

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED MAY 22 1979
DATE ENTERED JUN 27 1979

**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 Steamboat House

AND/OR COMMON

Emmer-Hughes House

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER 623 E. Main Street

— NOT FOR PUBLICATION
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

CITY, TOWN

New Iberia

— VICINITY OF

3rd - David Treen

STATE

Louisiana

CODE
22

COUNTY
Iberia

CODE
045

CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Elizabeth Carolyn Wall Hughes

STREET & NUMBER

623 E. Main Street

CITY, TOWN

New Iberia

— VICINITY OF

STATE

Louisiana

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, Registry of Deeds, ETC. Iberia Parish Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

New Iberia

STATE

Louisiana

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		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Steamboat House stands on 2.7 acres of bayou ridge land set between East Main Street and Bayou Teche in the old residential section of New Iberia.

Originally the house was a one-story, central hall plan, raised house, with a massive two-story, double turreted front. The front was only one room deep, and was completely encompassed by Eastlake galleries on both stories. Galleries were reached by means of large floor length slip head windows.

In 1948 the second floor gallery was removed as were the coupled turned columns, spindle valences, jig-saw brackets and railings with turned balusters. These were replaced by tall slender round wood columns extending through two stories.

Instead of the second floor gallery, a balcony with a wrought iron railing was constructed across the center of the second floor facade between the two towers.

In addition, the galleries on the sides and rear of the house were enclosed to form bathrooms and other living spaces. The original one-story portion of the house behind the two-story brick, towered front, was raised to a full two stories, and a new hipped roof with dormers and balustraded captain's walk was added.

Finally the base level of the house, which once consisted of brick piers with lattice work between, was enclosed with brick veneer, the steps were replaced, and the bell-shaped roofs of the turrets were replaced with lower conical roofs. Several closets were also installed and a staircase was built at the rear of the central hall. However, the millwork was in keeping with the original.

Although the house was extensively remodelled in the 1940's, its unique brick facade with twin circular towers is essentially intact and it is the intention of the present owner to restore the altered galleries to their original form and detail. When this restoration is completed, the view of the house from the street will appear almost the same as it did in the early photographs, as it is also proposed to reconstruct the interesting wood picket fence and recessed entrance gate and gate posts.

The interiors are large and imposing with fifteen foot ceilings and cove moldings. The mantels are all in the late nineteenth century Renaissance Revival style. The one in the right front parlor is particularly significant, being marbled slate with glass inlay, circular pattern panels, and consoles.

The house shares the 2.7 acres with a small summer house, a tennis court, and a small cemetery.

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Description (cont'd)

Intrusions:

Both the tennis court and the modern cottage are small, low in stature, and set off to the side. They do not significantly impinge upon the house or its view to the river.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

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

SPECIFIC DATES

1896

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

John Emmer

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

When the present restoration work is complete, the Steamboat House will rank, as the noted restoration architect Samuel Wilson states, "as the largest and most elaborate late Victorian house in New Iberia and its vicinity." (see statement in file) The round turret appears in a number of turn-of-the-century houses in Louisiana but it is a rare one indeed which has two. Moreover, the galleries as restored will be among the most extensive and elaborate examples of the use of Eastlake vocabulary in the state.

The home's commercial significance arises from its association with its builder John Emmer and his son-in-law George Lebau. Emmer was the well-to-do businessman and farmer--owner of a brickyard and of a fairly large amount of local real estate. He also drilled the first two oil wells in Iberia Parish, although they were unsuccessful. The bricks from the Emmer brickyard were used in the construction of many buildings in and around New Iberia. George Lebau, who along with his wife owned the home during 1903-1912 and 1914-1937, was a prominent local businessman who served as president and chairman of the board of New Iberia National Bank. (The foregoing information on the home's commercial significance is from the Dr. Hughes' interviews with Andrew Emmer and Wiltz Emmer, grandsons of John Emmer.)

The home's political significance arises from its association with two of its owners--the builder John Emmer, who was mayor of New Iberia from 1889-1891, and Dr. Paul N. Cyr (1878-1946), a significant figure in state politics during the Huey Long era. According to Cyr's children, he spent much time at the Steamboat House during the years he owned it, although it was not his primary residence. Cyr ran for lieutenant-governor on Long's ticket in 1928 and was elected. But a feud soon developed between the two, beginning in 1929 when Long refused to recommend that the sentence of a Dr. Dreher be commuted from death to life imprisonment. Cyr from then on was "a dangerous enemy" to Long, obstructing his legislative program in his capacity as presiding officer of the senate, for example. Cyr was a major reason why Huey continued on as governor after winning election to the U. S. Senate in 1930. Had he resigned, Cyr would have had fourteen months on his own as governor. "Paul Cyr will never be governor of this state for one minute" became one of Long's favorite sayings. Cyr mounted a campaign for governor in 1932 but soon withdrew to support another candidate. Also in 1932, he tried to force Huey out of office with a lawsuit but was unsuccessful. (The foregoing information on the home's political significance comes from Dr. Hughes' interviews with Andrew and Wiltz Emmer, grandsons of John Emmer; and with members of the Cyr family including Paul Cyr's daughter Emily Cyr Bridges and Louis Cyr; and from T. Harry Williams, Huey Long (New York:

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Significance (cont'd)

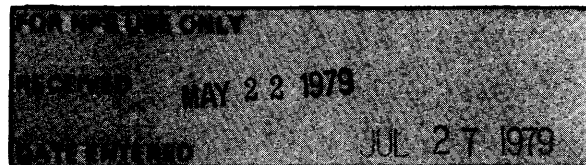
Bantam Books, 1970), pp. 276-277, 293, 353-358, 484-485, 588, 564, 569-572.)

