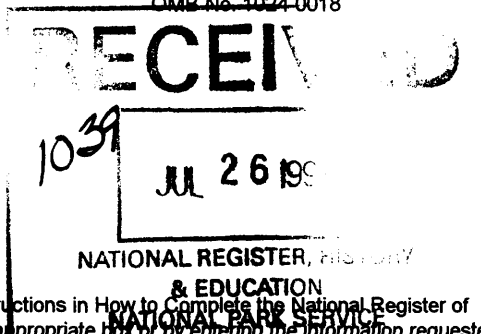


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



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 Sandbar Plantation House

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 4234 South River Road NA not for publication

city or town Port Allen X vicinity

state Louisiana code LA county West Baton Rouge code 121 zip code 70767

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.)

Gerri Hobdy
Signature of certifying official/Title Gerri Hobdy
LA SHPO, Dept. of Culture, Recreation and Tourism

July 19, 1999

Date

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:

- X 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):

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

Mick M. ...

9/2/99

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>3</u>	<u>1</u>	buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>3</u>	<u>1</u>	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

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

NA

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Cat. Domestic
Domestic
Domestic

Sub. Single Dwelling (House)
Secondary Structure (Kitchen)
Secondary Structure (Cistern)

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Cat. Domestic
Vacant
Domestic

Sub. Single Dwelling (House)
Not in Use (Kitchen)
Secondary Structure (Cistern)

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Greek Revival

Colonial Revival

Bungalow

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.)

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CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 1

Constructed c. 1837, Sandbar Plantation House stands on the west bank of the Mississippi River near the West Baton Rouge Parish town of Port Allen. Although constructed in the Greek Revival style, during the historic period the one-and-one-half story frame house was expanded on its down-river side and received a facelift which incorporated elements of the Colonial Revival and Bungalow styles. Despite a few non-historic alterations, the house retains its National Register eligibility.

Sandbar's early floorplan, three rooms wide and two rooms deep, remains clearly visible despite the alterations the home has received over the years. The central front and rear rooms are wider than those on each side, and a stair is located in the up-river rear room. A gallery spans the original facade. Although altered (see below) the rear gallery's original configuration (centering upon the rear entrance rather than spanning the entire elevation) remains evident.

Sandbar experienced its first renovation c. 1925. At this time the five bay gallery's fluted Greek Revival style columns (two of which survive in storage) were replaced by Colonial Revival boxed columns, the attic was subdivided to create extra rooms, a plumbing chase was attached to the building's up-river side wall, a small bathroom was added to the corner of the up-river rear room containing the staircase, the home's triangular gable ends were converted into jerkinhead gables, and a balcony was added to the roofline. The balcony is composed of Bungalow style posts-over-piers which support an entablature. The latter, in turn, supports a gabled roof. The year 1934 brought additional changes to Sandbar when a flat roofed mother-in-law's wing was appended to the home's down-river side. When this roof later leaked, it was reworked in the shed roof form. The wing originally contained a combination living room and kitchen. A bath for this area was provided by expanding the rear gallery on that side. Alterations to the 1934 additions will be discussed below.

Despite the exterior alteration and wing addition, a number of Sandbar's original Greek Revival characteristics survive. These include:

- 1) the main entrance, which features a transom, narrow sidelights, pilasters flanking a single door, and a bold surround with two layers of shoulder molding.

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Section 7 Page 2

- 2) interior windows and doors decorated with the same shoulder molding treatment. Of special interest is the door between the two central rooms. In addition to the shoulder molding of the surround, it consists of hinged folding doors, each of which has six panels. Although paneling is not specific to the Greek Revival style, the motif also distinguishes the interior shutters (four sets per window) which cover the windows of the front central room.
- 3) one mantel articulated with shoulder molding.
- 4) four mantels with paired pilasters supporting broad entablatures. Each set of paired pilasters shares one wide molded capital.
- 5) an acanthus leaf ceiling medallion.
- 6) stylized volutes on the risers of the previously mentioned staircase.
- 7) an elaborate cornice featuring acanthus leaf and Greek key motifs.

