

Form 10-300  
(July 1969)

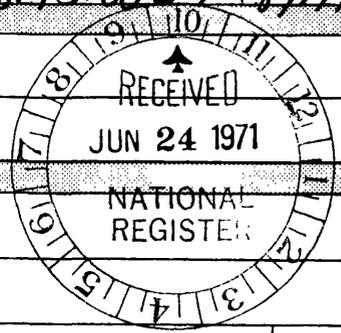
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

STATE:	South Carolina
COUNTY:	Beaufort
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

71.8.45.0057 8/19/71



**1. NAME**

COMMON: (John Mark) Verdier House

AND/OR HISTORIC: Lafayette Building

**2. LOCATION**

STREET AND NUMBER: 801 Bay Street

CITY OR TOWN: Beaufort 29902

STATE: South Carolina

CODE: 45

COUNTY: Beaufort

CODE: 013

**3. CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Educational <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Comments <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)

Headquarters for Historic Beaufort Foundation, which rents office space to lawyer

**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

OWNER'S NAME: Historic Beaufort Foundation

STREET AND NUMBER: 801 Bay Street

CITY OR TOWN: Beaufort, 29902

STATE: South Carolina

CODE: 45

**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: Beaufort County Court House (Deed Book 155, p.253)

STREET AND NUMBER: Bay Street

CITY OR TOWN: Beaufort 29902

STATE: South Carolina

CODE: 45

**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE OF SURVEY: (1) Historic American Buildings Survey

DATE OF SURVEY: 1965

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: The Library of Congress

STREET AND NUMBER: Washington, D.C.

CITY OR TOWN: Washington, D.C.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: COUNTY: ENTRY NUMBER: DATE: FOR NPS USE ONLY

(2) Beaufort Historic Area Survey 1969...Box 11, Beaufort, S.C.

71.8.45.0057 8/19/71

**7. DESCRIPTION**

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One) generally			(Check One)		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The house is frame with clapboarding. It has two stories on an elevated stuccoed tabby basement. The roof is hipped. On the front is a double-tiered portico. *city*

The interior, which follows a modified Adam style, has the traditional center hall with drawing room on the right, dining room on left and two additional rooms behind. In the hall, an archway frames the staircase. On the landing is a handsome Palladian window. From the landing a divided stairway leads to the second floor where there is a large ballroom with a retiring room.

Exceptionally fine, handcarved mantels featuring allegorical figures, ribbons, fruit, flowers and sheaves of wheat. The moldings and cornices are beautifully decorated.

The house is in good condition, and partially restored.

Historic Beaufort Foundation, for which house is headquarters, plans to continue restoration already begun: restoration of elaborate plaster molding; scraping and painting of walls, ceilings and mantels in 5 rooms; exterior painting, replacing of porch bannisters and shutters will follow comprehensive restoration plan by Charleston architect Albert Simons. Also planned is restoring of historic garden area, according to Simons plan.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



**SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |                                       |  |                                       |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century  | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 19th Century            |                                       |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) c. 1790

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |   |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal              | <input type="checkbox"/> Education              | <input type="checkbox"/> Political           | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric             | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering            | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic                | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry               | <input type="checkbox"/> Science             | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture             | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention              | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture           | _____                                    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature             | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater             | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce                | <input type="checkbox"/> Military               | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation      | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications          | <input type="checkbox"/> Music                  |  | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation            |   |  | _____                                    |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Beaufort landmark since the 1790s, when built by John Mark Verdier. Son of a French Huguenot emigrant, Verdier was a wealthy planter and merchant whose house typified Beaufort's gracious architectural style and was a focal point of the town, providing entertainment for Lafayette during his Southern visit and, in the 1860s, headquarters for Union troops. (Historic Beaufort Foundation has a picture of the house with Union troops in front.)

In the ballroom, Beaufort's first telephone was installed.

The heirs of the builder owned the house until 1940 when it was bought by a committee for the Preservation of the Lafayette Building through public subscriptions. In 1967, this committee founded the Historic Beaufort Foundation, which now owns the house as headquarters, and <sup>makes it</sup> the focal point of the Historic Beaufort District which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Hilton, Mary. Old Homes and Churches of Beaufort. Columbia, S.C.: The State Printing Co., 1970.  
 Historic Beaufort Foundation. A Guide to Historic Beaufort. Columbia, S.C.: The State Printing Co., 1970.  
 Jones, Katherine. Port Royal Under Six Flags. Indianapolis, N.Y.: Bobbs-Merrill, 1950.

