

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Blanchard House (1891) is in northern Rapides Parish on Bayou Jean de Jean, near the town of Boyce. It is a substantial one-story frame rural residence with a modified hip roof and a side wing. There is no appropriate stylistic label for the house. Aside from the 1948 move, the house has undergone few changes through the years.

The house was moved in 1948, its proximity to the bayou and the construction of a levee in the early twentieth century left it on a flood plain. After the flood of 1945, it had to be moved to a higher part of the plantation about one quarter of a mile from its original location in order to be saved. However, since it was moved such a short distance, it is still in the same area and the setting is similar in character to the original. The house still retains the full measure of its historical associations.

The 1891 frame and clapboard house was built from locally cut pine. It has a wide central hall plan with double parlors and a two room side wing. Until recently the wing was separated from the house by an open corridor. This has been closed in. The house has an unusual roof configuration which takes the form of a hip roof with a flat top and chamfered corner. Each facade of the roof has a large central gable with an extra gable on the rear. The right side gable is extended out 40 feet from the house to encompass the side wing. A gallery encompasses the entire entrance facade.

The wide central hall has a heavy cornice, a high chair rail, and vertical board wainscotting below. The living room and the dining room have cornices which were recently added. The two rooms are connected by a pair of sliding paneled doors. The dining room has a wainscotting treatment similar to the hall. Both the dining room and the hall have cabinets framed with pilasters and aedicule motifs.

All of the original pine floors remain, as do all the paneled doors. All the ground floor windows extend to the floor, with the exception of the windows in the rear. All of the gables have long inset windows. All of the windows are capped with decorative molded lintels. The front and rear doors, which occur at each end of the central hall, have transoms and side lights decorated with pilasters which are similar to the ones in the interior cabinets. The gallery has square posts with molded bases and capitals surmounted by an entablature with double brackets.

Aside from the aforementioned move, the house has undergone few changes over the years. Changes include the above mentioned closed-in corridor and cornices, the installation of bathrooms and closets, and the removal of some canvas wall covering. None of these changes has significantly affected the house's appearance or visual identity.

Specific dates	House built in 1891 Blanchard's period of productivity vis a vis his associations with the house: c.1890-c.1915
Builder/Architect	Builder: Newton Crain Blanchard

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)
Criterion B

The Blanchard House is of state significance in the area of politics/government because of its association with Newton Crain Blanchard, who served Louisiana as a United States Congressman, United States Senator, Louisiana Supreme Court Associate Justice, and governor.

Because the house is the only extant residence associated with a historic personage of statewide importance, it is being nominated for significance at the state level.

The house was built in 1891 by Blanchard, who was at that time a United States Congressman. At about the same time he began construction on an elaborate Queen Anne house in Shreveport, which was destroyed in the 1930's. Apparently the present house was his country residence while the Shreveport house was his primary residence. However, since the Shreveport structure is no longer extant, the present house, as far as can be determined, is the only extant residence associated with Governor Blanchard.

There is no question that Blanchard was a prominent political figure in late nineteenth and early twentieth century Louisiana. In 1880 he was elected to the United States House of Representatives and served in this capacity until he was appointed as United States Senator in 1894. From 1897 until 1903 Blanchard was an associate justice of the Louisiana Supreme Court. He served as governor of the state from 1904 until 1908.

As governor, Blanchard is, generally speaking, regarded as a reformer. Outstanding reforms accomplished during his administration include considerable progress in education, the enactment of the direct primary, a reduction in gubernatorial patronage, and the enactment of various conservation measures.

Of these Blanchard's accomplishments in the area of education are the most significant. It must be remembered that education had been largely neglected in late nineteenth century Louisiana and the illiteracy rate was extremely high. Although Blanchard was not able to solve this problem, at least the beginnings of change can be seen in his administration. For example, under Blanchard and Superintendent of Education James B. Aswell, appropriations for public schools increased from \$1.5 million in 1904 to \$3.5 million in 1908, which made it possible for 66,000 more children to be enrolled. Another example is the requirement of stricter standards for teacher certification. Despite this progress, the school system was still far from adequate. However, the situation in 1908 (after Blanchard left office) was far better than it had been in 1900.

Blanchard's last public service was as president of the 1913 Louisiana Constitutional Convention. He died in 1922.

Upon Blanchard's death, his daughter, Ethel Blanchard Smith, inherited the Blanchard House. She sold it to DeWitt James, and the present owner purchased it from the James family in 1969.

Major Bibliographical References

Research Report on Blanchard House Prepared by Owner, Ella James Keppinger. Report based on interviews with Blanchard family members and others, " primary sources, and secondary sources. Located in Blanchard House National Register file, State Historic Preservation Office, Baton Rouge.

Shively, Hazel. "The Political Career of Newton Crain Blanchard." M. A. thesis, LSU, 1945.

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Rapides Parish Conveyance Records, Rapides Parish Courthouse, Alexandria.