

1040

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

JUL 03 1989

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 (Old) Livingston Parish Courthouse
other names/site number

2. Location

street & number Corner of Second & Mulberry Streets N/A not for publication
city, town Springfield N/A vicinity
state Louisiana code LA county Livingston code 063 zip code 70462

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	1	0 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
		1	0 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.

Leslie Tassin June 30, 1989
Signature of certifying official Leslie Tassin, State Historic Preservation Date
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:)

Alonzo Byrum 8/7/89
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

GOVERNMENT/courthouse

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Federal

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation brick and concretewalls brickroof tinother

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The old Livingston Parish Courthouse (1835) is a two-story brick Federal style structure located on a quiet tree-shaded lot in Springfield. Alterations to the building since its construction include the replacement of its two-story front gallery, the enclosure and later removal of this gallery's twin on the rear elevation, several changes to doors and windows, and the subdivision of the large second floor courtroom into an apartment. Despite these changes, the courthouse retains its early Federal and Creole details which are the source of its local architectural significance. Also, it still retains enough of its original appearance to be easily recognizable to someone, for example, who worked there during the 1843-72 period when it served as the parish courthouse.

The courthouse's first floor consists of one large rectangular room with a mantel at one end and a stairway rising to the floor above. The second floor apartment consists of two small bedrooms on the north end and a living room containing the second mantel on the south. A dining room, kitchen, and small bath occupy the space between the north and south end rooms. Circulation between the two floors is currently prevented by the covering of the stairwell opening at the second floor level.

The building's most outstanding exterior features are its symmetry, its two gable end parapets, and its four sets of first floor French doors (two on the facade and two directly across from them on the rear). These doors are crowned by plain, barred semi-circular lunette windows with thick arched wooden surrounds. They are also framed by moveable batten shutters. A plain, steep exterior stairway hugs the facade wall between its two sets of French doors and serves to connect the front gallery's two floors. The unornamented gallery stretches the full length of the facade. Its five columns consist of square wooden posts without capitals. Other notable decorative features of the building include the flat brick arches which top the two single doors opening onto the second floor gallery and the wooden lunettes with surrounding brick arches which pierce the attic in each gable end. Most of the windows on the first floor are casement. Those on the second have sashes with nine over six lights. Some of these windows still retain their original wavy glass panes. The building's red bricks were reportedly made in Springfield.

The most outstanding visible interior features are the building's wraparound mantels with fluted Federal pilasters and panels. The walls in the downstairs portion of the building are made of brick covered by plaster. The original curved-beam construction of the second floor's hidden coved ceiling is visible

 See continuation sheet

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

(Old) Livingston Parish Courthouse, Springfield, Livingston Parish, LA

Section number 7 Page 1

from the attic. The construction is similar to that found in the hulls of ships and suggests that a former ship builder participated in the erection of the building.

Assessment of Integrity:

Since the historic period the following changes have been made to the structure:

- 1) Originally there was a two-story rear gallery. This was enclosed and a rear wing was added. In the mid-twentieth century both the gallery and the wing were demolished.
- 2) The original front gallery has been replaced with one which is undoubtedly of a similar style.
- 3) A side French door has been converted to a window and its lunette has been bricked in.
- 4) Several irregularly placed windows of various sizes and shapes have been installed on the rear elevation. In addition, a former doorway has been converted to a window.
- 5) The second floor courtroom has been subdivided for an apartment, and it appears that a partition wall on the ground floor has been removed. In addition, an interior staircase has been installed.
- 6) The original second floor curved-beam ceiling has been covered by a dropped ceiling.
- 7) The building has also experienced some superficial deterioration due to dampness.

Despite these changes, it is obvious that the old Livingston Parish Courthouse still resembles its original appearance. Its noteworthy French doors with crowning Federal lunette windows remain in place, its symmetry is intact, the front gallery reproduces the proportions of the original, the two mantels combining Federal and Creole styling still highlight the interior, and the covering of the original curved-beam construction of the second floor ceiling is reversible. Additionally, the building is one of only a handful of structures in Livingston Parish which pre-date the Greek Revival style and is one of the oldest structures in the parish.

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

Politics/Government

Period of Significance

1835

1843-1872

Significant Dates

1835

1843-1872

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 old Livingston Parish Courthouse is locally significant within the context of Livingston Parish as an extremely rare example of the Federal and Creole styles in a parish which is thought to have lost all of its structures dating from the colonial, territorial, and early statehood periods. It is also locally significant as the focal point of the parish's civil and political activity between 1843 and 1872.

