United States Department of the Interior Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form



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See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms* Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name β	ay St. Leuis Mult.	sie Resource Are	ra (Partial
historic	Inventory)		
Historic and/or common Architec	Resources of Bay St. Louis	(Partial Inventory:	Historic and
2. Location			
street & number Incorpor	ated limits of City of Bay	St. Louis	not for publication
city, town Bay St. Louis	vicinity of	congressional district	Fifth
state Mississippi	code 28 coun	ty Hancock	code 45
3. Classifica	tion		
Category Ownershi district public building(s) private structure X both object in proc Multiple being Resource	■ X occupied ■ X unoccupied ■ X work in progres quisition Accessible	X entertainment X government	museum X park park religious scientific X transportation X other: mortuary
name Multiple Owne	rsnip *45		
city, town	vicinity of	state	
5. Location courthouse, registry of deeds	of Legal Descript Office of the Chanc Hancock County Cour	ery Clerk	
street & number	Main Street	W	
city, town	Bay St. Louis	state	Mississippi
6. Represent	tation in Existing	Surveys	
title Statewide Survey o	of Historic Sites has this	property been determined ele	egible? yes no
date	11	federal X_state	e county loca
depository for survey records	Mississippi Department of	Archives and History	

7. Description

Condition X excellent X good	X deteriorated ruins	Check one X unaltered X altered	Check one X original site X moved date	Ł.
X_ fair	unexposed			

Describe the present and original (If known) physical appearance

Bay St. Louis (pop. 6,752), in Hancock County, Mississippi, lies fifteen miles west of Gulfport and fifty-two miles east of New Orleans. Situated at the junction of St. Louis Bay and the Mississippi Sound, the city is bounded on three sides by water. Lying within the coastal-meadows section of the state, the soil surface in Bay St. Louis is sandy and relatively flat (altitude 21 feet), with a slight slope upward toward the interior. The climate is temperate but the area is subject to hurricanes between June and November.

Iberville explored St. Louis Bay in 1699 and later that year sent soldiers and a few settlers to establish an outpost thought to have been located between present-day Carroll Avenue and de Montleizin Street. Since the earliest access to the city was by water, settlement naturally took place along the coastline on what is today Beach Boulevard. Other settlers, arriving in 1721, located on the bay in what is now the northern section of town. No houses remain, however, of the French settlement. The earliest house (ca. 1790) dates from the era of Spanish rule. Known as the Spanish Customs House it is located on South Beach Boulevard. A two-and-one-half-story gable-roofed house, the structure takes full advantage of the cooling gulf breezes with a two-story gallery, which originally surrounded the entire house. Its thick brick walls provide insulation from the heat and "[indicate] attempts at reconciling familiar construction techniques with the semitropical climate" (George Johnston, Jr., "A Brief Chronology of Bay St. Louis, Miss.," typescript, Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson).

Spanish land grants were begun in 1781 although actual settlement did not begin until sometime around 1800, and the first store was not built until 1812. In 1811 the area became part of the United States, and in 1812 Hancock County was created. Although Bay St. Louis was not named the county seat until 1867, court was held there for part of the year as early as 1825. In 1858 the town became incorporated as Shieldsborough, named for early settler Thomas Shields. At the time of its incorporation the area of densest settlement was still along the beach front road then known as Front Street and along parallel streets running west of Front Street for a short distance. The only roads which led further into the interior were Main Street, which led west to Pearlington on the Pearl River and on to New Orleans, and Washington Street, which led north to the Jordan River and indirectly to what is now the Old Spanish Trail, which led to Gainesville, the seat of Hancock County before 1867.

Only one house from the 1820s era remains in its original state. Elmwood Manor, thought to have been started prior to 1812 but not completed until ca. 1828, a two-and-one-half-story brick structure, is an excellent example of the French Colonial plantation-type house with two-tiered gallery, multiple entrances, and widely overhanging hip roof, quite prevalent in Louisiana. That this house and the Spanish Customs house are the only extant buildings from the early period of Bay St. Louis' history is probably partly attributable to the fact that both were sturdily built of imported brick. The lack in the area of clays suitable for brick manufacture, and the relative abundance of timber led to the prevalence of frame buildings.

