

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

Landry Plantation House, Vermilion Parish, LA

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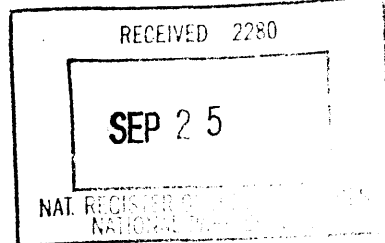
National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1296

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: Landry Plantation House

Other Name/Site Number: Creole



2. LOCATION

Street & Number 1320 Gallett Road

Not for publication: NA

City/Town Youngsville

Vicinity: X

State: Louisiana Code: LA County: Vermilion Code: 113 ~~112~~ Zip Code: 70592

3. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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.

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

Nationally: Statewide: Locally: X

Signature of Certifying Official/Title Jonathan Fricker, Deputy SHPO, Dept. of Culture, Recreation and Tourism

September 24, 2002 Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of Commenting or Other Official/Title

Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

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4. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is:

- Entered in the National Register
Determined eligible for the National Register
Determined not eligible for the National Register
Removed from the National Register

Other (explain):

Signature of Keeper: Daniel J. Vivian

Date of Action: 11/8/02

5. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property
Private: X
Public-Local:
Public-State:
Public-Federal:

Category of Property
Building(s): X
District:
Site:
Structure:
Object:

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing
1

Non contributing
buildings
sites
structures
objects
0 Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: 0

Name of Related Multiple Property Listing: Louisiana's French Creole Architecture

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6. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic: domestic Sub: single dwelling
Current: vacant Sub: vacant

7. DESCRIPTION

Architectural Classification: other: French Creole
Materials:

Foundation: brick
Walls: weatherboard; plaster
Roof: tin
Other:

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Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.

The Landry Plantation House is a French Creole house moved in 1981 to its present location on the Vermilion River just inside Vermilion Parish. Its original location was on Bayou Lafourche in Assumption Parish, about 125 miles away. The house has a bousillage upper story, with a reconstructed lower brick story. Based upon the few surviving stylistic clues, the house is being dated to c.1830. Despite some losses, it readily retains enough of its character-defining French Creole features to merit Register listing. And, fortunately, it was moved to an appropriate parish (i.e., a south Louisiana parish where French Creole houses would have been built). The present remote, rural setting is most compatible with the original. The principal difference is the orientation to a waterway. The house originally faced Bayou Lafourche. Today it is sited with the Vermilion River at some distance to the rear (not visible from the house).

Regrettably, there is limited first-hand information on the 1981 move. Timothy Lank, who purchased the house and moved it, has lived abroad for several years. While there were no in-progress photos of the move available, the LA SHPO did have access to photos taken fairly soon afterwards, as well as two views of the house in its original location (one from before the move and one from c.1900). The upper story was cut in two and the roof was dismantled. Bricks from the lower story were moved to the new site and re-used to rebuild the brick lower story. It appears (from looking at photos of the house in its original location) that the brick story is the correct height (about 7 feet). The new setting is indeed quite remote, with the house being accessed via a roughly half mile dirt road.

The Landry House is of the largest type built in French Louisiana – i.e., a two story, hipped roof house where the upper story (the main living area) is set on a high brick basement. The latter typically was utilitarian in character. The upper story is of bousillage construction with steeply angled braces in the French manner. The sides and rear are sheathed in weatherboard. The façade was originally completely covered in plaster (timbers now exposed - see below). As was typical of finer French Creole houses, the façade featured a chair rail (now missing). Two diminutive dormers pierce the front of the spreading umbrella roof. The interior chimney (shown in the pre-move photo) is gone as are the mantels. The thin, slightly tapered gallery posts (with no capitals or other detailing) appear in the c.1900 photo and give every indication of being original. The appearance of the now missing balustrade is documented in this photo as well. Also, there are holes in the gallery posts where the balustrade was attached.

