The Atchafalaya National Heritage Area

Selected Level 0 Cultural Landscape Assessments

2010

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This study was initiated by the State of Louisiana, Department of Culture, Recreation, and Tourism, in order to fulfill federal mandates related to funding and designation of the Atchafalaya National Heritage Area. Debra Credeur, Executive Director of the Atchafalaya National Heritage Area spearheaded the selection of the cultural resources that were surveyed, in order to represent the region in areal extent, cultural resource type, and importance of the different resources in the basin.

The primary resources for the site selection process were 1) the National Park Service Cultural Landscape Management Guideline, and 2) a Heritage Resource Screening Process used by a similar heritage area with an approved Management Plan. This process selects resources under the broader categories of cultural, historical, natural and recreational, which is consistent with our enabling legislation, and then breaks these categories down further into themes. The National Park Service Planning Team then consulted with the State of Louisiana Architectural Historian and National Register Coordinator to select National Historic Landmarks and other cultural landscapes that reflect heritage area themes. Effort was made to have all types of landscapes represented as well as all 14 parishes. The individual assessments will be used as references for similar types of resources for projects in the future.

Suzanne Turner Associates was contracted to conduct a “Level 0” assessment of selected properties within the Atchafalaya National Heritage Area, and to document the basic history of the site, construct a bibliography and partial literature review for each subject property, and document existing threats to the cultural assets of the region. Property owners or managers were contacted for their personal view on potential threats and these are listed along with each property survey. This format serves as the model with which to conduct Level 0 surveys for remaining assets within the Heritage Area.
Figure 1: Map showing the cultural resources assessed for this Park Reconnaissance Survey.
Figure 2: From Sheldon, 1879, *American painters: eighty-three examples of their work carved on wood.*
Beautiful is the land, with its prairies and forests of fruit-trees;
Under the feet a garden of flowers, and the bluest of heavens
Bending above, and resting its dome on the walls of the forest.
They who dwell there have named it the Eden of Louisiana.

Atchafalaya, The Lakes, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Occupying the heart of the state of Louisiana and containing many of its important water courses, the Atchafalaya Heritage Area possesses such a unique array of natural features that a culture like no other has developed within its bounds. This huge area of fourteen parishes contains the nation’s largest river basin delta, with bayous, cypress swamps, and marshes. The difficult nature of its terrain has meant that the region has been sparsely settled over most of recorded history, and much of the land remains a wilderness.

The place has been home to cultural groups who sought refuge for various reasons, and who found within this edenic landscape a wealth of resources for anyone willing to work the land and waterways. Abundant food from the waters, boundless timber supplies from the forests, wildlife to hunt and process for the table and for other uses provide the setting for a subsistence lifestyle, or for commercial ventures if one has the entrepreneurial drive.

The isolated situation of those who lived in the interior of the basin meant that the native cultures of Acadians, French, Native Americans, and African Americans were maintained and passed from generation to generation, in contrast to the kind of cultural blending that occurred in more populated areas. The languages, culinary arts, handcrafts, and lifestyles remain unique today, and give the area a distinctive quality, unlike any other American place.

The urbanized communities of the region are distinct as well, having been settled by specific cultural groups who have grown sugar cane, rice, and cotton on the surrounding land; their villages they built landmarks, institutions, and customs around their native cultures, adapting them and responding to the exceptional character of the Atchafalaya landscape. These communities celebrate their traditions with annual festivals, sharing their foodways, music, and crafts with a broad audience.

In the Atchafalaya Heritage Area, nature and culture have coalesced for centuries to create a place of incredible drama, with some of the state’s most majestic trees, most interesting and abundant wildlife, most amazing cuisine, and ways of living on the water like nowhere else in America. It is a place where one can still truly get lost—its vastness is difficult to imagine, its pathways blending with the water courses, making it difficult to retrace one’s route. The Atchafalaya holds within its boundaries examples of what makes Louisiana a place like no other, a culture rich in history, natural resources, and tradition.
The 25 different landscapes chosen for this report represent a small cross section of the diversity that exists within the basin. From Catholic cathedrals to cotton gins to prehistoric Indian mounds, the Atchafalaya encompasses such a broad cross section of Louisiana history that it becomes a microcosm for the state and its varied cultures. Formed at the confluence of Old River – a distributary outlet of the Mississippi River – and its junction with the Red River, the Atchafalaya River and Basin work as a major outlet for Mississippi River flooding during times of high water, such as springtime melts.