A number of houses exist from the ca. 1850 period. These are predominantly of the Greek Revival cottage type, with undercut galleries, central entrances, and Greek Revival details such as eared architraves and doorways with rectangular transoms and side lights. Also thought to date from this period are the shotgun and Creole-cottage type influenced by French construction in neighboring Louisiana. Evolving throughout the century, the shotgun,

8. Significance

Period prehistoric 1400-1499 1500-1599 1600-1699 X 1700-1799 X 1800-1899 X 1900-	Areas of Significance—(Check and justify below community planning conservation economics X education engineering X exploration/settlement industry invention	landscape architect law literature x military music philosophy x politics/government	science sculpture social/ humanitarian theater
Specific dates	-2 1144.	Builder Architect		

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The town of Bay St. Louis, Mississippi, contains outstanding architectural structures erected from 1790 through the 1940s. Particularly noteworthy are its large beach residences articulated in a variety of styles and its outstanding collection of vernacular Creole and shotgun cottages.

The town's discovery date of 1699 ranks Bay St. Louis with Biloxi and Ocean Springs as one of the earliest towns on the Mississippi Gulf Coast and indeed in the United States. The Spanish Customs House, ca. 1790, is one of the few examples of architecture representing the short period between 1779 and 1798 when the area was under Spanish control. A naval battle of some military importance was fought off the shore of the town in December, 1814, providing valuable time for Gen. Andrew Jackson to prepare forces for the defense of New Orleans.

Known as a resort town as early as the 1820s, the American Atlas of 1823 stated that the Bay St. Louis area was "one of the most healthy places in that latitude; and is the retreat for many of the citizens of New Orleans during the sickly season" (Hancock County Eagle, Souvenir Centennial Edition, Aug., 1958). Natchez planters also were frequent visitors as were lawyers involved with litigation of Bay St. Louis' complicated land titles ("Bay St. Louis, Miss.," 1958, in Statewide Survey of Historic Places, Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson). Ever its principal industry, tourism grew even more with the advent in 1872 of the railroad connecting New Orleans and Mobile.

Although the city did not become noted for other industries it did achieve some commercial importance as a port. The only shipping and railroad point south of Picayune in Pearl River County, Bay St. Louis became during 1875-76 a port of entry, and all U.S. government employees in the area were paid there (Works Progress Administration, Hancock County, Miss. Negroes, Progessional and Civic Leaders, Statewide Historical Research Project, Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson). Contributing to the town's commercial importance was the fact that Andrew Jackson had cut military roads through the area to Bay St. Louis to facilitate transportation from the interior to the port.

Bay St. Louis became the seat of Hancock County in 1867, but had earlier achieved significance as a center of government. Prior to the 1830s, when Gainesville became the county seat, Hancock County Court was held in both Bay St. Louis and Pearlington at different times of the year.

Several churches reflect the early religious history of Bay St. Louis. The city has always been predominantly Roman Catholic, and Our Lady of the Gulf Church is the mother church of Hancock County, the third oldest Catholic parish on the gulf coast and the fifth oldest in Mississippi. It was established in 1847 by Bishop J. J. Chanche, S.S., first bishop of Natchez. The present building of Romanesque Revival architecture, was begun in 1907 and completed in 1926 and replaced an earlier church building destroyed by fire. St. Joseph's Chapel, built as a mission after the Civil War by a Father LeDuc, is one of the few examples of Gothic-style architecture in Bay St. Louis. St. Rose de Lima Church, a

9. Major Bibliographical References

Along the Gulf. No date or place of publication. William E. Myers, publisher. Copy located in the Mississippi Department of Archives and History Library, Jackson, Mississippi.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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DATE ENTERED. NOV 2 5 1980

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7

PAGE 1

7 - DESCRIPTION

with its linear plan, and the creole cottage, with its double entrance and central chimney, are found in Bay St. Louis with ornamentation of the Queen Anne, Bungalow, and Colonial Revival styles.

