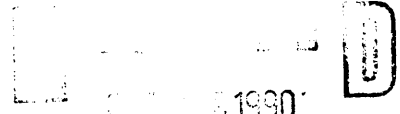


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service



# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

NATIONAL  
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

### 1. Name of Property

historic name Ray Homestead  
other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. Location

street & number 378 West Bellevue N/A not for publication  
city, town Opelousas N/A vicinity  
state Louisiana code LA county St. Landry code 097 zip code 70570

### 3. Classification

<b>Ownership of Property</b>	<b>Category of Property</b>	<b>Number of Resources within Property</b>	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<b>Contributing</b>	<b>Noncontributing</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	_____ structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	_____	_____ objects
		<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A  
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

### 4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.  
Jonathan Fricker October 15, 1990  
Signature of certifying official Jonathan Fricker, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, Dept. of Culture, Recreation and Tourism  
State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.  
Signature of commenting or other official \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

### 5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:  
 entered in the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet.  
 determined eligible for the National Register.  See continuation sheet.  
 determined not eligible for the National Register.  
 removed from the National Register.  
 other, (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

**Entered in the National Register**  
Alanna Byers 11/28/90  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

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**6. Function or Use**

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Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

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Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

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**7. Description**

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Architectural Classification  
(enter categories from instructions)French Creole

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Greek Revival

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Gothic revival

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Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation brick

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walls weatherboard

---

roof asphalt

---

other 

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**Describe present and historic physical appearance.**

The Ray Homestead (1853) is a one-and-a-half story frame galleried cottage featuring a combination of Creole and American Greek Revival elements. It is located on a large well-treed lot just west of downtown Opelousas. The most serious alteration has been the replacement of the original columns.

Creole characteristics include the method of construction and the floor plan. The walls are briquette-entre-poteaux (brick-between-posts), presently covered with sheetrock which replaces the original plaster. The hall-less plan consists of two large equal size rooms in front and two smaller rooms in the rear. The narrow staircase is set between the two rear rooms in its own compartment. As in most Creole houses, the front rooms at the Ray Homestead communicate directly with the front gallery. This yields the familiar facade with two front doors. What makes the Ray Homestead very unusual is that each of its two front entrances takes the form of a fully developed Greek Revival doorway with a transom and sidelights.

Unlike most Creole houses, the chimneys are set against the end walls of the house. In addition, there is a wide opening with pocket doors between the parlor and the room behind. These features represent the American Greek Revival influence as do the mantels which do not wrap around as they would in the Creole fashion. The house's stylistic details are entirely derived from mainstream American influences of the mid-nineteenth century. Most of these are Greek Revival. The pilasters and an old photo survive to document the original paneled pillars which formed the front gallery. Most Greek Revival houses had rectangular wooden pillars, with a minority of examples featuring the additional embellishment of an inset panel, sometimes with bolection molding. The Ray House was unusual in that its columns had two panels each, one above and one below the chair rail. Other Greek Revival details include the gable end returns on the side elevations, the gable windows which have sidelights of their own, and the two front dormers which feature pilasters and tympana outlined with dentils.

The interior openings feature fairly standard, relatively plain Greek Revival moldings. The downstairs mantels, however, are far from typical. The one in the east front room features three beveled panels in the entablature and a relatively plain pair of pilasters. The one in the west front room is more elaborate, with beveled panels set in the pilasters and a blind lancet arcade set in the entablature. These lancet cuts are also beveled and feature roundels at the impost line which may have been intended to suggest foils. The two mantels in the finished attic have plain board surrounds and a shelf.

See continuation sheet

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Ray Homestead, St. Landry Parish, LA

Section number 7 Page 1

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Alterations include the following:

- (1) In the late nineteenth century the facade was fitted with narrow gauge beaded board. Below the chair rail it is placed in a diagonal pattern.
- (2) Some years ago the original columns rotted and the present owner replaced them with manufactured round columns. However, the pilasters survive.
- (3) The front gallery cornice was removed as part of a re-roofing job.
- (4) A long lean-to has been built across the rear.

Assessment of Integrity:

The most serious alterations have been the loss of the cornice and the original columns. It should be noted, however, that the house still retains the bulk of its original fabric and features, some of which are very important. (See Item 8.) The case for significance is based upon these surviving features. The loss of the cornice and columns is most unfortunate, but does not make the house by definition ineligible for the Register.

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally  statewide  locally

Applicable National Register Criteria  A  B  C  D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)  A  B  C  D  E  F  G N/A

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)  
architecture

Period of Significance  
1853

Significant Dates  
1853

Cultural Affiliation  
N/A

Significant Person  
N/A

Architect/Builder  
unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Ray Homestead is locally significant in the area of architecture as a landmark in the residential patrimony of Opelousas. The parish seat of Opelousas is one of Louisiana's oldest towns, but the vast majority of its older residences date from the late nineteenth or early twentieth centuries. Considering the age of the town, there are relatively few residences (about a dozen) to represent pre-Italianate styles and fewer still (about a half dozen) to represent the area's native Creole influence. Creole features of the Ray Homestead include the overall form, the plan, and the use of briquette-entre-poteaux construction. Of particular importance is the very unusual pair of doors with transoms and sidelights used in place of the more typical French doors. Aside from the Creole influence, the house is also significant because of its two very distinctive, well-crafted downstairs mantels. Of particular note is the parlor mantel, which is probably Opelousas' only example of the influence of the mid-nineteenth century domestic Gothic Revival and certainly its finest.

Historical Note:

The Ray Homestead was built in 1853 for Dr. James Ray and his bride, Margaret Hill. Its date is documented in a letter Ray wrote to his aunt in 1857 bringing her up-to-date on the various happenings in his life over the last few years. The present owner, Harold Hill Comeau, is Dr. Ray's great-grandson. During the Civil War, the house was the headquarters of the 9th Brigade Medical Department (CSA).

See continuation sheet

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

September 13, 1857 letter from Dr. James Ray to his aunt, Mrs. Martha Alford.

Opelousas Courier, March 22, 1862. (documentation for Civil War use of house)

St. Landry Parish Historic Structures Survey, Louisiana State Historic Preservation Office, and staff knowledge of Opelousas.

Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

Acres of property less than one acre

UTM References

A 

1	5
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5	8	7	6	6	0
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3	3	7	8	2	0	0
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Zone      Easting      Northing

B 

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Zone      Easting      Northing

C 

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D 

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Please refer to enclosed property plat.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

Boundary lines follow the property lines of the lot upon which the building stands.

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title National Register staff  
 organization Division of Historic Preservation date August 1989  
 street & number P. O. Box 44247 telephone 504-342-8160  
 city or town Baton Rouge state Louisiana zip code 70804

GERALD L. WALTER  
SURVEYOR  
136 BELLEVUE STREET

P. O. BOX 736  
PHONE 203

OPELOUSAS, LA.,

RAY Homestead  
Opelousas  
St. Landry Parish  
LA

North St.

169.2'

Lucille  
harcade  
Amy

Liberty St.

170'

170'

169.2'

340'

RAY HOMESTEAD

First  
Baptist  
Church

170'

170'

169.2'

Bellevue St.



SAME AS-1936  
1" = 75' Gerald Hill Comeau  
4-23-89

Plat of Survey

made by me of a certain lot of ground  
situated in the City of Opelousas, La.,  
showing sub-division into two equal  
parts thereof, for Mrs. Arthur Comeau.

Opelousas La July 3 1936.

Gerald L. Walter  
SURVEYOR