

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

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

OMB No. 1024-0018

Katie Plantation House, St. Martin Parish, LA

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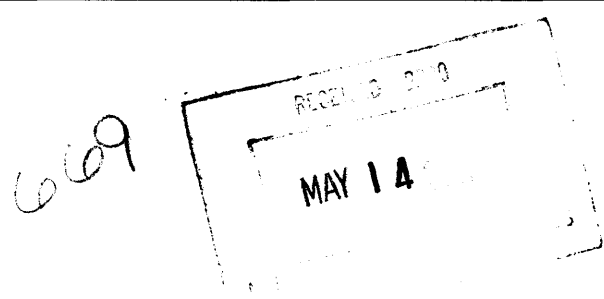
United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: Katie Plantation House

Other Name/Site Number:



2. LOCATION

Street & Number 1015 John D. Hebert Dr.

Not for publication: NA

City/Town Breaux Bridge

Vicinity: X

State: Louisiana Code: LA County: St. Martin

Code: 099

Zip Code: 70517

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

Date MAY 9, 2001

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.

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: Aaron D. Pope

Date of Action: 6/29/01

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
1

Non contributing
0 buildings
0 sites
0 structures
0 objects
0 Total

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

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: Domestic Sub: Single dwelling
 Recreation and Culture Sub: Museum

7. DESCRIPTION

Architectural Classification: other: French Creole

Materials:

Foundation: brick
Walls: weatherboard
Roof: wood shake
Other:

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Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.

Originally located in Vermilion Parish, Katie Plantation House was moved in 2000 to its present location on Lake Martin (also known as Lake la Pointe) in nearby St. Martin Parish to save it from destruction. Built c.1840, the French Creole house retains most of its original character-defining features, although there has been some replacement due to the deteriorated condition of the house in its original location.

The Move:

The house was located near Perry in Vermilion Parish on the former Katie Plantation. Vacant for decades, the house was deteriorated and had lost its front porch. The two brothers who owned the property no longer had a use for the house and were contemplating demolition. The present owner was able to buy the house providing it be re-located. The house was moved some forty miles to its present site on Lake Martin. The core was moved in one piece, but the roof had to be removed and reassembled (which was done very carefully, numbering each element). The house is at some distance from the lake in a discrete, secluded setting enveloped by numerous mature trees and other vegetation. While there are other houses strung along the road ringing the lake, the overall setting remains rural and has a feeling of remoteness, despite the small town of Breaux Bridge being nearby. (While the house has a Breaux Bridge address, it is not in Breaux Bridge proper.)

The House and Restoration:

The gable end house features pegged, *colombage* construction with steep angle braces (in the French manner). The infill material on the perimeter walls is *bousillage* (a mixture of mud, Spanish moss and animal hair) and on the interior walls, *brique entre poteaux* (bricks between posts). As noted previously, the porch floor and columns were gone in the original location. The present simple posts were installed as part of the restoration. Their placement was based upon notches in the plate above. The otherwise strongly French Creole house shows some Anglo-American influence in the symmetrical placement of the façade openings. There is a French door and window for each of the two front rooms. (The symmetry is only on the exterior. The rooms themselves are of unequal size.) The French doors are new, but based upon what would be appropriate for a house of this age. (They feature eight panes of glass per leaf. Above is the original four pane transom.) Windows, most of which are in-kind replacements, are six over six. One set of window shutters survived; the remainder are replications. In typical French Creole fashion, the porch ceiling features exposed beams.

The steps leading from the front gallery to the attic date from the restoration. There was physical evidence to show that there was a stair. The present configuration is based upon the recollections of one of the former owners, who remembers the stair and recalled that it had a turn. (An attic stair on the front gallery is far more typical of houses built by Acadians, who began to arrive in the region in large numbers in the 1760s. They were from Nova Scotia, or Acadia.)