Originally blocked by large log jams made up of cypress snags and other debris, the State of Louisiana decided in 1832 to clear the navigational obstructions, in order to open the Atchafalaya and Red Rivers to commerce from the Gulf of Mexico inland to Shreveport and points beyond. At the time, this seemed like an obvious action, to increase river trade and open up yet another important transportation route. However, the Atchafalaya geographically flows at a lower elevation than the Mississippi River, and over time, more and more of the great river began to flow down the Atchafalaya.

After the Flood of 1927, the federal government realized that there was an imminent danger of the Mississippi changing course, and decreed that no more than 30% of the flow of the Mississippi was to be diverted through the Atchafalaya drainage basin. It has been maintained at that level since that time. An unusually high springtime flood in 1983 was the most recent potential catastrophe, when the Old River Control Structure was partially undermined and began to drop unexpectedly. Only through emergency engineering and construction measures was the control structure saved, and an “avulsion” of the Mississippi River prevented, which would have changed its dominant flow to the Atchafalaya Basin. The economic, environmental, and cultural disaster that an avulsion would cause is incalculable.

Recently, the Ecoinformatics Collaboratory at the Gund Institute for Ecological Economics at the University of Vermont calculated the annual value that extensive wetland ecosystems provide in mitigating flood hazards and storm surge inundations from hurricanes. They valued each wetland ecosystem acre at $6,960/acre, which would create an annual value for the Atchafalaya Basin wetlands at just over $406 million dollars annually. If you include fresh marsh, bottomland hardwoods, cypress swamps, and open water within the basin, the number jumps to $2.6 billion dollars per annum. This is only calculating the mitigation value of the ecosystem to the United States (Bagstad, et al. 2010, 43).

As a resource for the State of Louisiana, the region, and the United States of America; and an international destination for travelers interested in the deltas, wetlands, Creole and Cajun cultures, and their associated music, food, celebrations, and lifestyle; the Atchafalaya Basin is an asset to the world, and its continued existence and protection are a priority for the state, country, and international agencies.
Figure 3: Braided channels in the Atchafalaya Basin. This pattern of river flow is indicative of faster flowing water. Slower channels flow in very wide turns and loops back and forth, similar to the Mississippi River. (Kniffen and Hilliard, 59)

Figure 4: Brashear City, now Morgan City at the terminus of the Atchafalaya River. (Reuss, 53)
Bibliography and Partial Literature Review


Threats

The Atchafalaya Basin corridor is currently threatened where it exits into the Gulf of Mexico. The British Petroleum oil disaster has adversely affected each of the parishes that are adjacent to the Gulf. These include Terrebonne, St. Mary, and Iberia Parishes. The full extent of potential damage is still being surveyed at this point, and it could take months or years for these areas to fully recover ecologically and economically. Another potential issue involves the current hurricane season. There is the threat that underwater, dissolved distillates could affect parishes further inland if a significant storm surge were to occur.

According to Martin Reuss, much of the ecological damage caused by projects related to stormwater management, oil drilling, and levee district work occurred in the middle of the twentieth century. Current regulations and laws provide for much greater oversight and environmental review before significant activities occur in the basin.

