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7' DESCRIPTION

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DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Located on a side street in the small, courthouse community of Hernando, Mississippi, the Felix Labauve House occupies a flat, tree-shaded, mid-block lot that falls off steeply along its rear boundary. Facing east, the house is approximately in the center of casually planted grounds, a positioning which accommodates a deep front yard. The more open back area once featured a number of outbuildings, but only one small, open-sided, board-and-batten barn of later construction remains.

The single-story frame house reflects the late nineteenth century fascination with the picturesque, since the basic, vernacular structure is richly embellished with fanciful, eclectic detailing. Originally T-shaped, the fivebay, gable-roofed structure rests on low brick piers and is sheathed with clapboards. A very shallow, gabled pavilion is set to the south of the central entrance, giving the structure a varied silhouette. The overhanging eaves are boxed with flat, sawn pendants at each corner. Sheltering the full facade and breaking forward to express the pavilion is a sophisticated Italianateinspired gallery with an elliptical and round-arch frieze with keystones, board-and-batten sheathed spandrels, and a deep, molded cornice. Rounded arches flanking the central elliptical arch define the curiously narrow entrance bay, which has a deep, single-light transom set over a single-leaf door with Renaissance Revival detailing and an arched, glazed upper panel. Full-length, two-over-two windows fitted with operable, three-panel louvered blinds flank the entrance. A highly decorative circular ventilator is set in The rear portion of the house was remodeled and enlarged after each gable end. World War II into an unobtrusive one-and-a-half-story wing employing the same simple detailing of the original section. The large, hip-roofed dormer on the main elevation was added at the same time.

Structural evidence indicates that the house originally consisted of three rooms radiating from the wide, central hall. The rear chamber, replaced by the present one-and-a-half-story wing, is serviced by double-leaf doors, while the side rooms have single-leaf openings. Simply detailed, each front room features an interior end chimney with a closet closed by double-leaf, two-panel doors set in one side of the reveal. The pilastered mantel in the north room is of an earlier style than the existing woodwork and may date from the previous house on the property. Much of the original Eastlake-style decorated hardware survives. Ceilings throughout the first floor have been dropped but cut out around the fenestration.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

| PERIOD | AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW | | | | |
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| | ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC AGRICULTURE XARCHITECTURE ART COMMERCE | COMMUNITY PLANNING CONSERVATION ECONOMICS EDUCATION ENGINEERING EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT | LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE LAW LITERATURE MILITARY MUSIC PHILOSOPHY | RELIGION SCIENCE SCULPTURE X SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN THEATER TRANSPORTATION | |
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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Labauve House was the home of Felix Labauve (1809-1879), an orphaned French emigré whose years of dedicated, unselfish service to his community as a whole made him one of the most revered and respected of DeSoto County's early leaders. Known as the "Father of Scholarships in Mississippi," he was the first Mississippian to bequeath an endowment to a university for the explicit purpose of establishing a permanent scholarship. Founded to enable orphaned boys from Labauve's home county of DeSoto to attend the University of Mississippi, the ongoing scholarship survives not so much as a memorial to the man as to his ideal of an education available to all young men and his concern for the welfare of orphaned youths. His single-story frame house with its graceful, classically inspired, arcaded gallery is an important regional example of picturesque detailing applied to a frequently used vernacular form.

The premature death in 1815 of Felix Labauve's father, a professional soldier who served with Rochambeau at Yorktown and later with Napoleon, left the family in France so hard pressed that Madame Labauve sent her son to America to be raised by her brothers, successful merchants in Camden, South Carolina. Labauve remained in Camden in the mercantile business with his uncles until 1835, when he moved to Noxubee County, Mississippi. Initially interested in agriculture, he quickly abandoned farming, moved west, and established a trading post at Cockrum, a predominantly Indian settlement in the Chickasaw lands ceded to the state and opened in 1832. In 1838 he moved to nearby Hernando, the seat of the newly created DeSoto County, where, in addition to conducting his mercantile business, he read law. His studies were motivated more by an enthusiasm for politics than a desire to pursue a legal career. The following year he became editor of Hernando's first newspaper, The Hernando Free Press and State Rights Democrat, which he used as a means of setting forth his political views.