At some point before Sandbar changed hands in 1995, its original front door was replaced with one featuring glazing in its upper half. After its 1995 purchase, the house underwent a rehabilitation which lasted until 1998. In addition to general repairs, the new owners extended the original portion of the rear gallery outward under a gabled roof and enclosed the area with glazing. They also added a rear deck, expanded the c. 1925 downstairs corner bath, converted the 1934 mother-in-law's bath into a kitchen, and reconfigured the floorplan of the rest of the mother-in-law's wing. These recent changes have not caused a serious integrity problem; the house looks much as it did in 1934 when Ethel Claiborne Dameron (for whom significance is being claimed) first made the dwelling her home. There is no doubt that the building meets the Register's litmus test for historical nominations, for Mrs. Dameron would easily recognize Sandbar if she were to visit the property today.

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Contributing Elements

Two antebellum dependencies also stand on the property. These are a brick kitchen and a cistern with a brick base and frame upper portion. Both are being counted as contributing elements because they existed on the property during the historic period when Ethel Claiborne Dameron lived at Sandbar.

Non-Contributing Element

In addition, a large frame garage/guest house stands on the property. It is being counted as a non-contributing element because it was built during Sandbar's 1995-1998 rehabilitation.

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)

Education

Period of Significance

1934-1949

Significant Dates

NA

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Dameron, Ethel Claiborne

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: West Baton Rouge Parish Library

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Sandbar Plantation House is locally significant in the area of education under Criterion B, property associated with the life of a significant individual. That person was Ethel Claiborne Dameron, who played a leading role in the establishment of West Baton Rouge Parish's first public library. The period of significance for the nomination ranges from 1934 (the date of Mrs. Dameron's move to Sandbar) to 1949, the Register's fifty year cutoff. She made her greatest contributions during the library's founding years of 1933-1937. She lived in Sandbar until 1964, when her husband died and she moved to a smaller dwelling in the nearby parish seat of Port Allen.

As late as 1920 only a handful of Louisiana's towns and cities had public libraries. Almost all of the few that did exist were in the state's larger cities, leaving the majority of Louisiana's population (including the citizens of West Baton Rouge Parish) without public library services.

The situation began to change in 1925, when the state received a grant of Carnegie funds channeled through the League of Library Commissions in New York. Louisiana was chosen because of its extreme need. Using these funds, the Louisiana Library Commission established a pilot project (called the Louisiana Library Demonstration) in which the Commission worked with a few parish governments to establish demonstration libraries. These facilities were designed to show the state's other parishes what could be accomplished in providing library services to the public. Information about the project was spread through promotional pieces and presentations in communities throughout the state. Essae Culver, state librarian, and Katherine Hill, a member of the State Library Commission, made such a presentation to the members of the West Baton Rouge Garden and Civic Club in 1931. However, civic and political leaders alike felt the parish was unable to make the financial commitment necessary to establish a demonstration library at that time. This circumstance had not changed when Ethel Claiborne Dameron moved to West Baton Rouge Parish a few years later.

Ethel Claiborne Dameron was born in New Roads, Louisiana on August 4, 1890. Her father was a prominent Pointe Coupee Parish judge. After attending the Harris College for Young Ladies in Roanoke, Virginia she married Charles Irving Dameron on January 24, 1914. Between that year and 1921, the couple had four children. The family lived in Pointe Coupee Parish and Port Allen before C. I. Dameron inherited

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Section 8 Page 2

Sandbar from his father in late 1933. To accommodate his widowed mother, Dameron added a wing to the down-river side of the building (see Part 7) before moving his own family into the original portion of the home in the spring of 1934.