The following threats were identified by J. A. Rummler, an ANHA Commission member:

**Atchafalaya Basin (in Pointe Coupee) – outdoor recreation, environment, and land**

With respect to the total acreage of land in the Parish that comprise “Basin lands” (i.e. undeveloped land within the protection levees), only a relatively small portion (consisting of a limited area in the southwestern part of the Parish containing a portion of the Sherburne WMA) is ultimately open to the public. There are also some state highway rights-of-way from which the public can view forested portions of the Basin lands while driving. The part of Pointe Coupee Parish north of the Morganza Floodway that is surrounded by levees (containing such towns as Batchelor, Innis and Lettsworth) is technically a part of the same USGS hydrologic unit that contains the entirety of what is typically thought of as the Basin. The primary land use in this part of the parish is agricultural though there are two industrial plastics facilities. This area contains conservation servitudes of the Wetlands Reserve Program which provide critical black bear habitat. Local agricultural stakeholders have brought up concerns about drainage impairments but as of yet the Parish Police Jury has not been successful in getting funding for watershed planning that it would like to undertake to document and ultimately quantify these problems.

The forebay area of the Morganza Floodway is also used primarily for agriculture. However, prolonged flooding of the forebay, which many local stakeholders believe is exacerbated by the floodway guide and mainline Mississippi River levees, makes this area extremely risky for agricultural use. Additionally a stand of bottomland hardwood (BLH) forest that had existed in the forebay has been destroyed by this flooding over the course of the last 20 to 25 years. One of the few remaining trees left in this former area of BLH is a documented nesting site for the American Bald Eagle. Downstream of the relief channel through the Morganza Spillway Structure, there is an expansive forested area that also forms important black bear habitat. This area is also sporadically utilized for timber harvesting. Supposedly, the quality of the timber and the BLH habitat in this forested area downstream of the spillway structure is also suffering due to prolonged flooding. The environmental restoration of habitats within the Morganza Floodway, as well as the optimization of drainage (in the forebay specifically) for agricultural stakeholders, is the subject of a study that is being undertaken by USACE being managed by the consulting firm of GEC in Baton Rouge.

In most of the area of the Basin lands in Pointe Coupee, hunting leases are very common. Landowners may sometimes be willing to grant permission for other recreational users to enter but this would ultimately be on a case by case basis.
Level 0: Atchafalaya National Heritage Area - Alma Plantation, Sugar Mill and Quarters Archaeological site No. 16PC76, Lakeland, LA

Brief Synopsis

Alma Plantation, Ltd., composed of members of the Pitcher family, “whose sugar activities in Pointe Coupée Parish extend back over three-quarters of a century” (Louisiana State Guide, 650), was once the property of Julien Poydstras.¹ There is an often-repeated account² that the 1795 Pointe Coupee slave conspiracy took place at Alma, but this has been refuted by local historian Brian Costello who has demonstrated that Poydstras did not acquire present-day Alma until 1801, purchasing it from Benjamin Farrar’s heirs. According to Costello, Alma never served as Poydstras’ resident plantation. (Costello, 50)

Alma is today privately owned by the Hampton P. Stewart Family and is one of the parish’s largest sugar producers and site of Pointe Coupée’s only functioning sugar mill. Its last competitor ceased operations in 1925. At Alma, the significance lies in the fact that the mill is still fully operational, demonstrating a factory that has evolved through the process of modernization, surviving the many challenges of economic downturns and natural disasters to become the centralized mill for the area. In 1991, Alma ground a combined total of 346,000 tons of sugar cane from its own 2000 acres and from 35 other growers. (Drummond, 173) There is an extant plantation store that dates from the turn of the century and is unique in that it still functions as a store for plantation residents. Originally located on 416, it was moved to its present site in the 1930s, facing the plantation road and nearer the residents that it serves. There are also a group of workers’ houses in their original locations, as well as the plantation bell located to the side of the plantation road. Through the history of Alma Plantation, one can essentially trace the history of sugar cane production in Pointe Coupee for the past century.

¹ Julien Poydstras de Lalland (1746-1824), a native of Nantes, France, came to New Orleans in 1768 and managed to accumulate enough capital to purchase significant land holdings in Pointe Coupée and West Baton Rouge Parishes. Poydstras’ resident plantation was Dubertrand, where in 1798 he entertained the Duc d’Orleans, who later became Louis Philippe, king of France. He befriended Governor Claiborne, and through this relationship held numerous political offices. After Poydstras’ death, his plantation passed through a series of owners, bearing the names of Poydstras Hall, Red Store, and Schexnayder. (Costello, 38-39) He died without heirs, and through his will not only provided for the emancipation of his slaves, but left most of his fortune to parish educational and charitable institutions. He also left a dowry for local women who were destitute.

