

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED 11 SEP 1979 DEC 6 1979
DATE ENTERED

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Maison de Marie Therese

AND/OR COMMON

Same

2 LOCATION

1 mi NW of Bermuda

STREET & NUMBER

At end of dirt road off Highway 494 about 1 mile northwest of Bermuda

CITY, TOWN

Bermuda

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

5th - Jerry Huckaby

STATE

Louisiana

VICINITY OF

CODE

022

COUNTY

Natchitoches

CODE

069

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH
- PUBLIC ACQUISITION**
- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE**
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

PRESENT USE

- AGRICULTURE
- MUSEUM
- COMMERCIAL
- PARK
- EDUCATIONAL
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- ENTERTAINMENT
- RELIGIOUS
- GOVERNMENT
- SCIENTIFIC
- INDUSTRIAL
- TRANSPORTATION
- MILITARY
- OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME
Mr. and Mrs. Russell Whittington, Jr.

STREET & NUMBER

300 Des Negis Street

CITY, TOWN

Natchitoches

VICINITY OF

STATE

Louisiana 71457

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Natchitoches Parish Courthouse (Clerk of Court Office)

STREET & NUMBER

Church Street

CITY, TOWN

Natchitoches

STATE

Louisiana 71457

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Louisiana Historic Sites Survey

DATE

1979

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

State Historic Preservation Office

CITY, TOWN

Baton Rouge

STATE

Louisiana

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

—EXCELLENT
—GOOD
FAIR

—DETERIORATED
—RUINS
—UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

—UNALTERED
ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
—MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Maison de Marie Therese is a five room raised, hip roof Creole cottage. Located on flat farmland, the house is unusual in not facing the nearby Cane River. The nominated area, ~~two acres~~, encompasses the house, its setting, and its access and view to the river. *1 acre per phone call 12/4/51*

The plan consists of a front gallery, two large front rooms with a chimney between, and two rear cabinets with a room between. In most Creole raised cottages, this rear room between the cabinets would have been an open gallery. Many times a rear gallery of this sort has been subsequently enclosed to form an extra room. However, the structural evidence indicates that at the Maison de Marie Therese, this rear room was always enclosed. The side lean-to, and the side and rear galleries are comparatively recent additions.

The cottage is constructed of hewn frame posts on sills with corner faces and panelled bousillage. The hip roof structure is particularly unusual and significant (see sketch). It features a ridge pole resting upon King posts with corner braces. At each end of the ridge pole is a set of double scissor-like rafters. There are two long purlins between the sets of double rafters. But all this is merely understructure for the rafters and corner beams which form the actual hip roof.

The exterior is sheathed in irregularly placed beaded boards which incorporates a chairrail in front. The house also features plank doors, simple molded window frames, and interior chairrails. Evidently the moldings and sheathing were added sometime after the house was built. None of the old sashes remain. It is possible that originally there were no sashes. The original floor boards remain as do the wood plank ceilings.

The adjacent dilapidated sheds were excluded from the nomination owing their comparatively recent date, and their poor likelihood of surviving.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) Black History
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES ca. 1786 BUILDER/ARCHITECT _____

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Maison de Marie Therese is architecturally significant as an early and well preserved example of a Creole raised cottage. This can be seen in its plan, its moldings and chairrails, its hewn timbers and panelled bousillage. Perhaps the complex and untypical roof structure was the result of untrained builders, who were used to pitched roofs, but were faced with the problem of constructing a hip roof. Perhaps it simply reflects a total lack of understanding of structures on the part of slave builders. Whatever the reason for its existence, it is very probably unique in Natchitoches Parish. Crude and inept, its overstructuring gives strong evidence of an unsophisticated building technology and represents an inherent part of the early architectural development of the area.

The house is also significant in the area of black history as the home of Marie Therese Coincoin (1742 - 1816?), a remarkable black woman whose achievements were the foundation of the network of plantations owned by the Cane River region's famous "Creoles of color".

