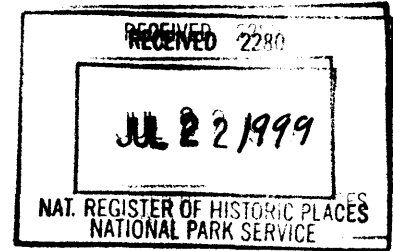


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "X" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Sorapuru House

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 971 Hwy 18 NA not for publication

city or town Edgard X vicinity

state Louisiana code LA county St. John the Baptist code 095 zip code 70049

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide X locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Berri Hobdy July 14, 1999
Signature of certifying official/Title Berri Hobdy, Date
LA SHPO, 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 for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title _____ Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. 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):

Edson W. Beal Signature of Keeper Date of Action 8/20/99

Sorapuru House
Name of property

St. John the Baptist Parish, LA
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

private
 public-local
 public-State
 public-Federal

building(s)
 district
 site
 structure
 object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

Louisiana's French Creole Architecture

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Cat. Domestic

Sub. Single Dwelling

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Cat. Vacant

Sub. Not in Use

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Other: French Creole

Federal _____

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick

walls Weatherboard

roof Asphalt

other _____

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "X" next to the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

NA

(Mark "X" next to all that apply.)

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

c. 1825

Significant Dates

c. 1825

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

NA

Cultural Affiliation

NA

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

NA

- 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 # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: _____

Sorapuru House
Name of property

St. John the Baptist Parish, LA
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Approximately 3 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

1 15 741240 3326400

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

___ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title National Register Staff

organization Division of Historic Preservation date May 1999

street & number P.O. Box 44247 telephone (225) 342-8160

city or town Baton Rouge state LA zip code 70804

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

- A **USGS** map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A **sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white** photographs of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Multiple owners—see continuation sheet

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**Section 7 Page 1

The Sorapuru House (c. 1825) is a one-story, frame French Creole cottage with interior Federal style detailing. It is located within the rural community of Lucy, which lies near Edgard on the west bank of the Mississippi River in St. John the Baptist Parish. Although it has experienced alterations over the years, the dwelling's National Register eligibility remains intact.

Characteristics of the Creole style found in the Sorapuru Home include:

- 1) a Class III umbrella roof with gabled ends (see attachment).
- 2) the fact that the building is raised several feet on brick piers.
- 3) a hall-less Creole floorplan which is three rooms wide and two rooms deep. The central rooms (*salle*, or parlor, in the front range and dining room in the rear) are slightly larger than the flanking *chambres* (bedrooms). The two ranges are flanked by a full length gallery on the facade and a *cabinet/loggia* range (the *loggia* is now enclosed, see below) at the rear.
- 4) *bousillage* walls.
- 5) exposed beaded ceiling beams on the gallery and in six rooms. Those in the *salle* (parlor) are arranged in an unusual box-like configuration.
- 6) four French wraparound mantels. These display Federal styling, with layered mantel shelves and paneled sides. (Federal styling is also evident on the moldings which comprise the interior door and window surrounds.)
- 7) six sets of interior ten-pane French doors with old, wavy glass; an additional set of these doors is stored in the home's attic.
- 8) four sets of paneled wooden double doors.

Additional features which attest to the home's early age are the large beams found beneath the house and the French doors' hardware, which includes ram's horn hinges and gravity latches. The home also has simple cornices, a picture rail in the *salle*, and the remnant of a chair rail in one room within the rear range. Interestingly, no other sign of a chair rail can be found in the residence.

CONTINUED

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEETSection 7 Page 2

The following items comprise the alterations experienced by the Sorapuru House since its c. 1825 construction:

- 1) the complete recovering of the exterior (including the facade) with clapboards. However, a small portion of the *loggia* wall reveals its original plaster sheathing.
- 2) the outward extension and enclosure of the *loggia* to serve as a connector to double kitchens built in the early twentieth century. (Double kitchens were desired because the residence housed two families at this time.)
- 3) the conversion of one *cabinet* into a modern bath and the subdivision of the other to create a bath and dressing/storage space.
- 4) the removal of four sets of original French doors from the facade, and their replacement with single leaf doors featuring multiple panes. As mentioned above, one of the removed sets of doors is stored in the attic.
- 5) the c. 1880 replacement of older Creole style gallery columns or colonnettes with solid rectangular posts featuring molded capitals.
- 6) the addition of simple, almost primitive looking moldings at the edge of some of the home's older Federal style moldings.
- 7) the replacement of the original windows. Those currently in the home contain six panes in the top sash and two panes in the lower sash.
- 8) the probable replacement of the roof structure. Although remnants of a braced frame remain, the majority of the roof exhibits more modern construction techniques. It should be noted that old materials containing mortises have been reused in several places.