The coming of the railroad to Bay St. Louis, in 1872, gave great impetus to the tourist trade from New Orleans. The city experienced a building boom around this time. Numerous large hotels and summer houses were constructed on Beach Boulevard, and commercial structures were built at the foot of Washington Street on both sides of Beach Boulevard. Storms or fires destroyed most of these commercial structures. Only one brick structure of the era, built in 1894, remains, the present Star Theater. Its facade has been altered, however. A great number of the summer houses from the period remain, however. The large hotels disappeared, but some smaller ones survived and today are family residences. Reflecting these developments Bay St. Louis entered one of its most inspired architectural eras. The Queen Anne-Victorian influence flowered in applied scroll-sawn and wood-lathe detail, shingled gables, turned valances, and colored-glass windows. Often this detailing was applied to older structures to update their appearance. In 1886 the city changed its name from Shieldsborough to Bay St. Louis and by the turn of the century original land grants had been subdivided and the town had expanded inland. VA black settlement grew up west of Hancock Street on Citizen, Washington, and Sycamore streets, and two black churches were built on Sycamore Street. Substantial public and commercial building during this period is evidenced by the construction of the City Hall, in 1905 (now located on Second Street away from its original beachfront location), the Hancock County Courthouse, in 1911, the old Echo newspaper building at State Street and North Beach Boulevard, in 1903, and Our Lady of the Gulf Church, erected 1907-26.

By the 1920s a black community had developed west of the railroad tracks on Sycamore and Washington streets. Bungalow style houses as well as attached residential/commercial structures remain to document the history of the area. By 1928 the opening of the bridge across St. Louis Bay and the popularity of the automobile combined to make Ulman Avenue a main thoroughfare. Several small commercial buildings constructed along the avenue in the Art Deco (Moderne) style are still standing today. Also built during this period were the large Mission-style railroad depot and high school, as well as several large brick buildings on the campuses of St. Stanislaus School and St. Augustine's Seminary. The rerouting in 1954 of Highway 90 from Ulman Avenue to its present location near the bay resulted in the loss of some large beachfront residences and isolation of the northern section of Bay St. Louis, but it provided for new strip development away from the center of town, thus preserving the unique character of the town's beachfront and old commercial areas.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7,8 PAGE 2

7 - DESCRIPTION

This nomination includes five historic districts and ten individual properties. The largest, Beach Boulevard Historic District, includes over one-and-one-half-miles along Beach Boulevard as well as the central business district and adjacent residential structures. Elmwood Historic District contains Beach Boulevard structures lying outside (north) of the Beach Boulevard Historic District. The Washington Street and Sycamore Street historic districts contain buildings of significance to black history. They are located west of the railroad tracks. The Main Street Historic District contains a row of structures at the western end of Main Street. The ten individually nominated properties are scattered throughout the city and include twelve structures, since one proposal includes three buildings.

The majority of structures included in this nomination are residential. Approximately five percent are religious, ten percent commercial, and less than one percent industrial. Three cemeteries are located within the area, two of which are of historical interest. Other open space areas may be found on the campuses of St. Stanislaus School and St. Augustine's Seminary and in the small triangular park behind City Hall and across Railroad Avenue from the depot. This nomination relies on an architectural survey conducted by architects George Johnston, Jr., and Richard McNeel during the summer of 1979, utilizing the corporate limits of Bay St. Louis as its boundaries. A state survey form was completed on all buildings constructed prior to 1930 as well as on those constructed after that date which were architecturally significant.

8 - SIGNIFICANCE

mission-style structure constructed ca. 1926, was constructed for the black Roman Catholics of Bay St. Louis after a separate parish was established for them in 1923. Protestant churches of significance are the United Methodist Church on Main Street, a Gothic Revival structure built in 1895, and the Valena C. Jones Methodist Episcopal Church on Sycamore Street, a significant building in the black community. Built in 1926 this stucco and brick church stands on the site of an earlier frame church, the congregation of which was organized in 1892 by the Rev. O. H. Flowers. A black church organized even earlier was the First Baptist Church, on Sycamore Street. Organized by the Rev. Taylor Fryerson in 1877, the first church building was destroyed by a 1947 hurricane and replaced by the present brick and stucco structure in 1950.

Of both religious and educational significance is St. Stanislaus School. Founded in 1854 by the French Catholic missionary order Brothers of the Sacred Heart, it is the oldest institution of learning on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. Original buildings were destroyed by a fire in 1903 and by Hurricane Camille in 1969. Present buildings

FHR-8-300A (11/78)

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DATE ENTERED NOV 2 5 1980

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER

PAGE 3

8 - SIGNIFICANCE

are in the Colonial Revival and Renaissance Revival styles and date from the 1920s, reflecting a period of rapid growth in the school's history.

Associated with religion, education, and black history is the St. Rose de Lima School, established as a private school for black children by missionary priest Father LeDuc in 1868. One of its present buildings on Necaise Avenue was the secondary school building, constructed in 1907. Also important in these three areas is St. Augustine's Seminary. Founded in 1920 in Greenville, Mississippi, by Divine Word Missionaries, the seminary was relocated to Bay St. Louis in 1923. The oldest Roman Catholic seminary in Mississippi for the training of young men for the priesthood, it was in 1939 "the only negro training school for catholic priests in the United States" (Walker Wood, Biennial Report, Mississippi Blue Book: 1937-1939, p. 70).

