

PH0009206

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: <b>Louisiana</b>	
<del>COUNTY:</del> <b>Parish St. Martin</b>	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER <b>APR 5 1972</b>	DATE

**1. NAME**

COMMON:  
**U. S. Post Office**

AND/OR HISTORIC:  
**Residence of Eugene Duchamp De Chastaignier**

**2. LOCATION**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**Corner of Main and Port Street**

CITY OR TOWN:  
**St. Martinville**

STATE <b>Louisiana</b>	CODE <b>22</b>	<del>COUNTY:</del> <b>Parish St. Martin</b>	CODE <b>099</b>
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**3. CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Comments <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) <b>U.S. Post Office and Federal Building</b>

**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

OWNER'S NAME:  
**General Services Administration**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**819 Taylor Street**

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Ft. Worth**

STATE:  
**Texas**

**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:  
**Clerk of Court**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**St. Martin Parish Courthouse**

CITY OR TOWN:  
**St. Martinville**

STATE:  
**Louisiana**

CODE:  
**22**

**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE OF SURVEY:

DATE OF SURVEY:  
 Federal  
 State  
 County  
 Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:  
**St. Martinville**

STATE:  
**Louisiana**

CODE:  
**22**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE:

COUNTY:

ENTRY NUMBER  
**1072**

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered		<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The appearance of the structure is typical of the French and Spanish Colonial Period in Louisiana. The building measures fifty-two feet in width by sixty-three feet in length. It has a five foot basement and a very large attic. A well designed cupulo tops the building.

Large galleries supported by cypress columns on concrete piers face the Bayou Teche to the east and the street to the west. Cast iron railings decorate the galleries.

The structure has thirty-six openings. On the lower floor there were ten large windows. The upper floor has twelve windows and there are several exterior doors. This was in keeping with the necessity for cross ventilation in the hot, humid area.

The interior of the building, excluding the corridors consist of nine immense rooms. The lower floor was divided into two bedrooms, parlor and dining room. The upper floor has four large rooms and a bath. The entire interior is plastered since all exterior walls were of brick.

There are four large chimneys built from the ground in the building. The decorative front portion of the fireplaces, rising from the mantelpieces are made of decorative cast iron.

A few feet to the rear of the old home was a large two-room structure. It was used as the kitchen and servants quarters.

About 1938 the building was converted to use as a Post Office and several modifications were made to the building. The original kitchen outside the main house was converted to a boiler room. A vault was added in the main house and several partitions were removed to make a lobby and work room. The original structure, however, is very well documented in the blueprints for the Post Office conversion. The exterior of the structure was renovated on a brick by brick basis and no substantial change was made. By and large the change to Post Office useage was done without significant alteration of the basic building.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**6. SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian |  16th Century |  18th Century |  20th Century  
 15th Century |  17th Century |  19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |                                      |   |  |
|--|--------------------------------------|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal              | <input type="checkbox"/> Education   | <input type="checkbox"/> Political      | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric             | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Phi-  | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Historic     | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry    | osophy                                  | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture             | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention   | <input type="checkbox"/> Science        | _____                                    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape   | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture      | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art                     | Architecture                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Human-  | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce                | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature  | itarian                                 | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications          | <input type="checkbox"/> Military    | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater        | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation            | <input type="checkbox"/> Music       | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____                                    |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

This residence offers several features of considerable historical significance as this residence has for nearly a century been a part of the history of St. Martinville an area which in itself is a living museum of the French-Spanish heritage of the area. The scale and predominance of the residence in the community make it especially important in maintaining the overall character of the community.

St. Martinville was heavily settled by refugees of the French nobility during the French Revolution and in its early days was famous as a "Style" center of south Louisiana. Today evidence of this rich period in Louisiana still remains in the culture of the people and in the physical form of such building as the residence constructed in 1876 by Eugene Duchamp De Chastaignier. Mr. Duchamp came to St. Martinville from the West Indies and the home was designed as a replica of his sugar plantation home in Martinique.

Several features of the house make it significant among the early residences built in this area. The galleries are handled with the lacy iron grillwork characteristic of the homes built in New Orleans during that period. The problem of transportation was so difficult, being partly through the bayous and partly by portage through dangerous swamps, that such costly touches were usually not included. The bricks used in building this mansion were hand made of Louisiana red clay taken from the banks of the Bayou Teche. Red cypress was used throughout the house. Fully matured trees from one to two thousand years old were selected in the swamp and cut and used for the house.

Eugene Duchamp De Chastaignier was an early mayor of St. Martinville. He took an active part in all the affairs of the City and Parish. For thirty years he served as president of the St. Martin Parish Police Jury. He was also noted as a business leader and civic worker. It is said that the Duchamp family lost an estimated fortune of \$75,000 between 1880 and 1884. In 1885 the premises <sup>were</sup> ~~is~~ sold to Husville P. Fournet, a wealthy merchant. The Fournet heirs held the property until 1938 when it was acquired by the U. S. Post Office Department to be restored and used at the local Post Office.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

1. Old Louisiana Plantation Homes and Family Trees  
Herman De Bachellet Seebold
2. St. Martinville, Louisiana  
Mrs. James Guirard
3. The Weekly Messenger (Now Teche News, St. Martinville, La.)

**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	° ' "	° ' "		30°	7'	19" N
NE	° ' "	° ' "		91°	49'	45" W
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

UTM  
15/61286  
3332766  
CD

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY:

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE:  
**Bradshaw and Tomeny, Architects**

ORGANIZATION: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: **March 8, 1972**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**115 South State Street**

CITY OR TOWN: **Abbeville** STATE: **Louisiana** CODE: **22**

**12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION**

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National  State  Local

Name *George M. Reese*

Title State Liaison Officer

Date 25 MARCH 1972

**NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

*Robert K. Utley*  
Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation  
APR 5 1972

Date \_\_\_\_\_

ATTEST:

*W. Bradford*  
Keeper of The National Register

Date April 4, 1972

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
Louisiana	
<del>COUNTY</del>	
Parish St. Martin	
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APR 3	1972

(Number all entries)

8. (Continuation of Significance)

It is especially significant that plans had already been drawn for a new building to be located on the site of the old residence as it was against Post Office regulations to renovate a building for Postal Facilities. With the aid of the local congressional delegation, the insistence of the people of St. Martinville, and the opinion of the U. S. Architect that this was indeed a landmark, it has become the only private residence in the nation which has been preserved as a historical monument by conversion to a Federal Building.

In summary, the prime factors which make the Duchamp House significant are:

1. The rich historical background associated with the house.
2. The importance of the house in relation to the character of the community.
3. The notable Architectural features of the building.