It is not absolutely certain that the house was lived in by Marie Therese or that it dates from the time of her occupation of the site. But, as Dr. Carolyn French, one of several scholars who has done research on the house, notes, "...the evidence is overwhelming that this is the former home of Marie Therese" (see letter from Dr. French to Dr. Russell Whittington, 24 July 1978, copy in Maison de Marie Therese file). Both French and Gary Millis point out that the building is located on the site designated as a land grant to Marie Therese by a survey plat of 1794. In addition, there is a building indicated on the plat map and labelled "Maison de Marie Therese, Negresse libre" (see copy of map in Marie de Therese file; Dr. French's letter noted above; and Mill's article "Historian Responds to Story About Marie Therese," Natchitoches Times, 4 May 1978)

Louis Nardini, who did historical research on this site in 1972, reported that the land was given to Marie Therese in 1786 and that she had resided on the land from 1778. (Nardini's report is in the possession of Mr. and Mrs. John E. Prudhomme, former owners of the house). In addition, Dr. H.F. Gregory has done some archaeological research on the site. He reported, "My impression is that the occupation of the site, and likely the house . . . began about 1770-80. It appears to have been continuously occupied since that date." He also noted that his findings correlate well with the historical documents concerning the land and with the "architectural and hardware features of the house" (see letter from Dr. Gregory to Dr. Whittington, 1 November 1978, copy in Maison de Marie de Therese file).

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Henry, Joseph, "Discovery of Boussilage Cabin Substantiates True Story," Natchitoches Times, 16 April 1978.

Letter from Carolyn French to Dr. Russell Whittington, 1 July 1973.

Letter from H.F. Gregory to Dr. Russell Whittington, 1 November 1978.

Mills, Gary B., "Historian Responds to Story About Marie Therese," Natchitoches Times, 4 May 1978.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

UTM NOT VERIFIED

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY approx. .1 acre

QUADRANGLE NAME _____

QUADRANGLE SCALE _____

UTM REFERENCES

A 15 498250 3504100
ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B _____
ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C _____

D _____

E _____

F _____

G _____

H _____

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

See attached drawing

Boundaries centered on house - phone call 12/4/79 BS

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Mr. and Mrs. Russell Whittington, Jr.

ORGANIZATION

DATE

June 1979
TELEPHONE

STREET & NUMBER

300 Des Negis Street

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Natchitoches

Louisiana 71457

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL _____

STATE X

LOCAL _____

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

D. Bernard Lavin

TITLE

State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

8/16/79

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Sally L. Oldham
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

12/6/79

ATTEST *Beth Groves*
CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

DATE

12/4/79

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Maison de Marie Therese
CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

The evidence for Marie Therese's residence in the house is therefore strong.

Marie Therese Coincoin (1742-1816?) was born a slave of Louis Juchereau de St. Denis, the founder of Natchitoches. He died in 1744, but she remained the slave of his family until 1778. At this time she was purchased and freed by Claude Thomas Pierre Metoyer, a Frenchman who had settled in Natchitoches. She had borne several children by him during the previous decade. Marie Therese remained his mistress until 1786, when they ended their alliance and he gave her the land which is the site of the Maison de Marie Therese.

She began to operate a small plantation on this land and worked to free several of her children and grandchildren who were still in slavery. From then on to her death in 1816 or 1817, she expanded her landholdings and gradually achieved the manumission of her children and grandchildren. With her death she left her descendants what Mills calls a "comfortable" estate, consisting of at least sixteen slaves and over a thousand arpents of land. Contrary to legend, she did not leave behind a fabulous amount of wealth. Her foremost legacy, according to Mills, was her example of determination, industry, frugality, mutual assistance, and emphasis upon working with the white people rather than against them to achieve one's goal.

Her sons and daughters of mixed blood were able to expand the property she left into the vast, rich plantations which they came to own on Cane River. Among these was the plantation now known as Melrose, which became the center of their holdings. Their sizable domain began with the land that is the site of the house in which Marie Therese Coincoin apparently lived in the early years of her freedom. (The foregoing biographical sketch of Marie Therese is based on Gary B. Mills, The Forgotten People: Cane River's Creoles of Color (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1977), pp. 1-49.).