Despite the changes outlined above, the Sorapuru House clearly retains its identity as an early French Creole cottage, and it is this identity upon which its architectural significance is based. As a rare example of this once common style, the Sorapuru Home is a strong candidate for National Register listing.

CONTINUED

Sorapuru House
Name of property

St. John the Baptist Parish, LA
County and State

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(8-86)

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 7 Page 3

Non-Contributing Element

One non-contributing element dating to the twentieth century stands on the property. It is a wooden garage and is being listed as non-contributing because it is not contemporary with the much-older home being nominated.

United States Department of the Interior
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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8 Page 1

The Sorapuru House is locally significant in the area of architecture as a rare surviving example of St. John the Baptist Parish's earliest and most important architectural heritage (i.e., the French Creole style). The dwelling's Federal style mantels are also rare and, thus, contribute to the home's importance.

The area which became St. John the Baptist Parish was fairly well settled by the end of the eighteenth century. Created in 1807, the parish grew to become a prosperous sugar planting area. Although St. John was part of the so-called German Coast, its dominant cultural influence was French Creole. Presumably there were once a few hundred Creole residences of various sizes in the parish. Today, out of a total of over 1,100 buildings identified in the parish survey as being fifty years of age or older, the Sorapuru House is one of only about ten which remain to portray the area's Creole environment and lifestyle. The home's floorplan, ten light French doors, exposed beaded ceiling beams, and mantels which wrap around the flue in the French manner all mark the building as an early and important example of the Creole style.

Creole houses such as the Sorapuru Home represent St. John's earliest architectural development and are the primary representatives of its well known Creole cultural heritage. It should be noted that in any given French parish in Louisiana, the Creole buildings are generally considered the most important. This is because the French Creole heritage is the major element distinguishing Louisiana from other southern states and in many ways forms its cultural identity.

The home is also important as a rare example of Federal styling. Within St. John the Baptist Parish, only the Sorapuru House and the much larger Whitney (National Register) have mantels in this style.

Historical Note

The Sorapurus, a family of Creoles of Color, have lived in St. John the Baptist Parish at least since the late 1700s. At that time the farming family was also part owner of a sugar mill. Later, Louis Sorapuru was an early postmaster of Lucy, while Adolphe Sorapuru served as the parish's Recorder of Mortgages in the 1850s. The family built the home c. 1825, and Sorapuru descendants lived there continuously until 1996. Although the building is currently vacant, the Sorapurus are interested in preserving the home.

CONTINUED

Sorapuru House
Name of property

St. John the Baptist Parish, LA
County and State

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

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9 1

NOTE: As an old and prosperous Creole of Color family, the Sorapurus may be important enough in St. John the Baptist Parish's history to justify nominating their home on historical grounds. However, there is currently not enough information available to evaluate and document such a case to the standards the Register requires. Hopefully, this can be accomplished at a future date.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Division of Historic Preservation. Historic Structures Survey of St. John the Baptist Parish.

Historical sketch of Sorapuru family; copy in National Register file.

Site visit by National Register staff.

Sorapuru House
Name of property

St. John the Baptist Parish, LA
County and State

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 10 Page 1

BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:

Please see attached sketch map.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION:

Boundaries were chosen to encompass the immediate historic setting of the Sorapuru Home. On the north, east and south sides, they follow the current property lines. On the west side, the boundaries are cut so as to exclude non-contributing elements and extensive rural acreage.

