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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	MAR 31 1976
DATE ENTERED	APR 23 1976

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

**

HISTORIC Dr. Jules Charles Des Fosse Home

AND/OR COMMON
The Des Fosse Home

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
L' Eglise Street

CITY, TOWN
Mansura

STATE
Louisiana

--- NOT FOR PUBLICATION
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
8th - Gillis Long
COUNTY
Avoyelles
CODE
009

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
			<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:
			<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
			<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME
Town of Mansura

STREET & NUMBER
Town Hall

CITY, TOWN
Mansura

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.
Avoyelles Parish Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER
Main Street

CITY, TOWN
Marksville

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE
None known

DATE
--- FEDERAL --- STATE --- COUNTY --- LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN
STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Des Fosse Home was built c. 1852-1854. It has remained basically the same except that there no longer exists the detached kitchen which was once part of the house. The back porch, always open, was closed in approximately five years ago. Minimal restoration work was done, which consisted mainly of replacing missing weatherboarding and shingles, and reflooring the front porch.

The construction of the house is typical of an Avoyelles Parish Creole home of the earlier French Colonial period in Louisiana. The house is set on pillars of hewn cypress blocks and home-made bricks. Heavy cypress timbers averaging eight by twelve inches set on these pillars form the sills for the base of the home. Large upright timbers of cypress and pine form the frame work of the one and a half story house. The spaces between these timbers are filled with a mixture of dried mud and moss called "bousillage". This type of wall construction is commonly referred to as "bousillage entre poteaux", literally dried mud between posts. The exterior walls of the home are covered with beaded cypress boarding. The house is rectangular in shape, measuring externally thirty-one feet by fifty-one feet. The front gallery measures ten by fifty-one feet and is supported by eight hand worked octagon-shaped columns. Victorian era balusters, added at a later date, adorn the space between the columns. The home has the overall appearance of a typical vernacular cottage type.

The floor plan of the house consists of three large rooms to the front and an enclosed porch separating two smaller rooms at the rear. As stated, a separate kitchen once existed at the rear of the house, but it was removed at an unknown date. A single large chimney with double fireplaces furnished heat for two rooms which were used as the parlor and main bedroom. The kitchen was moved to a smaller room at the right rear of the house as time went on. Large French shuttered doors at the front and rear of the parlor provide good air circulation in the main portion of the home. The front doors are flanked by smaller sets of identical doors providing ventilation to the side bedrooms. Interior walls are of bare pine and cypress boards. All ceilings have exposed beaded beams. The gable roof is covered with cedar shingles, most of which are original. Rafters and ceiling joists are hand cut and worked. Two additional bedrooms, divided by a large unfinished area, exist in the upstairs section. A winding service stairway off of the back porch provides a passage to the upstairs rooms. The home was designed and built by local artisans.

The Des Fosse Home is presently surrounded by six acres of land. La Commission des Avoyelles, a parish-wide historical and cultural group, is restoring and furnishing the home.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW

<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

c. 1852-54

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Des Fosse' Home is architecturally significant in Avoyelles Parish. It is typical in construction of homes of this era in rural Louisiana. It was constructed of native materials -- cypress, pine, cedar, clay for bricks, mud and moss for walls and insulation. It is one of the oldest existing structures in Avoyelles Parish and is typical of most early Avoyelles homes.

The Des Fosse' Home is located on L'Eglise Street in Mansura, one of the oldest towns in Avoyelles Parish. Mansura was settled by soldiers who had served in Napoleon Bonaparte's French Army in Mansura, Egypt, and later came as immigrants to America.

Earliest records available on the property date from 1820. The property was transferred various times during the following years, and in 1826 was purchased by Leon Gauthier. The 1846 succession records of Gauthier's estate include an interesting inventory of his household goods and other property. However, no specific mention of a house on this property is made.

In 1850 Dr. Jules Charles Des Fosse' bought the property from Gauthier's widow. The purchase price does not indicate the presence of a house on the property at that time. Most research suggests that the structure was built by Dr. Des Fosse', a native of France who had emigrated here early in the nineteenth century. Dr. Des Fosse', a dentist, was one of a handful of French physicians and dentists who came to America to practice medicine in an area greatly lacking in medical care. Des Fosse' married Celestine Bordelon in 1852 and it is supposed that he built the house shortly thereafter. Dr. Des Fosse' practiced dentistry from this home. The next legal record is the sale of the home and two arpents in 1869 to Louis Porterie. In sales of 1877 and 1887 the rest of the property was sold by Des Fosse's widow to Louis Porterie, and it remained in the Porterie family ownership until 1975.

Many families have lived in the home, which was occupied as a residence until about ten years ago. In 1969 the town of Mansura leased the property as headquarters for its annual "Cochon de Lait Festival." At present the home also serves as headquarters for the annual tour of Avoyelles historic homes and sites. The Town of Mansura has recently purchased the six-acre property, which includes a community center and recreation facilities, which the town built, and the Des Fosse' Home.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Saucier, Corinne L. History of Avoyelles Parish. New Orleans: Pelican Publishing Company, 1943, pp. 200,201, 208.
 DeCuir, Randy P. Avoyelles Homes. Marksville: Gremillion Publishing Company, 1975, p. 8.
 Court and surveyors' records on file in the Avoyelles Parish Courthouse in Marksville, Louisiana,

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 6

UTM REFERENCES

A 1,5 | 59,0 | 7,5,0 | 3,4 | 3,6 | 6,8,0
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B | | | | |
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C | | | | |
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

D | | | | |
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Clyde M. Neck - President

ORGANIZATION

La Commission des Avoyelles

DATE

August 1975

STREET & NUMBER

P. O. Box 384

TELEPHONE

(office) - - - (318) 487-4511 Ext. 301 (Alexandr:

CITY OR TOWN

Marksville,

STATE

Louisiana 71351

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation 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.

SIGNATURE

Keith S. DeCompte

TITLE Assistant State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

March 23, 1976

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

4/23/98

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE

4.23.76

ATTEST:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Levy P. ...
Charles ...