Labauve was an ardent Democrat whose concern for the common man never waivered throughout his distinguished career of public service. In 1839 the Frenchman was elected to the Hernando town council, but running on a platform which included the establishment of common schools, he lost in his bid to capture a seat in the Mississippi senate. Undaunted, he continued to espouse the Democratic philosophy and in 1841 acquired a new paper, The Phenix, which replaced the discontinued Free Press. At the urging of his many supporters in the county, Labauve ran for the lower house of the state legislature in 1843 and was elected. He was noted as "a man who could never be neutral on any question relating to public welfare" (Owens, p. 19), and his political career was characterized by concern for improvements in public education and the protection of the interests of the common man.

Sensing controversy because of his Franco-Catholic background, Labauve returned to Camden, South Carolina, after his first term in the legislature and acquired his American citizenship. In 1846, he was elected to the state senate, despite the efforts of the Know-Nothing nativist faction, and was returned in 1848.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

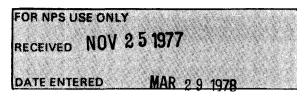
DeSoto County, Mississippi. Chancery Clerk. Will Record Book 2, Deed Books R, S.

Owens, Ida. "Felix Labauve: Emigrant Patriot" (M.L.S. thesis, University of Mississippi, 1970).

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| City of Hernando. Beg | inning at a point a | approximately | 85' north of the original |
| southern boundary of L | ot 423, the present | t lot is appr | oximately 122' x 255'. |
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| Mary McCahon Shoemaker | , Architectural His | storian | |
| ORGANIZATION Mississippi Department | of Archives and H | istorv | October, 1977 |
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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM



CONTINUATION SHEET

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8 - SIGNIFICANCE

Pressing business matters in Hernando forced Labauve to leave state politics temporarily and return to DeSoto County. There his interest in politics and participation in the activities of the Democratic party continued, leading to his election in 1853 as clerk of the circuit court, a position he held until 1860. Curiously, he did not become a licensed attorney until 1857.

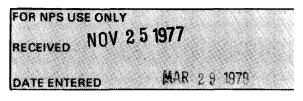
The land on which Labauve's house is located, lot 423 in the original plat of Hernando, was purchased by him in 1860 (Deed Book R, p. 111). Between 1853 and 1855 a "house" had been built on the property by Hiram B. Phillips. That structure apparently served as Labauve's home until it was either removed or incorporated in the present structure, which stylistically appears to date from the 1870s. In 1866 Labauve added lots 426, 427, and 428, immediately south of his house lot, to his holdings (Deed Book S, p. 514).

When the Civil War broke out, Labauve was presumably too old for active service, but he did participate in the war effort, traveling with the Confederate armies and serving as a member of the generals' staffs. Supportive efforts on the home front included organizing benefit balls. He was returned to the state legislature for three one-year terms at the conclusion of the war.

Locally, Labauve is credited with providing the design source for the 1870 DeSoto County courthouse. Replacing a modest frame facility that was practically destroyed during the war, the new courthouse, which stood until it was consumed by fire in 1940, was an extremely fine Chateauesque structure designed by the noted architectural firm of Jones and Baldwin of Memphis. A drawing of a French chateau that Labauve provided the architects supposedly served as the basis for the design. Fittingly, Labauve's last official responsibility before his death in 1879 was to represent his state and county as an honorary Commissioner of the International Industrial Exposition in Paris in 1878. The occasion marked the first time that Labauve had returned to his native country.

Perhaps even more significant than the many accomplishments of Felix Labauve's productive lifetime was his legacy to his adopted community. He left monetary remembrances to several widows and his only known living relative in France, but the bulk of his estate went for charitable purposes. He UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM



CONTINUATION SHEET

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willed lots 426, 427, and 428 to the bishop of the Roman Catholic Church in Natchez for the purpose of erecting a 'Roman Catholic Chapel'' in Hernando. He further stipulated that he should be interred on lot 426, envisioning it as the church's burial yard. The remainder of his estate (nearly \$16,000, which included the \$800 value of his house and lot) was devoted "to the creation of a scholarship in the University of Mississippi to be called Labauve Scholarship, for the Education of Boys in the University and their support while there who are Orphans Children of worthy parents and citizens of DeSoto County . . ." (Will Record Book 2, p. 148). The scholarship supports several students at a time and has aided young men in a variety of disciplines who have distinguished themselves on both the local and state level. Through his generosity, Labauve's ideals as a businessman, lawyer, legislator, and philanthropist continue to serve as a source of pride and inspiration for the community.

In 1976 the former Labauve property was donated to the city of Hernando. The possibility of its restoration is currently being pursued by the city and the Executive Committee for the Restoration and Preservation of the Felix Labauve House.