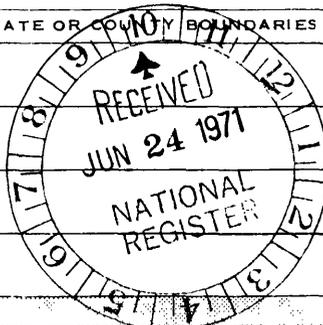
**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY				OR	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES							
CORNER	LATITUDE				LONGITUDE			LATITUDE			LONGITUDE	
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	°	'	"	°	'	"	32°	25'	51"	80°	40'	15"
NE	°	'	"	°	'	"						
SE	°	'	"	°	'	"						
SW	°	'	"	°	'	"						

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY:  $\frac{1}{4}$  acre

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE



**11 FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE:  
**Mrs. James W. Fant, Historic Resources Division**

ORGANIZATION: **S.C. Department of Archives and History**      DATE: **6/3/71**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**1430 Senate Street**

CITY OR TOWN: **Columbia**      STATE: **South Carolina**      CODE: **45**

**12 STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION**

**NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National  State  Local

Name Charles S. Lopez

Title Director, Department of Archives History

Date June 14, 1971

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Ernest A. Connelly  
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date AUG 19 1971

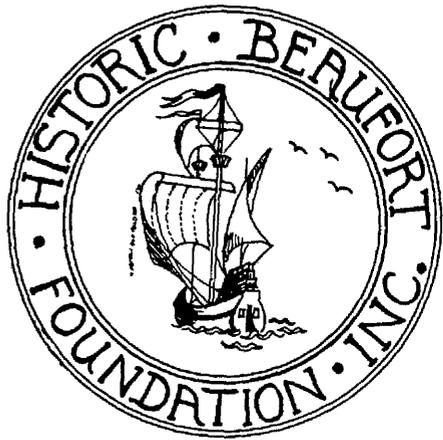
ATTEST:  
William M. H. [Signature]  
 Keeper of the National Register

Date AUG 6 1971

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

# THE JOHN MARK VERDIER HOUSE

BEAUFORT,  
SOUTH CAROLINA



## THE LAFAYETTE BUILDING

It was in the late 1790's that John Mark Verdier, one of Beaufort's leading merchants, built his fine Adam-style residence on "the Bay", where, within a stone's throw, he could see his own ships moored to his own wharf on Beaufort River—ships which took the new long staple Sea Island cotton to England and brought back the furniture which graced so many early Beaufort homes.

John Verdier planned his house according to the traditional pattern with a very fine parlor to the right of the entrance and on the second floor a spacious ballroom and its retiring room extending across the full face of the building. A fine stair hall, with the usual paladian window and a graceful dividing stairway rose to this area and the whole was handsomely decorated in the restrained but elegant style of the late Adam period.

It was in this house that Beaufort entertained the Marquis de LaFayette upon his visit while on the grand tour of the South in 1825. Delayed by lavish but cordial hospitality on Edisto Island, LaFayette to the dismay of all Beaufortonians arrived far after dark and the royal welcome was perforce, crowded into the few brief hours before his mid-night departure for Savannah. However the enthusiasm, decorations and entertainment of this evening affair was equal to any on the Marquis' tour. His evident appreciation was so great that the towns people from that time began calling the John Mark Verdier house the LaFayette Building.

This large white clapboard building is finely proportioned, its four corners graced by a delicate rope motif which is repeated in some of its fine interior decorations. The eaves are marked with restrained but handsome dentils. A columned portico gives access to a handsomely carved front doorway.

The uses to which this house has been put are many and varied.

It was doubtless the residence of the Verdier family until the Union forces took it for their headquarters

during the Civil War. In the ballroom, some years later, Beaufort's first telephone was installed. The basement at one time housed our first ice-house, from which wagons carried blocks of ice to local houses, ice from New England ponds shipped here by schooner and insulated by sawdust. This basement portion of the building went from store to specialty shop many times, and was within recent years converted into a fine eating place known as the LaFayette Restaurant.

The upper floors for more than a hundred years have been rented as offices, to lawyers, brokers, insurance people, realtors and various business enterprises. For many years Jacob Blocker, truly a colored gentleman, operated in what is now the Drawing Room a "tonsorial parlor" where with a straight razor, clipping scissors courtly manners and great professional skill he cared for the heads and faces of Beaufort's gentry.

In the adjoining building, which is a supporting part of the property, was the first Beaufort automobile showroom and service department.

In 1942 the Verdier Building had become a rooming house, and had fallen into disrepair, almost into squalor, and was threatened with condemnation. Thanks largely to the generosity of the Verdier heirs who still owned the major interest in the property and to that of Mr. William Levin who had acquired an interest in it, the house was bought by public subscription to be preserved as a memorial to the gallant sons of Beaufort who had given their lives for their country. Legal title was placed in The Beaufort Museum and the property administered by a committee of citizens.

This committee was instrumental in 1967 in founding The Historic Beaufort Foundation and a year later successfully advocated the transfer of the LaFayette Building to this organization. The Foundation has continued the program of restoration many of the results of which are just now becoming visible. We look toward the eventual total restoration and furnishing of this beautiful building as a House Museum, to be a reminder to our people of their cultural heritage and an attraction to our visitors.

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
PROPERTY MAP FORM**

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with map)

STATE South Carolina	
COUNTY Beaufort	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER 11.8.45.0057	DATE 8/19/71

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**1. NAME**

COMMON: John Mark Verdier House  
AND/OR HISTORIC: Lafayette Building

**2. LOCATION**

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801 Bay Street  
CITY OR TOWN:  
Beaufort 29902

STATE: South Carolina	CODE 45	COUNTY: Beaufort	CODE 013
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**3. MAP REFERENCE**

SOURCE: ---  
SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL

SCALE: ---

DATE: ---

**4. REQUIREMENTS**

- TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS
1. Property boundaries where required.
  2. North arrow.
  3. Latitude and longitude reference.