Ethel Dameron was already an active member of the West Baton Rouge Garden and Civic Club when the question of a library resurfaced in 1933. At the club's April meeting, Mrs. C. H. Dameron (Ethel's mother-in-law) "... urged that concrete plans be made to establish a library. . . ." After this motion successfully passed, the club's president named Ethel Dameron as chairman of a committee to pursue the goal. Mrs. F. J. Whitehead and Mrs. E. D. Favrot agreed to serve with her. According to a story told many times over, Mrs. Dameron then "... asked if the president or any of the members had any suggestions to offer the committee, to which . . . [the president] replied, 'we have no books, nor any place to put the books if we had the money to buy them, so we leave the ways and means to your committee.' "

The Library Committee was faced with three issues: 1) obtaining books, 2) finding a place to house them, and 3) providing staff for the new library. Because West Baton Rouge was suffering the effects of the Great Depression, there was little possibility of obtaining monetary donations for the project. However, under Mrs. Dameron's leadership the committee found other ways to achieve its goal. First, she and her assistants canvassed the parish house-to-house requesting donations of books. Next, Mrs. Whitehead persuaded parish officials to donate a small amount of space on the second floor of the courthouse as the library's home. Material for shelves was donated by a local lumberman, and their construction was underwritten by New Deal relief funds. The final problem was solved when the committee persuaded garden club members to share staffing responsibilities on a part-time, volunteer basis. On July 11, 1933, only three months after Mrs. Dameron and her associates accepted the challenge, the library opened with 343 donated books.

Although the initial goal of providing West Baton Rouge's citizens with a library had been met, the survival of the new institution was far from assured. Elected president of the garden and civic club in June 1933, Ethel Dameron recognized the library's need for ongoing support and made it her personal project. Upon relinquishing the presidency in 1934, she accepted chairmanship of the club's library committee and

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continued her work in this capacity until May 1937. Under her guidance in these early, critical years, the club met the book repository's financial needs through fund raising efforts such as theme teas, plays, card parties, and other benefits. (There were also occasional monetary donations from interested citizens.) However, Mrs. Dameron's role was much more personal than this statement suggests. Club correspondence and minutes reflect her actions. Because she was the liaison between the library and the club, all successes and problems were apparently reported directly to her. Also, she was instrumental in forming library policies. Her monthly reports to the club faithfully documented information such as the number of books in circulation, repair work needed or done on the books, and staffing problems and solutions. She appears to have taken the lead in finding librarians whenever the position became vacant. Her work apparently also included finding monies to fund the position, including persuading the Works Progress Administration (in September 1935) to adopt the project. And, as chairman of the library committee in these early years, Mrs. Dameron was the "face" of the cause to the police jury, the local government unit. It was she who appeared before the jurors and succeeded in persuading them to donate funds to the library on an intermittent basis beginning in early 1934. (Monetary donations were used to purchase additional titles and repair damaged tomes.) She acknowledged each donation with a personal letter of thanks.

The public response to the library was everything the garden club had hoped. By October 1934 the collection had grown to include 860 books, and circulation averaged around 400 books per month. Children used the library as much, if not more, than did their parents. This was especially important because, previously, the local high school library had been the only avenue through which teenagers could borrow books. The garden club's library served children of all ages and made possible recreational reading in the summer, when the high school library was closed.

The library soon outgrew its small courthouse space, creating a new problem for Mrs. Dameron and her fellow club members. The issue was resolved by the construction of a new community center in Port Allen. (The source of funding for this building is unclear.) As Chairman of the Library Committee, Mrs. Dameron (along with Mrs. Horace Wilkinson, Jr.) served on the building committee, making sure that a separate room designed to meet the library's needs was included in the plans. After construction was completed, it was Mrs. Dameron who organized and supervised the

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move from the courthouse to the new facility. The new library's formal opening was held in April 1936. At that time 150 additional books and \$25.00 in cash were donated to the cause.

Despite repeated searches, evidence concerning Ethel Claiborne Dameron's possible part in library affairs after her final term as Library Committee chairman ended in 1937 has not surfaced. However, her role as a library activist in the 1950s through her death in 1976 strongly suggests that she continued her activities during this "lost" period. Although the evidence cannot be considered for the purposes of this nomination due to the Register's fifty year cutoff, it is appropriate to record some of her later contributions. She served on the building committee when the library moved from the community center to a room in the old parish courthouse in 1959. It was she who eventually persuaded the West Baton Rouge Parish Police Jury to accept responsibility for the library. As a result, the parish joined the state's demonstration library program in 1965. Mrs. Dameron served on the parish library's board of trustees from its inception until her death and served at least one term as the board's vice chairman. She was also active in efforts to obtain a new library building in the early 1970s. It was completed and dedicated only a few weeks after she died in early 1976.