² The WPA Louisiana State Guide of 1941 states that Alma was the center of a slave conspiracy in 1795 which culminated in the Black Rebellion, “an uprising inspired by the success of the Santo Domingo Revolution and designed for the massacre of every white in the district—with the exception of the adult females.” The attempted revolt failed, and twenty-five slaves were killed in the aftermath. The same source also incorrectly states that the plantation house, today the home of the H. W. Stewart Family, contains two of the rooms of the original house built by Poydstras in 1789 (Louisiana State Guide, 650).
Agriculture was Pointe Coupée’s chief source of income in the early 1900s. By 1905, cotton surpassed sugar as the parish’s principal crop and “Alma was one of the few plantations which was still planted in sugar.” Sugar cane production was almost non-existent on the Island of False River and along the west bank of False River from 1880s until 1920s, before good paved or gravel roads, because hauling during wet autumn and winter was so difficult unless farmers were located on the railroad line, enabling them to ship cane a little at a time. When the roads were eventually improved, sugar cane planting increased in these areas. (Costello, 180) A crevasse (levee break) in 1912 flooded the entire parish up to the railroad embankment at New Roads. An early freeze in 1914 struck a devastating blow to the cane crop. Couple with the regional and national disasters of the Flood of 1927, the Great Depression, and the failure of banks, the agricultural concerns that survived did so on credit and because they were able to manage well with scarce resources. As a result of these setbacks, mortgages were foreclosed, properties seized, and the community of New Roads suffered an economic downturn until World War II. (Costello, 181) Rural residents fared better than those in town.

Mechanization contributed to the prosperity of some of the larger plantations, although it did not bode well for those in need of employment in these hard times. The invention of a sugar cane harvester in 1938 by False River planter Allan Ramsey Wurtele revolutionized the industry. This stripping, cutting, and bunching device pulled by tractor replaced the work of 50-60 men, cutting a ton of cane in four minutes (Costello, 187). The Wurtele harvester also automated the planting of cane as well. During the direst of times, this invention by a local planter had a profound impact on economic and social fabric of parish. (Costello, 187)

The availability of labor for the sugar harvest became an issue, despite mechanization, with the coming of the war years. “During World War I, Mexican laborers were brought onto Alma to assist in the 1917 harvest. During the 1940s, as many as 400 workers were imported each season from Mississippi. Primarily mill workers, these Mississippians declined in numbers to less than 100 in 1948. German prisoners of war worked on Alma during 1943-1945. In 1946, Jamaican blacks were hired, and in 1947, Bahamian blacks” (Costello, 208).

Alma Plantation serves as a case study for the effects of mechanization. “In 1932, only two tractors were used on the plantation, the bulk of the work being performed by 165 mules. Tractors and mules on Alma numbered four and 110, respectively, in 1940. By 1949, however, Alma’s fleet of tractors had swelled to 20 and only 20 mules remained in service. Soon, their services were replaced as well. Tractors operated by a single human, in some instances, performed the work that had previously required 12 or more mules and six to eight human teamsters. As a result, Alma’s field ‘hands’ decreased in numbers from 200 in 1935 to 90 in 1949” (Costello, 208).

The purchase of a Wurtele sugar cane harvester in 1938, and of three additional mechanical harvesters during the Second World War, resulted in further labor requirements. “Each harvester, operated by two men, cut from 125 to 200 tons of cane per day, a job which had hitherto required approximately 40 human ‘cutters.’ Moreover, a mechanical conveyor in the sugar mill, operated by two men, displaced the old method of 18 men loading cane by hand” (Costello, 208).
In 1907, Alma purchased and installed a narrow gauge railway to haul cane from Alma and neighboring plantations to the Alma mill. “It ran in three directions from the mill: west to and south through Oakland Plantation, east to Maysville Plantation and south to Erwinville.” This rail served the mill’s transportation needs until 1946, when hauling was taken over by trucks.