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 11 Page 1

**OWNERSHIP OF SORAPURU HOME,
St. John the Baptist Parish, LA**

Clarence Sorapuru, Jr.
415 W. 2nd Street
LaPlace, Louisiana 70068
(504) 652-2687

Bessie J. Douglas
2653 Iberville Street
New Orleans, Louisiana 70119
(504) 288-0324

Jude T. Sorapuru, Sr.
7330 Perth Street
New Orleans, Louisiana 70126
(504) 241-6095

Carlyn S. Duplantier
2419 Sycamore Street
Los Angeles, California 90016
(323) 934-2142

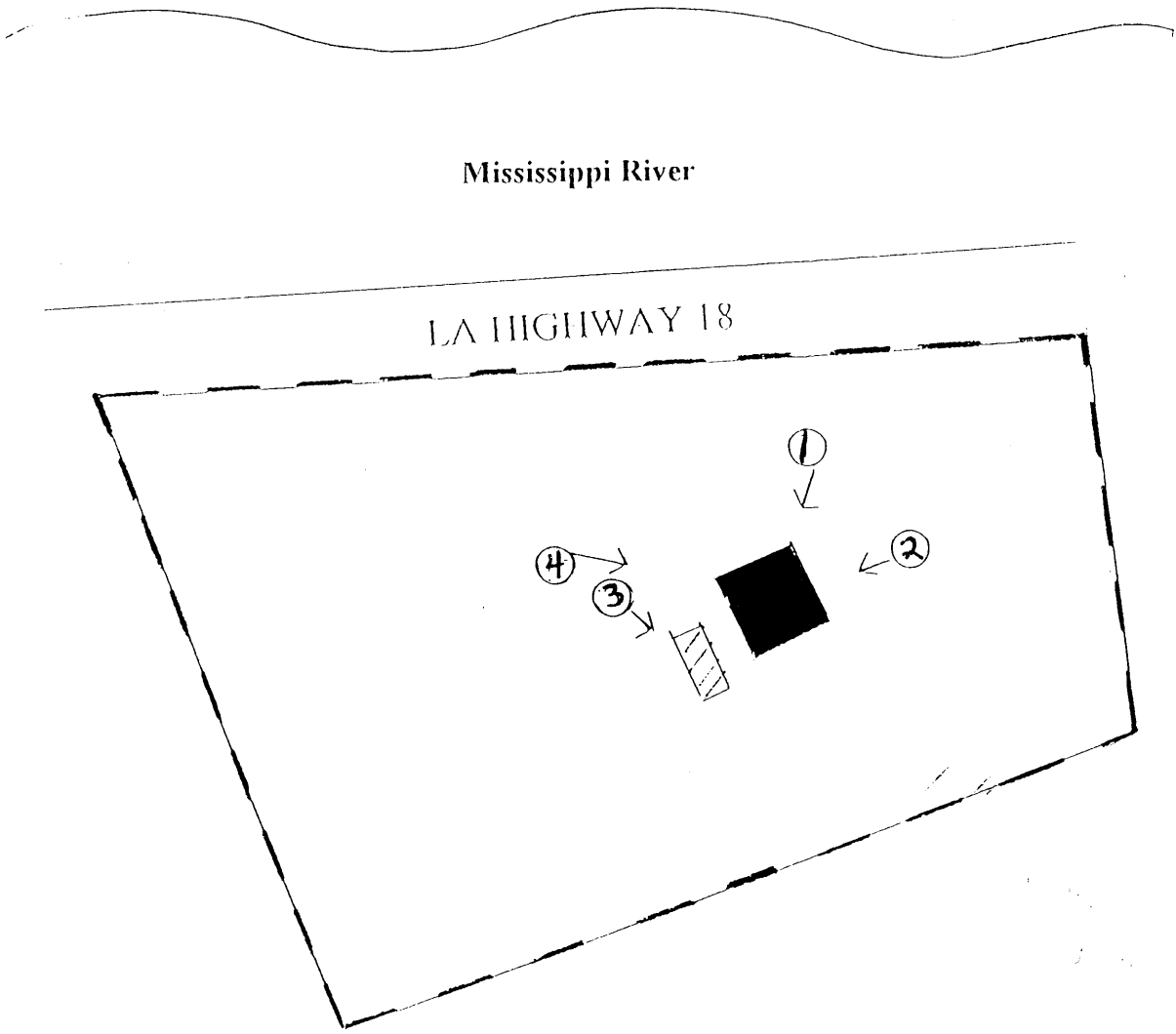
Carol S. Daliet
805 Industrial Blvd., #7
Inglewood, California 90302
(310) 671-9732

Rodney P. Sorapuru, Sr.
60361 Dixie Ranch Road
Slidell, Louisiana 70460
(504) 643-7728