Without the intervention of the West Baton Rouge Garden and Civic Club, in which Ethel Claiborne Dameron assumed a leading role, the citizens of West Baton Rouge Parish would not have obtained library service in 1933, and perhaps not at all until after the end of the Great Depression. (As late as 1941, 44 of the state's 64 parishes had no public libraries.) To Mrs. Dameron's credit, she refused to abandon the crusade, even when difficult family situations such as the death of her father-in-law and the time-consuming move of her family into Sandbar intervened. It is clear that her groundbreaking work laid the foundation for the parish's current library system, and this contribution has been recognized publicly on a number of occasions. In 1959, for example, the garden club presented Mrs. Dameron with a plaque "in recognition of her outstanding service to the library." Both the Port Allen and Baton Rouge newspapers have chronicled her role on more than one occasion. Her library activity is also mentioned in her entry in the *Dictionary of Louisiana Biography*, published in 1988. As the building most directly associated with Ethel Claiborne Dameron, Sandbar Plantation House is a legitimate candidate for National Register listing.

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Other Properties Associated with Ethel Claiborne Dameron

Ethel Claiborne Dameron lived in two houses during the period of her early library work (1933-1937). Upon moving to West Baton Rouge Parish (the exact date of this move is uncertain), the family rented a home in Port Allen for a short period before moving into Sandbar in the spring of 1934. Although she lived in this rented dwelling when she began her library work (in 1933) and the house may still be extant, it should be noted that her time there was brief, the family never owned this building, and a number of other families would have been associated with the rental property after the Damerons left. Sandbar Plantation House served as Mrs. Dameron's home for all but a few months of her productive period (as well as for many years afterward) and is clearly the property most directly associated with her. Thus, Sandbar is the appropriate candidate for National Register listing.

NOTE: In addition to her work for the library, Ethel Claiborne Dameron played a leading role in other important civic endeavors. Although these activities cannot be considered as part of this nomination (as many occurred after the fifty year cutoff), the record would be incomplete without mention of these efforts. Mrs. Dameron was the leader in founding the West Baton Rouge Parish Historical Association and, later, its museum. She led the effort to place a bronze statue of Henry Watkins Allen (Confederate general and governor of Confederate Louisiana, 1864-1865) on the West Baton Rouge Courthouse grounds, to establish a rest area in the parish, and to secure highway markers at local historic sites.

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

Baton Rouge *Morning Advocate*, January 9, 1976.

Baton Rouge *State Times*, January 24, 1969.

Baton Rouge *Sunday Advocate*, March 2, 1986.

Conrad Glenn, R., General Editor. *A Dictionary of Louisiana Biography, Volume I: A to M*, n.p.: Center for Louisiana Studies of the University of Southwestern Louisiana, 1988.

Dameron, Marjorie Head. *Review of the West Baton Rouge Garden & Civic Club*, presentation made at the 10th anniversary celebration of the founding of the West Baton Rouge Parish Garden and Civic Club, October 25, 1938; copy in National Register file.

Garden Club Scrapbook, West Baton Rouge Parish Library; copies of pertinent pages in National Register file.

Letter, Mrs. M. Truman Woodward, Jr. to Ms. Mary Pramuk, February 25, 1985; copy in National Register file.

Minutes, West Baton Rouge Parish Police Jury, 1934-1937; copies of pertinent pages in National Register file.

Site visit by National Register staff.

West Side Journal (Port Allen, LA), October 29, 1965.

Sandbar Plantation House
Name of property

West Baton Rouge Parish, LA
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property 3.09 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

1 15 671240 3365240

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 (research by home owner Genie Hendry)

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 Ron and Genie Hendry

street & number 4234 South River Road telephone (225) 749-3650

city or town Port Allen state LA zip code 70767

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.

NPS Form 10-900-a

No. 1024-0018

(8-86)

OMB

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Section 10 Page 1

BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:

See attached plat map.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION:

Boundaries follow current property lines and include the historic resources and setting existing when Ethel Claiborne Dameron, for whom the property is being nominated, was in residence at Sandbar.