Architectural Significance:

Although Livingston Parish was settled fairly early in the nineteenth century, very few of its pre-1900 buildings have survived. Additionally, very few of the parish's early twentieth century buildings are stylistically significant. Within this context, the old Livingston Parish Courthouse stands out as 1) a finely-crafted example of the Federal style, 2) a rare illustration of French Creole influence in a parish settled largely by people with English building traditions, and 3) one of the parish's oldest buildings. The structure's Federal characteristics include lunette windows above the building's four main entrances, gable end parapets, and a fine pair of mantels with fluted pilasters and fluted center panels. The Creole influence is found in the four sets of French doors on the ground floor and in the wraparound shape of the mantels. The courthouse is thought to be the only building in Livingston Parish to display such Federal and Creole stylistic influences.

Politics/Government Significance:

Springfield was named as the Livingston Parish seat in 1835. The community was chosen for this honor because of its location on a navigable river, the primary mode of transportation in rural Louisiana during this era. The law implementing the decision dictated that a suitable courthouse be furnished without expense to the parish. Evidence suggests that S. G. Parsons, the parish sheriff, donated an appropriate building located within Square 6 of the community.

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Brasseaux, Carl A., Conrad, Glenn R., and Robison, R. Warren. The Courthouses of Louisiana. Lafayette: University of Southwestern Louisiana, 1977.

Edward Livingston Historical Association, The Free State: A History and Place-Names Study of Livingston Parish. Livingston, LA: n.p., 1976.

Edward Livingston Historical Association. History of Livingston Parish, Louisiana. Livingston, LA: n.p., 1986.

Forrest, Clark, Jr. "The Old Springfield Courthouse Building." Typescript, February 8, 1976. (Copy in Old Springfield Courthouse National Register file, Louisiana Division of Historic Preservation.)

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

Acreeage of property less than one acre

UTM References

A

1	5
---	---

7	3	5	7	0	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

3	3	6	8	6	2	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Zone Easting Northing

B

--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Zone Easting Northing

C

--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--

D

--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description Please refer to enclosed property plat map. Boundaries follow the property lines of the rectangular parcel of land on which the nominated building stands, said lot being 96' by 115'.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification Boundary lines follow legally recorded property lines.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