Anthony J. Sorapuru, Sr.
6531 Archgate Drive
Spring, Texas 77373
(281) 821-3792

Conrad B. Sorapuru, Sr.
19 Country Club Drive
LaPlace, Louisiana 70068
(504) 652-1929

SORAPURU HOUSE
Lucy, St. John the Baptist Parish, LA



Contributing
Element



Non-Contributing
Element



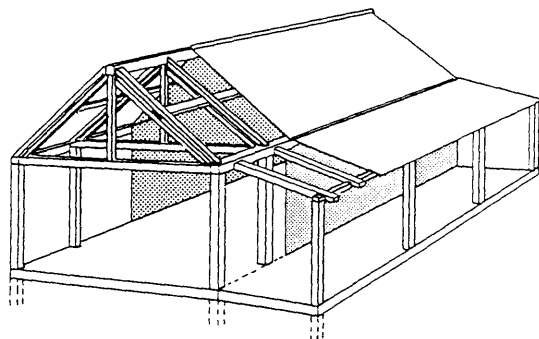
Scale

1" = 100'

Boundary

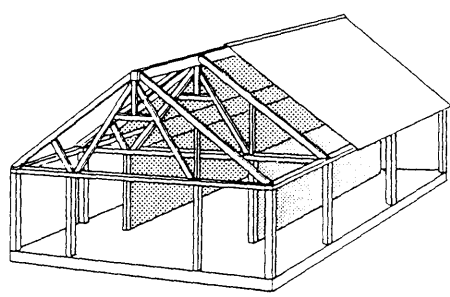


SOME CLASSES OF CREOLE VERNACULAR HOUSES



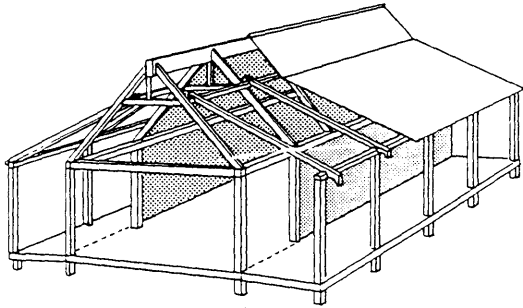
CLASS I

Single-pitch roof. Truss system includes the use of a king post and a double rafter system. Rafters set on wall plate. Inner rafters (truss blades) set on tie beam. Gallery optional. If present, gallery rafters tied into wall plate or front wall, and supported by an outer gallery plate, which is itself supported by light weight colonnettes.



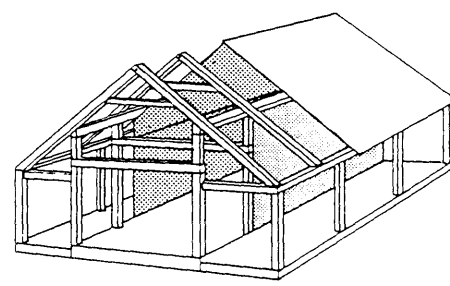
CLASS IIIa

Full (single-pitch) umbrella roof. Truss blades (principal rafters) mounted on wall plates. Long outer rafters mounted on outer gallery wall plates and let into or notched over the roof ridge. These rafters supported in their middles by posts (right side) or braces (left side), or by purlins supported by these.



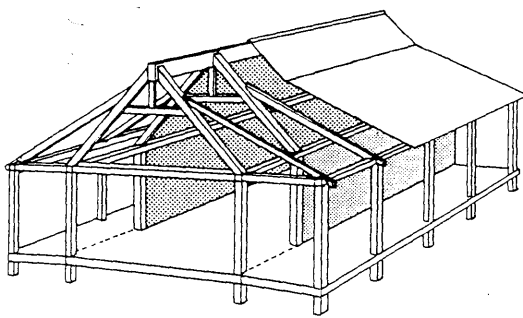
CLASS IIa

Mississippi Valley French Colonial broken-pitch roof (early form). Gallery always present. Gallery rafters notched over principal purlin and supported on outer gallery plate.



CLASS IIIb

Full (single-pitch) umbrella roof (later form). Truss blades now absent. Outer rafters supported in their middles by posts or by post-supported purlins. Roof ridge generally not present



CLASS IIb

Mississippi Valley French Colonial broken-pitch roof (later form). Principal rafters (single or doubled) set on wall plate. Gallery rafters let into backs of principal rafters and supported on outer gallery plates.