All of these changes in the industry resulted in a tremendous reduction in the population living and working at Alma. The number of families employed shrank from 145 in 1932 to 60 in 1949. “As late as 1929, hundreds of blacks were housed at Alma along the “quarters” lane heading to the mill and in other smaller “quarters” areas back in the fields. Eventually 62 of these houses were demolished, many not to be replaced. In 1949, Alma’s tenants were housed in 58 residences in the quarters and eight in the field. (Costello, 207-208)

The Stewart Family residence at Alma is located along Highway 416, set back from the road and nestled in a grove of mature live oak trees. The Historic American Building Survey dates this house as early 20th century. (Poesch and Bacot, 378) A picket fence encloses a small ornamental garden; the entire residential property is planted with mature live oaks. A remnant of a drainage ditch to the east of the house has been landscaped with iris and other wetland plants, and can be viewed from the road.

Figure 5: Alma Plantation Big House. (Drummond, 162)
Figure 6: Plantation Store at Alma Plantation still operating today. (Drummond, 186)

Figure 7: Alma Plantation, portion of original brick wall incorporated in the present sugar mill. (Drummond, 179)
Figure 8: Plantation Bell, Alma Plantation. (Drummond, 201)

Figure 95. Alma Plantation bell
Figure 76. Generalized composite of a quarter-house yard (Rehder 1971).

Figure 9: Quarter house layout, Alma. (Drummond, 171)
Partial Literature Review and Bibliography


Threats

Currently there are no known threats to Alma Plantation. As long as the economy of sugar cane production holds steady, and the weather, including hurricanes and early freezes, doesn’t become worse than the last five years, which have been a challenge, Alma seems secure. The uncertainty of sugar tariffs and federal legislation that favors domestic sugar production, from one administration to the next, has always been a concern for Louisiana sugar growers.
Level 0: Atchafalaya National Heritage Area - Avery Island

Brief Synopsis

In the landscape of south Louisiana, well known for its extremely low topography and flat land features, Avery Island stands out with an elevation above sea level of 158 feet. One of five salt domes that border the state’s Gulf of Mexico coastline, Avery Island has been the home of the McIlhenny family since 1868, when Judge Daniel Dudley Avery, for whom the island is named, brought the island under a single ownership. Of the 5,000 acres that comprise Avery Island (ten miles in diameter), 2,500 acres are underlain by a salt dome. Not technically an island, the dome is surrounded on all sides by bayous, salt marsh, cypress swamps, and Bayou Petite Anse; the island was known as Petite Anse Island during its early years of settlement.

The Louisiana salt domes—Jefferson Island, Avery Island, Weeks Island, Cote Blanche Island, and Belle Isle – are geological structures called upthrusts, and because of their unique elevations, they support a wide variety of habitats that do not exist in the surrounding marshes and prairie terraces (Reese and Thieret, 251). The native vegetation includes forested hills and deep, shaded ravines that support rare species of ferns and mosses. The soil averages “about ten feet in thickness and is a very fertile brown loam,” enabling the land, where the slope permits, to support agriculture such as sugar cane and capsicum peppers (Reese and Thieret, 252). Petroleum deposits exist on the flanks of the domes, consequently significant drilling activity has occurred on all of the salt dome islands; pipelines, and abandoned and operating wells are evident along the island’s lower reaches. On Avery Island, the salt dome is located eight feet from the surface, which has allowed the salt to be mined by shafts, rather than by forcing hot water into drilled holes, creating dissolved brine, and then crystallization through evaporation (Reese and Thieret, 255).