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

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

(Old) Livingston Parish Courthouse, Springfield, Livingston Parish, LA

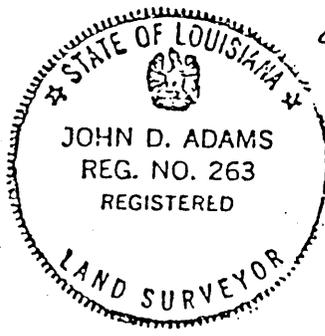
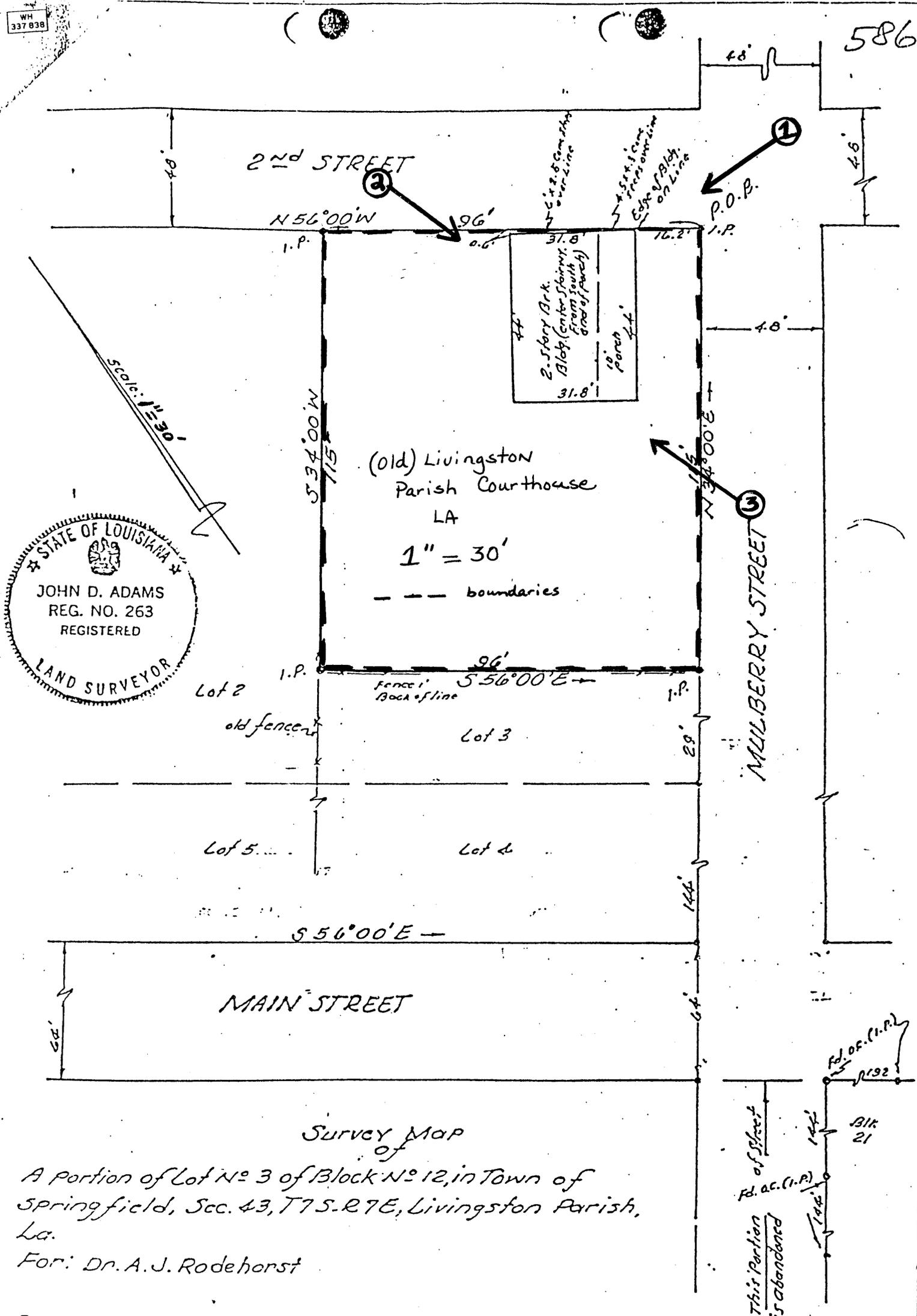
Section number 8 Page 1

Also in 1835, the New Orleans Gas Light and Banking Company chose Springfield as the site of its new bank, apparently the first in the parish. The company erected its new building within a few blocks from the courthouse in Square 12. However, the bank failed in 1843. At that time, the parish acquired the building, although whether it was donated or purchased outright is unclear. Thus, the former bank served as the Livingston Parish Courthouse from 1843 until 1872. As such, it was the center of the parish's civic and political activity throughout the years leading to Louisiana's secession from the Union in 1861, the difficult war years which followed, and for several years during the controversial Reconstruction era.

The courthouse's most significant dispute during its period of service was the location of the parish seat. During the 1850s pressure mounted to move government personnel and records to a site near a newly completed railroad line. In 1860 the Legislature actually authorized an election to determine the question, but the Civil War temporarily tabled the issue. It quickly resurfaced after the war. An 1871 election verified the people's desire for a change, and in 1872 the Legislature approved the removal of the courthouse to Port Vincent.

Additional Historical Note:

After losing the parish seat, Springfield community leaders used the former courthouse as a voting precinct. In 1886 the J. S. Settoon family purchased the building and shortly thereafter converted it into a grocery store. It operated until 1920. After that date the building was occasionally rented as a meeting place. Later it was used as a residence for a descendant of the Settoon family. After 1962 the building went through several changes of ownership. It is now the property of Mrs. Mary Kate Spring. The first floor is currently vacant, but the second floor apartment is occupied by a small family.



SURVEY MAP
of

A portion of Lot No 3 of Block No 12, in Town of Springfield, Sec. 43, T7S. R7E, Livingston Parish, La.

For: Dr. A.J. Rodehorst

Ref. Map: Map of Springfield by: James H. Whitton, Deputy Surveyor 7. 31-1850

Map by: C. M. Moore, C.E. Location of Main St & Mulberry St & Blk. 21, 3/15/66

Base Bearing: 556°00' E (Main St.)

John D. Adams
John D. Adams, Reg. Surveyor
Livingston, La.
Date: 11-17-75

Blk 21
This portion is abandoned
Ed. ac. (I.P.)
Ed. of. (I.P.)