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Mills, Gary B., The Forgotten People: Cane River's Creoles of Color. Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1977.

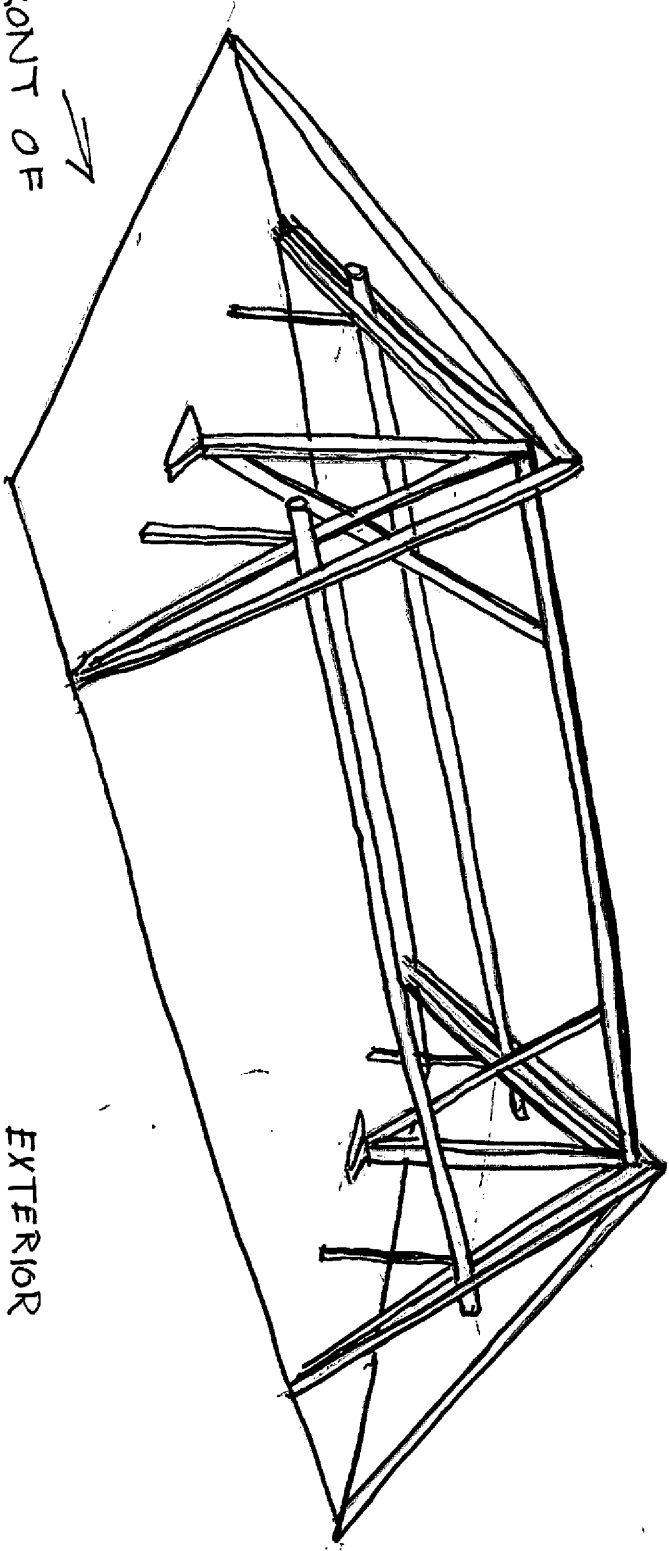
Nardini, Louis, "Legends About Marie Therese Disputed," Natchitoches Times, 22 October 1972.

Plat map showing property of Marie Therese, 1794, State Land Office, Baton Rouge. Copy in National Register file for Maison de Marie Therese, State Historic Preservation Office, Baton Rouge.