The façade features four doorways with transoms above. As is typical for French Creole houses, the openings are placed without regard to the gallery posts (i.e., no attempt at regularity or symmetry). The circa 1900 photo shows the façade openings filled with French doors and handsome paneled shutters. The gallery ceiling is typical in that it has exposed beaded ceiling beams but atypical at its edges, where short cross and diagonal members are found. (A similar but not identical treatment is found on the interior.)

The upper story (the main living area) has a typical French Creole floorplan with no hall. There are three unequal size rooms across the front, which is then repeated across the rear. The middle rooms are almost square (roughly 19 by 20 feet). The rooms to the north are roughly fourteen feet wide and 20 feet deep, while those to the south are quite narrow and deep (only about 10 ½ feet wide by 20 feet deep). Millwork surviving on the interior includes sections of chair rail in some rooms and exposed beaded board ceilings. In one room the ceiling features short cross members at the perimeter.

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The long vacant and deteriorating Landry house was moved with the intention of a full restoration. However, this did not happen, and the house remains unfinished. The following will summarize the major losses and/or modifications:

- 1) As noted previously, the lower brick story was disassembled and rebuilt to what looks like the original height (roughly seven feet). While most of the bricks appear to have been reused, it also looks as if some are new.
- 2) It is impossible to know for certain that the lower story openings and floorplan were faithfully reproduced. The pre-move photo shows only one side of the lower story clearly, and here the openings do indeed match.
- 3) Photos taken fairly soon after the house was re-assembled on its new site show what appear to be the original windows on the upper story (12 over 8 and 9 over 6). Now these openings are filled with inappropriate windows with four horizontal panes. There are four windows on the upper story side elevation in the pre-move photo. Today there are only three.
- 4) The roof structure was completely rebuilt, using the original timbers and square nails. The old tin roof was flipped over.
- 5) The façade shutters, French doors, chair rail and balustrade are missing.
- 6) There are no mantelpieces – simply a big gap where the chimney once was.
- 7) Some of the bousillage interior walls are missing – perhaps as much as 10%, most notably a large hole between the middle and side room of the front range.
- 8) Missing sections of chair rail (interior) are marked by a line in the plaster. No interior doors survive.
- 9) The timbers bracing the bousillage were roughed up with an ax, indicating that the bousillage walls were originally finished with plaster (interior and façade). While some plaster remains, the timbers are today visible.
- 10) The weatherboards appear to be largely replaced.

Assessment of Integrity:

Without question the Landry House has suffered notable losses and replacement of original fabric, whether from years of neglect on its original site or as a result of the move and stalled restoration project. That said, the house still retains enough of its original fabric and Creole character to stand as a legitimate historic house. Character-defining features that survive in their original form (i.e., not reconstructed) are the hall-less floor plan, most of the bousillage walls with their steep angle braces, the façade's French door openings that make no reference to the gallery posts in terms of placement, and ceilings on the interior and gallery with exposed beaded beams.

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The move does not present an insurmountable integrity problem because the house remains in a South Louisiana parish settled by the French, and the new setting is rural and hence compatible with the original.

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Applicable National
Register Criteria:

A__ B__ C X D__

Criteria Considerations
(Exceptions):

A__ B X C__ D__ E__ F__ G__

Areas of Significance: architecture

Period(s) of Significance: c.1830

Significant Dates: c.1830

Significant Person(s): NA

Cultural Affiliation: NA

Architect/Builder: unknown

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State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.

Landry Plantation House is eligible for the National Register under Criterion C at the local level because it contributes to southern Louisiana's distinctive French Creole architectural identity.

French Creole (or French Colonial style) architecture is one of the nation's three major colonial architectural traditions. It takes its place alongside British Colonial, as exemplified by the saltbox houses of New England and a later generation of "Georgian" houses, and Spanish Colonial, as seen in the missions of California and the Southwest. The French Creole building tradition appeared in "New France" – i.e., in the United States, the Mississippi Valley. Because the region was sparsely settled at the time, little French Creole architecture was built outside Louisiana. Today Louisiana is home to the overwhelming majority of surviving examples. (Other French settlement sites, such as Mobile, Alabama and Ste. Genevieve, Missouri, have only a scattering of examples.)