Chain of Title

John Emmer acquired the site of the house from the Citizens Bank in 1882 (see Conveyance Book 10, page 22, Iberia Parish Records). He built the home during the years 1896-1898. In 1903, John W. Emmer and Mrs. Adelia Emmer conveyed the home to Josephine Emmer (Conveyance Book 49, page 426, Iberia Parish Records). In 1912 Josephine M. Emmer, wife of George Lebau, sold it to John S. Suttle, who in 1914 sold it back to Josephine Emmer. In the succession of George Lebau, the property was bequeathed to Dr. Paul N. Cyr in 1937 (Conveyance Book 132, page 513). In 1948, Mary McGowen Cyr conveyed the home to James P. Cross (Conveyance Book 180, entry No. 74099). In 1978, Elizabeth Carolyn Wall Hughes, the current owner, acquired the property.

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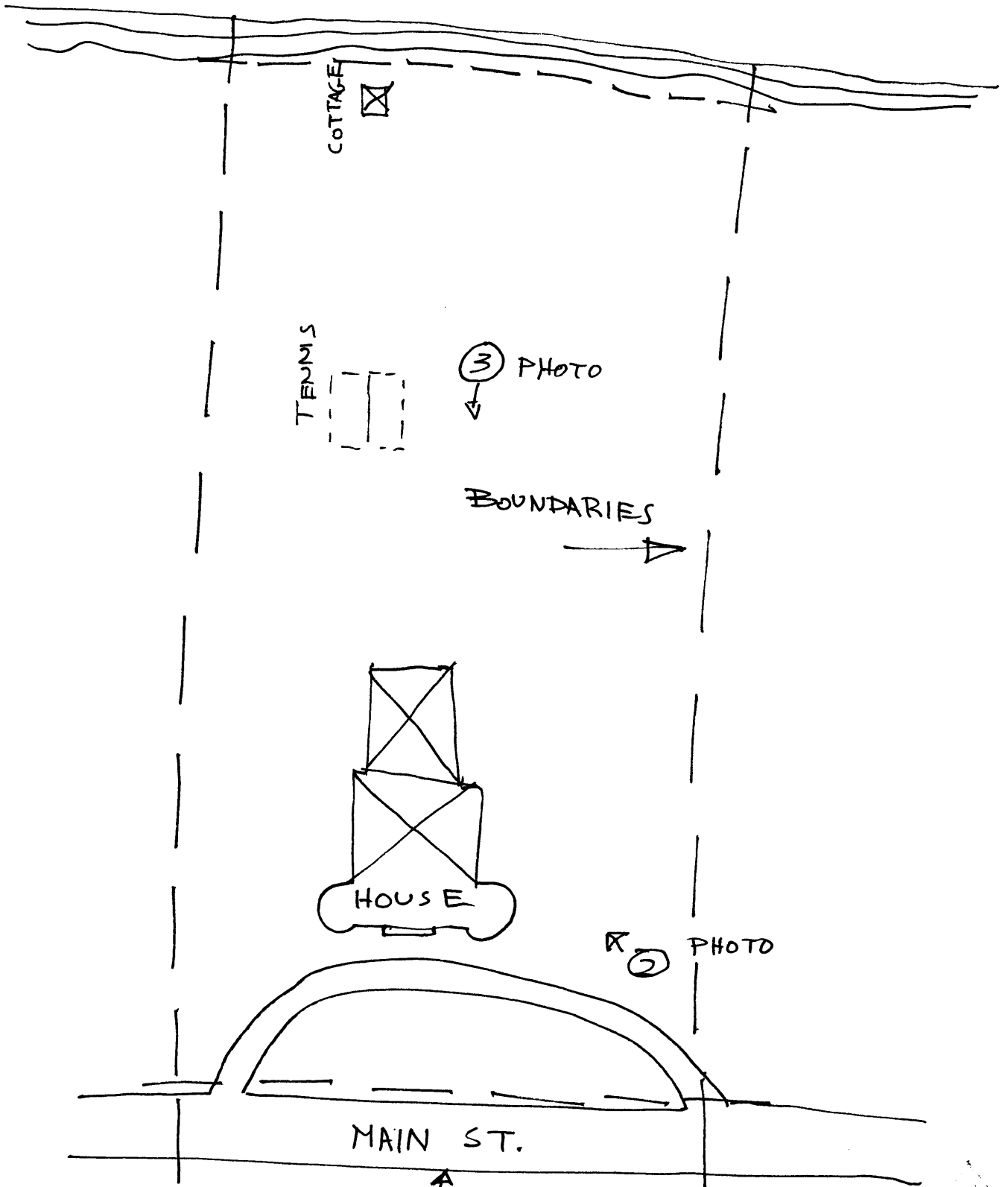
Letter with attachments from Glenn R. Conrad to Dr. Richard Hughes,
5 December 1978, copy in National Register file for Steamboat House,
State Historic Preservation Office, Baton Rouge.

Letter from Dr. Richard Hughes to State Historic Preservation Office,
4 April 1978, located in National Register file for Steamboat House.

Williams, T. Harry, Huey Long. New York: Bantam Books, 1970.

Wilson, Samuel, statement on architecture of Steamboat House, located in
National Register file for Steamboat House, State Historic Preservation
Office, Baton Rouge.

BAYOU TECHE



COTTAGE

TENNIS

(3) PHOTO

BOUNDARIES

HOUSE

(2) PHOTO

MAIN ST.

(1) PHOTO.

(4) PHOTO.

