

From the

LOUISIANA

State Historic Preservation Office

Office of Cultural Development,
Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism

National Register 101

What Types of Properties Can Be Listed in the National Register of Historic Places?

By Patricia L. Duncan
National Register Coordinator, Division of Historic Preservation

I OFTEN GET INQUIRIES from citizens interested in having their properties declared historic, although many of them aren't even sure what the National Register of Historic Places is called. Over the next few months we hope to educate readers about the Register so the listing process can work smoothly for everyone.

The National Register of Historic Places is the list of resources that are considered important and worthy of preservation because they illustrate something about our nation's history or culture. Congress created the program through the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, which called for the states and the National Park Service (NPS, in the Department of the Interior) to co-administer the program.

Listing on the Register does not bring restrictions. Instead, it brings honor and prestige, a measure of protection from federal undertakings through the Section 106 Environmental Review Process, eligibility to apply for grants when and if Congress allocates funds and, in certain cases, the possibility of qualifying for federal and state rehabilitation tax incentives. Unfortunately, there is no guarantee that a listed resource will receive a financial benefit, for each of these programs has its own rules and procedures. However, Register listing is required for properties and their owners to apply for these benefits.

The National Register recognizes resources belonging to five broad groupings. Each of these categories is specifically defined in the 1966 federal law. Additionally, the National Park Service provides guidance on how to classify resources in a bulletin titled *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*. Formerly known as "Bulletin 15," this document is available to the public on the NPS Web site.



Pleasant Hill Battlefield in northwest Louisiana

SITES are the locations of an event, activity or prehistoric/historic occupation that possess historic, cultural or archaeological value independent of any existing or formerly existing building or structure. Battlefields, like Pleasant Hill in northwest Louisiana where 3,000 men died in April 1864, and archaeological digs are easily recognizable as sites. However, there are other possibilities. These include, but are not limited to, designed landscapes, petroglyphs, rock shelters, trails, village and ceremonial sites, shipwrecks, campsites and ruins of a building or structure. Additionally, some types of natural landmarks can be considered sites if their significance and association with events has been acknowledged by scholarly research. However, natural water features are generally excluded from listing because the Register feels that buildings associated with those more appropriately illustrate their history and contributions.

For more details on National Register property types, see "How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation" at www.nps.gov/nr/publications/bulletins/nrb15/



Fannie Riche House in rural Pointe Coupee Parish

BUILDINGS are probably the easiest resource type to visualize. Congress defines a building as a construction whose function is to shelter any form of human activity. In addition to houses like the Fannie Riche House in rural Pointe Coupee Parish, churches, governmental facilities, hotels, libraries, office buildings, post offices, schools, stores, theaters, depots, garages and barns are among examples of building types that might be eligible for the National Register. To qualify, a building must be complete (i.e., have all its parts) and its important identifying features must survive.



Delhi's Municipal Baseball Park in Richland Parish

STRUCTURES are those resources made for functions other than providing human shelter. This definition opens the possibility of Register eligibility to resource types that one might find surprising. For example, as "structures," aircraft and locomotives, boats and ships, bridges and tunnels, irrigation systems and windmills, and canals and highways are all possible National Register candidates under the right circumstances. Delhi's Municipal Baseball Park in Richland Parish is one of Louisiana's more unusual listed structures.

DISTRICTS, according to Congress and the NPS, are areas that "possess a significant concentration, linkage, or continuity of sites, buildings, structures, or objects united historically or aesthetically by plan or physical development." More simply put, a district is a group of contiguous resources that are related in some significant way and are nominated to the Register simultaneously in one nomination. For more information on National Register and local historic districts, see "Historic Districts 101" in the November 2010 issue of *Preservation in Print*, which can be found at www.prcno.org.



General Beauregard Equestrian Statue in New Orleans

OBJECTS are constructions that are primarily artistic in nature or are relatively small in scale and simply constructed. Although an object may be moveable, to qualify for the Register it must be associated with a specific setting or environment. Examples of objects include, but are not limited to, statues, boundary markers, fountains, mileposts, sculpture and monuments. The General Beauregard Equestrian Statue in New Orleans is an object that was added to the National Register in 1999.