Within Louisiana the French building tradition is found in the southern part of the state (with the notable exception of Natchitoches Parish, a French enclave in an otherwise Anglo-Saxon North Louisiana). Very few extant examples actually date to the colonial period. The tradition continued to dominate local architecture well into the nineteenth century. Hence one has full-blown totally French houses being built as late as the 1830s. By that decade, generally speaking, Anglo-American architectural traditions began to make inroads, resulting in a generation of so-called "half-breed" houses – for example, an otherwise French Creole house that has acquired a central hall.

The most important features of the typical rural French Creole house are as follows: 1) generous galleries, either across the front or on three and even four sides; 2) a broad spreading roofline under a so-called umbrella roof; 3) gallery roofs supported by light wooden colonnettes, 4) placement of the principal living space well above grade; 5) a form of construction utilizing a heavy timber frame combined with an infill made of brick (*brique entre poteaux*) or a mixture of mud, moss and animal hair called *bousillage*, 6) multiple French doors, 7) a floorplan that lacks halls, and 8) interior chimneys with mantels that wrap around the flue. The previously mentioned timber frame incorporates French joinery – i.e., angle braces that are extremely steep, running all the way from sill to plate, in contrast to English joinery where the brace is almost at a forty-five degree angle. The French Creole tradition embraces everything from one room cottages to large residences, finding its highest expression in the major, two-story Creole plantation house, with the principal story being raised a full story on a brick above-ground basement.

It could be argued that French Creole is Louisiana's most important building tradition – that which sets the Pelican State apart from others. And because the southern part of the state was fairly well populated by the early 1800s, French Creole houses once would have existed by the thousands. While the state still retains an impressive collection, far more have been lost than have survived. By the most recent educated guesses, perhaps 200-300 examples survive (in varying states of integrity) outside New Orleans. Collectively, from an architectural standpoint, these buildings "say" South Louisiana, and in the opinion of the LA SHPO, any example that retains sufficient integrity is important because it contributes to this distinctive architectural identity. (Probably less than 100 French Creole houses survive in rural Louisiana with sufficient integrity to merit Register listing.) Within South Louisiana, the Landry House, losses and the move notwithstanding, would be regarded as a fairly major example – based solely on the size of the fairly intact upper story. And, very importantly, the house is resolutely French, with no American influences.

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Historical Note:

The ownership history of the candidate is yet to be documented. According to one undocumented secondary source, the original owner was Joseph Pierre Landry. The house was known as Creole prior to its move in the early 1980s. Whether this is a historic name or a contemporary one is unknown. The house is presently owned by Dr. Frank L. Bacque of nearby Lafayette, who plans to complete the restoration begun in the early 1980s.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Historic structures surveys of southern Louisiana parishes, on file in the Louisiana State Historic Preservation Office and LA SHPO staff knowledge of the region.

Photos of house, circa 1900 and circa 1970, copies in National Register file, LA SHPO.

Previous documentation on file (NPS): NA

- Preliminary Determination of Individual Listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- Previously Listed in the National Register. (partially)
- 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 (Specify Repository):

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10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreage of Property: less than an acre

UTM References: **Zone Easting Northing**
 15 589500 3327960

Verbal Boundary Description: Boundaries parallel building elevations, each at a distance of 50 feet.

Boundary Justification: Boundaries were chosen to discretely encompass the nominated resource. This is a moved building with no historic boundaries to recognize.

11. FORM PREPARED BY

Name/Title: National Register staff

Address: Division of Historic Preservation, P. O. Box 44247, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70804

Telephone: (225) 342-8160

Date: June 2002

PROPERTY OWNERS

Dr. Frank R. Bacque
602 St. Landry St.
Lafayette, LA 70506-4698