

The Guitreau House (c.1911) is a one story frame cottage in the French Creole style. It faces Louisiana Highway 16 in the Village of French Settlement and stands within a large fenced yard surrounded by pastureland. While it has experienced changes and additions since construction, it retains its National Register eligibility.

Creole features found within the Guitreau House include the following:

- 1) a Class III gabled roof with central chimney,
- 2) a full length front gallery,
- 3) two French wraparound mantels, and
- 4) a partially intact floorplan displaying unusual Creole geometry (see Part 8). This plan consists of four equal sized rooms, two facing the front gallery and two facing the space formerly occupied by a cabinet/loggia range. Although slightly altered (see below), the plan's original configuration can still be clearly seen.

The cottage experienced a major addition and renovation early in its history, possibly as a result of its sale in 1914. At that time, the following changes were made:

- 1) The gallery was extended along each of the cottage's two sides, and a false gallery was attached to the roof.
- 2) Rounded transoms suggestive of the Italianate style were placed above the two front doors, and glass panes were installed in the doors themselves. To make the doors look more Italianate in character, the top members of each were reshaped in an arch motif.
- 3) The original wraparound mantel were adorned. Pilasters in the form of baluster shaped silhouettes were applied to the mantels' piers and arch shaped panels were applied to the entablatures. These panels wrap around the boxed flues below the mantel shelves.
- 4) The walls of the cabinet/loggia range were removed to create a long hall the width of the house.
- 5) The right rear room of the cottage was subdivided to create a hallway and bathroom.
- 6) A two room addition was added at the rear. later in the twentieth century the left room of this addition was converted into a kitchen, the original wooden mantel in the right room was bricked over, and a new shed addition was appended to the rear. This new addition consists of a small room and a porch.

Other twentieth century changes to the house include the installation of double and triple windows in several exterior walls, the installation of ceiling tiles in the original Creole portion of the home, the addition of a closet beside one wraparound mantel, and the installation of French doors opening into the kitchen and the hall which occupied the former cabinet/loggia range.

Despite these changes, the cottage retains its Creole identity. Its massing, French wraparound mantels, and Creole floorplan survive relatively intact. The application of flat pilasters to the mantels continues an old Creole tradition. The side galleries create the impression of the wraparound gallery often associated with the finest of Creole homes. The visual impact of the doors

is minimal, and the additions at the rear do not impact the facade. The false gallery only slightly changes the roof shape and is easily dominated by the large and pronounced original Creole roofline. In addition, most of these changes are themselves historic, having occurred only three years after the house was built. With its c. 1911 original construction date, the Guitreau House is the last known example of the Creole style to be built in French Settlement. As a rare and relatively intact example of the final flowering of the Creole style in Livingston Parish (see Part 8), the Guitreau House is a strong candidate for National Register listing.

Significant dates	c.1911; c.1914
Architect/Builder	unknown
Criterion C	

The Guitreau House is locally significant in the area of architecture because it is a rare and relatively intact example of the French Creole style within Livingston Parish.

A Historic Structures Survey has not yet been implemented for Livingston Parish. However, the area was settled primarily by persons of Anglo descent, and few structures influenced by the Creole building tradition were erected there. Just one French enclave--the Village of French Settlement--is known to exist. A windshield survey of French Settlement has identified only twenty surviving houses which can be classified as Creole. All but two of these dwellings are the result of a lumber boom which occurred between 1880 and 1915. Many French Settlement men worked in the lumber mills and had access to inexpensive or free lumber, which they used to build new houses for their families. Almost all of French Settlement's older homes were replaced at this time. For the most part, these new houses used late nineteenth century building technology (stud walls) and materials rather than the older, more traditional Creole methods of construction such as the use of bousillage. However, they very much resembled the Creole houses built several generations previously because they copied the floorplans, the central chimney location, the full length front galleries, and the gabled umbrella roofs which characterized these earlier Creole homes. They often also retained Creole stylistic motifs such as wraparound mantels. Thus, they illustrate the enduring importance of the Creole tradition in Southern Louisiana and represent the final flowering of that tradition in Livingston Parish.

Unfortunately, however, the majority of French Settlement's eighteen late Creole homes have lost their historic integrity. For example, many have sustained inappropriate additions. Others have lost original features. Still others are falling apart and abandoned. The Guitreau House is one of only a small group whose physical integrity and Creole character remain basically intact. In addition, it is distinguished by a floorplan more commonly used in urban rather than rural areas and is the only known example of this plan within Livingston Parish. Thus, its integrity, its rarity in a parish not generally recognized as a center of Creole culture, and its status as the last known example of the Creole tradition in Livingston Parish make the Guitreau House a viable candidate for Register listing.

Historical Note

The house was built for Armond LaBougeois in 1911. He sold it to A. D. Guitreau in 1914. It remained in the Guitreau family until the 1960s, when Cajun humorist Justin Wilson purchased it. Wilson sold the home to its current owners, Edward and Tana Berteau, in 1979. At present it functions as the residence for a horse ranch run by the Berteaus.

Major Bibliographical References

Windshield survey of French Settlement, LA by Dr. Jay Edwards, Department of Geography and Anthropology, LSU, Baton Rouge.

Edwards, Jay. Draft National Register Nomination, Department of Geography and Anthropology, LSU, Baton Rouge.

Site visit by National Register staff.