Little is recorded of black settlement patterns and black history in Bay St. Louis but the area around Sycamore Street east of the railroad tracks seems to have become a relatively cohesive black area by the 1880s, as indicated by its black church history. Later the western sections of Washington and Sycamore streets appear to have fostered black neighborhood growth. Although the historic character of this area has been disrupted by urban renewal, the Sycamore Street and Washington Street historic districts retain much of their original appearance. Also in the western section of town but farther north on Union Street is the 100 Men Association building, built in 1922. This black social organization, which also provided various insurance benefits to its members, was organized in 1888. One notable black man in Bay St. Louis history is Eugene Ray, contractor and the only undertaker in town in the 1890s. Three of his Queen Anne-style cottages still stand in a row on Railroad Avenue, and he is said to have built dozens of other houses in the center of town.

Also of historical and architectural interest are two cemeteries located within the boundaries of the Beach Boulevard Historic District. These are the city cemetery, established in 1861, and St. Mary's Cemetery, established in 1872. Although dating from 1861, the city cemetery contains remains dating to the 1830s which were moved from an earlier burial ground on St. Charles Street. Both cemeteries contain elaborate New Orleans iron fences and gates outlining family plots and, in the case of St. Mary's, enclosing the entire cemetery.

Of the French settlement period in Bay St. Louis there are no architectural remains, and the Spanish Customs House, which contains a brick dated 1787, is the only architectural record of the Spanish control of the area. Several structures remain from the early 1800s. Elmwood Manor, in the Elmwood Historic District, dates from the 1820s and furnishes an excellent example of French Colonial architecture. Two other houses in the district date from the 1820s but have seen later alterations. These

FHR-8-300A (11/78)

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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DATE ENTERED NOV 2 5 1980

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER

PAGE 4

8 - SIGNIFICANCE

are the Breath House (616 N. Beach Blvd.) in the Beach Boulevard Historic District and the Kimbrough House (810 N. Beach Blvd.) in the Elmwood Historic District. Greek Revival-style residences from the ca. 1850 period are the Swoop House (414 S. Beach Blvd.) and Hilltop (502 S. Beach Blvd.). Several others have Greek Revival features but show applied later-period detailing. The same is true of the early vernacular building types found in the district. One vernacular cottage located in the Sycamore Street District does retain most of its original features. Thought to be antebellum, it is the only five-bay cottage in Bay St. Louis which displays three doorways onto an undercut gallery, a feature notable for its French influence.

The most prevalent architectural style is the Queen Anne, its popularity in the late-eighteenth-century coinciding with the period when the resort industry in Bay St. Louis was at its peak. The McDonald House (502 N. Beach Blvd.) is the most elaborate of the Queen Anne-style dwellings, but three simpler examples may be found along Railroad Avenue. Ornate millwork characterizes these houses and similar decoration may be found applied to vernacular shotgun and Creole cottages throughout the Beach Boulevard Historic District. Main Street Historic District also supplies outstanding examples of the Creole and shotgun cottage with Victorian details. Although not as prevalent as the Queen Anne, the Classical Revival, Georgian Revival, Bungalow, and Mission styles are all represented. There is also a scattering of Art Deco (Moderne) buildings located on Ulman Avenue, reflecting the importance of that street as a main thoroughfare between 1928, when the first bridge across the St. Louis Bay was constructed, and 1954, when a new bridge was built and traffic rerouted.

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

Continuation sheet Bay St. Louis MRA, Hancock Co. MS tem number

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Amendment to the nomination form for the Bay St. Louis Multiple Resource Area, Bay St. Louis, Hancock County, Mississippi.

(NOTE: All of the following properties and the district were included in the original nomination dated January 1980 but were not listed due to insufficient information.)

St. Joseph's Chapel

Webb School (300 Third St.)