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The house has a typical French Creole floorplan in that there is no hall. There are two front rooms of unequal size (sharing one chimney) and three rooms of unequal size across the back. There is no evidence that the middle rear room was ever an open loggia, as is sometimes seen in French Creole houses. The middle rear room did not, and does not, have direct access to the adjacent rear rooms. It can be entered only from one of the front rooms. Originally, plaster covered the *bousillage* and *briquette entre poteaux*, but most of it was gone when the present owner rescued the house, as was most of the *bousillage* in the side walls and a small percentage of the *briquette entre poteaux*. Work has already begun on replacing the *bousillage*, and eventually the walls will be re-plastered. The house has exposed ceiling beams throughout, its original plank doors, and two mantels that wrap around the chimney flue in the French manner. The identical mantels feature a layered shelf, splayed pilasters and a diamond-point French lozenge design in the entablature. (The chimneys, of course, were rebuilt as part of the move. The mantels at present are not affixed to the chimney breasts because the plasterwork still needs to be done.) The antique ambiance of the house is enhanced by the original wooden floors left in a natural state.

In addition to the replacement noted above, the present owner added a kitchen (constructed of salvaged materials) to the rear of the house. The two are connected via a fairly narrow passageway, with the result that the composition reads largely as two buildings.

Assessment of Integrity:

The move is not a serious integrity issue because the new setting is compatible to the old – i.e., rural. And, very importantly, the house's original and new parish share the same cultural history. Both were populated by people of French descent, and French Creole houses were the norm in both. Finally, the house is important enough to be nominated within a regional context (see Part 8); hence, the move from one parish to another is not an issue.

While there has been replacement of original fabric, this also is not a serious problem in terms of Register eligibility. To recap, because of the deteriorated condition of the house, the following are replacements rather than the original: most of the windows, all but one set of shutters, the porch posts, on-going work on missing *bousillage*, and the French doors. Fortunately, this work has been done very sensitively. And very importantly, almost all of those features which define the house's French Creole character are original and unaltered: specifically, the floor plan, French joinery in the form of steep angle braces, about half of the *bousillage* and almost all of the *briquette entre poteaux*, exposed ceiling beams on the porch and throughout the interior, and the two distinctive wraparound mantels with their diamond-point lozenge.

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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.1840

Significant Dates: c.1840

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.

Katie Plantation House is of local architectural significance as an important example of French Creole architecture in a several parish area known today as Acadiana. The parishes in question include St. Landry, Lafayette, Iberia, Vermilion, where the house was originally located, and St. Martin, where it is located today. While French Creole houses historically were the norm in the region, they are now increasingly rare – especially ones that are as strongly French as Katie.

Acadiana was settled in the eighteenth century by the French – either directly from France or via the Acadian expulsion from Nova Scotia in the 1760s. Until the onslaught of Anglo-American architectural traditions beginning in roughly the 1830s, the region would have been dominated by houses like Katie. American influences soon made inroads, producing a generation of “half breed” houses. And although the French Creole building tradition hung on tenaciously, it was eventually supplanted by American forms and styles.

Today, despite the region’s great age, the vast majority of historic buildings are from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. French Creole houses in the five-parish region (whether in the small to medium range or the large two story form, or whether influenced by Anglo architecture or not) number in the 50-60 range. This is a low survival rate considering that there would have been hundreds in the nineteenth century.

Katie is especially important within this context because it is strongly French Creole, displaying numerous character-defining features of the tradition – the hall-less floorplan, *colombage* construction, French wraparound mantels, and exposed ceiling beams on the porch and throughout the interior. In short, it would be difficult to be any more French Creole. And, very importantly, Katie’s “Creoleness” has not been seriously diluted by Anglo-American architecture. Its *colombage* construction, once the standard building practice in Acadiana, is now a rare survivor. Finally, there are less than a dozen houses in the region with French wraparound mantels, and, with their diamond-point lozenge design, those at Katie are particularly fine.

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9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Survey data on Iberia, St. Martin, St. Landry, Vermillion, and Lafayette parishes, Louisiana Division of Historic Preservation, combined with extensive staff knowledge of the region.

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

Acreeage of Property: less than an acre

UTM References: **Zone Easting Northing**
 15 605440 3343200

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

Boundary Justification: There is no historic setting to recognize for this moved building. Hence boundaries were chosen to discretely encompass the building and its immediate setting.

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: January 2001

PROPERTY OWNERS

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