SKETCH OF ROOF
FRAME

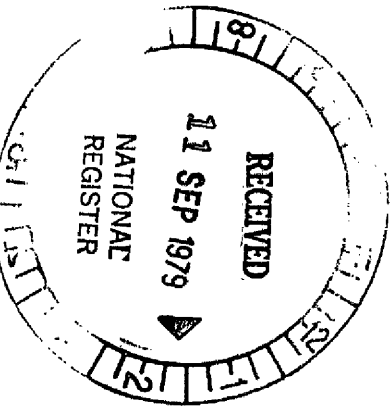
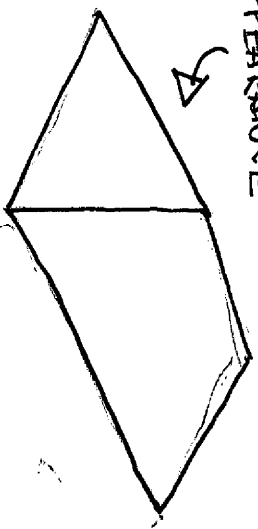
(RAFTERS NOT)
SHOWN

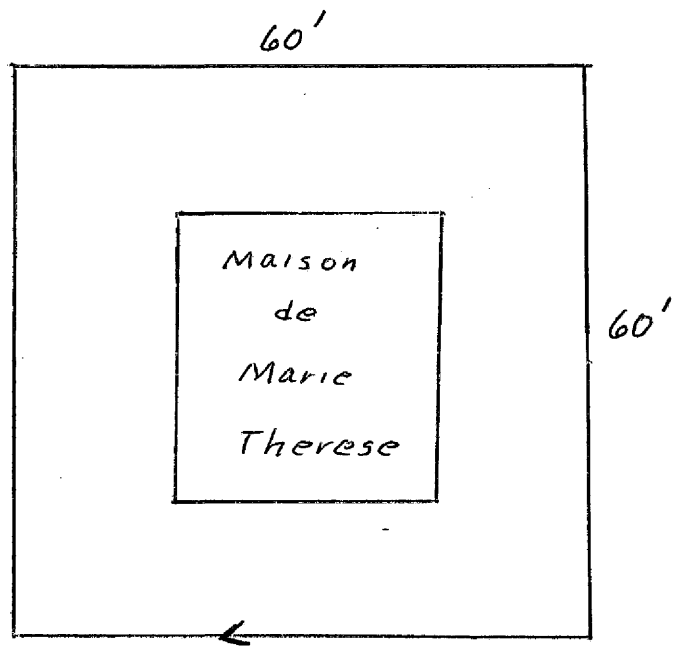
FRONT OF
HOUSE



NOT TO
SCALE

EXTERIOR
APPEARANCE





Maison de Marie Therese is located in
Section 89, Township 8 North, Range 6 West,
Natchitoches Parish, Louisiana.

CANE RIVER

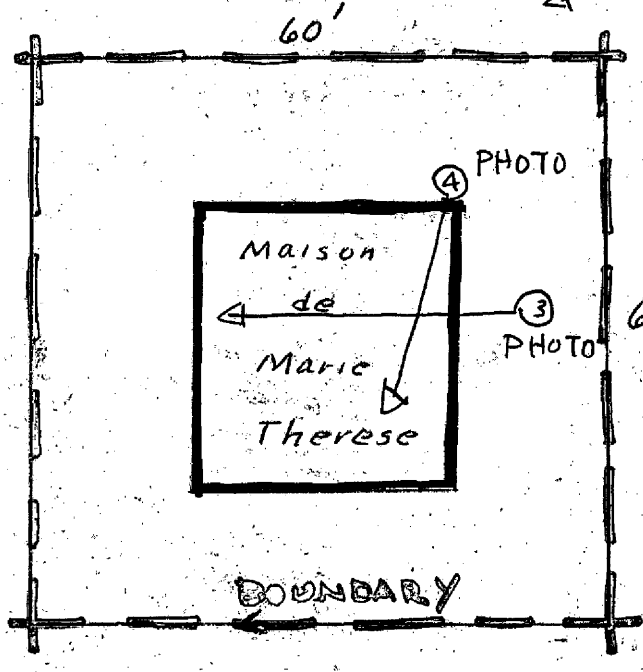
SHEDS



① SLIDE

① PHOTO

② PHOTO



N



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② SLIDE