Alfred LeBlanc, Sr. House (986 S. Beach Blvd. and 100 Bay Oaks Court)
104, 105, 106 Boudin Lane
115 Julia St.
211 Third St.
Marv's Body Shop

Taylor School (116 Leonard St.)
Elmwood Historic District

In 1986 the district and the individual properties were researched and reevaluated in order to resubmit them for Register nomination. As a result of the reevaluation, several properties have been deleted. The proposed district has been deleted as well, but three of its elements are being individually nominated. The properties now being submitted for nomination are:

Statement of Significance

The town of Bay St. Louis (pop. 7,891) comprises an impressive collection of buildings constructed from 1790 to the 1940's. The architectural structures included in this proposed amendment to the Bay St. Louis Multiple Resource Area nomination were erected from before 1812 to approximately 1913. They are all being nominated for their architectural significance. Additional significance is attached to the Taylor and Webb Schools because of their importance to the theme of education within a local context.

In the original nomination, the Elmwood Historic District encompassed

OMB No. 1024-0018 Expires 10-31-87

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National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

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Continuation sheet Bay St. Louis MRA Bay St. Louis, Hancock Co., MStem number

Page 2

ten buildings. All located north of Highway 90, the houses were strung out along the western sea wall of the Bay of St. Louis. However, due to a lack of cohesiveness in this "district", only three of the buildings (Glen Oak, Elmwood Manor, and the Taylor House) are being nominated, each as an individual property. Glen Oak at 806 N. Beach Boulevard is believed to have been constructed circa 1820, but is primarily significant because of its Shingle Style renovation. It is the only example of this architectural style in Bay St. Louis. This is rather unusual because the popularity of the Shingle Style coincided with the community's peak as a seaside resort. In fact, the only other Shingle Style buildings on the Mississippi Gulf Coast that have been identified to date are in Ocean Springs at the other end of the state's coastline. The construction of Elmwood Manor (902 N. Beach Blvd.) began before 1812 and was completed in 1828. It is one of the earliest extant buildings in the community. Not only is Elmwood Manor a significant example of the French Colonial style of architecture, but the infrastructure of its roof is also an important illustration of early nineteenth century timber frame construction.

At 808 N. Beach Boulevard is the Taylor House. Constructed around 1910, the building is a good example of a locally persistent house form dating from the antebellum period with early twentieth century architectural elements.

The Alfred LeBlanc, Sr. House, although it is now two separate structures (986 S. Beach Blvd. and 100 Bay Oaks Court), is being nominated as one property. In the original nomination, the buildings were referred to as the Henry P. Dart, Sr. House. These two structures were originally part of one long building believed to have been constructed before the Civil War. It underwent a major renovation in the late nineteenth century which resulted in a Queen Anne style building. In the 1940's, the center of the house was removed, leaving the two houses now standing. Taken as a unit, the remnants are a significant articulation of the Queen Anne style of architecture as it was applied to summer resort housing in late nineteenth century Bay St. Louis. Each house retains a surprisingly high degree of architectural integrity, despite the division. Each house has a tower which is a rare design element for Queen Anne style buildings in Bay St. Louis.

The Taylor and Webb Schools are the final properties included in this proposed amendment. Both are early twentieth century buildings. Taylor School (116 Leonard St.) is a Craftsman style structure erected in 1910. Its primary significance derives from the fact that it is extremely uncommon for this style of architecture to be articulated in

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

Amendment/Bay St. Louis MRA, Continuation sheet_{Bay} St. Louis, Hancock Co., MS Item number For NPS use only
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Page

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an institutional building. The Craftsman style is associated primarily, if not exclusively, with residential architecture. The Webb School (300 Third St.) is the only early twentieth century Colonial Revival style school building on the Mississippi Gulf Coast that has been surveyed to date. It was constructed in 1913. Both structures are indicative of the one and two teacher schools that comprised the public education system on the Mississippi Gulf Coast around the turn of the century. Other school buildings from this area recorded in the Statewide Survey Files are generally larger and more elaborate in design than these.

All of the buildings considered in this proposed amendment are significant in terms of the themes of architecture and/or education which were discussed in the Bay St. Louis Multiple Resource Area cover nomination. Taken as a group, the structures are an architectural illustration of one hundred years in Bay St. Louis history. These cultural resources, in conjunction with the properties that have already been listed, help historians and others to interpret the past of one of the oldest towns on the Gulf Coast.

Susan M. Enzweiler Architectural Historian Division of Historic Preservation Mississippi Department of Archives and History

July 10, 1986

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

__September_26,_1986_____

Date

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National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

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Page

Multiple Resource Area Thematic Group dnr-11

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Nom	ination/Type of Review			Date/Signature
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