Native American settlement on Avery Island dates to 12,000 years ago. The Banana Bayou site is a man-made earthen mound, 80 feet in diameter and three feet tall, which has been dated from 2490-260 B.C., and associated with the Meso-Indian Period. This period is distinguished by small nomadic groups who remained in camp locations longer than their predecessors, exploited smaller geographic areas, and returned seasonally to favored campsites. Meso-Indians subsisted off the native fruits of the region, and on the game and other wildlife and shellfish of the waterways. Banana Bayou is considered to be one of the earliest mounds in the United States (www.crt.state.la.us/archaeology/virtualbooks/LAPREHIS/paleo.htm, accessed, 8/18/2010). Archaeologists have used basket fragments, stone implements, and pottery excavated on the island to date the first salt brining industry on Avery Island to 1300 A.D. (http://www.fundinguniverse.com/company-histories/McIlhenny-Company-Company-History.html, accessed 8/18/2010).

Avery Island’s rich natural resources account for its early settlement by European as well as native peoples, with its discovery by French explorers in the 18th century. Elizabeth Triett is said to have been the first post-colonial settler on the island. As a Catholic under persecution by the British in 1780, she and her family settled in Opelousas. Her husband soon deserted her and their five children;
subsequently the Opelousas community banned her as a single, abandoned mother. Apparently, as these six wandered seeking a place to settle, they met members of the Attakapas Indian tribe, who offered an empty island that the Indians no longer inhabited. After locating on Petite Anse Island, it was her fifteen-year-old son John Hayes, who accidentally discovered a brine spring when he knelt to take a drink. He and his mother understood the potential profit, for salt was a precious commodity not only as a condiment, but as a preservative and an ingredient in medicines. (Rothfeder, 21-22) Andrew Jackson's troops are said to have used Avery Island salt in the Battle of New Orleans (http://www.fundinguniverse.com/company-histories/McIlhenny-Company-Company-History.html, accessed 8/18/2010). Triett died in 1815; her son developed a large plantation on her land, purchasing slaves, and becoming one of the more profitable planters in Iberia Parish.

In 1818 John Craig Marsh of New Jersey began moving his slaves to Louisiana, seeking a place to re-establish his agricultural venture, as New Jersey was then considering legislation that would ban slavery. Upon reading William Darby's Immigrant's Guide to the Western and Southwestern States and Territories (1818), in which the author described Petite Anse's forty species of trees and shrubs and testified that “the land is excellent and consists of about 3,000 acres of highly productive soil” (Darby, cited in Rothfeder, 24), Marsh visited the island, saw how productive Hayes’ land was, and selected a site for a sugar plantation on the undeveloped southern portion of the island. Little did he know that this parcel included the land that would become most central to the McIlhenny business of the future.

About 1834, a meeting occurred that would change the face (and the name) of Petite Anse Island forever. A young attorney of the circuit court from Baton Rouge, Judge Daniel Dudley Avery, was travelling the region and anxious to meet Marsh, who had by then become tremendously wealthy by virtue of the land’s fertility and Marsh’s astute management. He also met Marsh’s daughter Sarah Craig, and by 1837 the couple had married. In 1839 at the age of 60 John Marsh determined to return to his native New Jersey farm, and divided his Louisiana land among his three male heirs—his son George, Daniel Avery, and another son-in-law. Avery felt that neither of the two were suitable business partners, and so over the course of the next thirty years, he was able to slowly acquire their shares of the land, as well as that of Hayes. In so doing, Judge Avery obtained possession of the entire island; it was his wish that the island always remain in the ownership of his descendents (Bassich, 2).

The final chapter of this prelude to the McIlhenny business venture occurred in the 1840s when Avery made the acquaintance of Edmund McIlhenny. McIlhenny was the second eldest of nine sons of a Scottish immigrant from Maryland and his wife Ann. His father died in 1832, so Edmund quit school at the age of seventeen to attempt to help his mother support the large family. He went to New Orleans seeking opportunity, and quickly worked his way through the ranks of the financial services business at the Bank of Louisiana. Through shrewd self-promotion, he was able to accrue a personal fortune while rising in the industry. He clearly had talent in sales and marketing that would eventually catapult him into the marketplace of commodities rather than finance. But as he built his reputation, he made connections with the region’s most wealthy and entrepreneurial businessmen, including Judge Avery. But the important meeting was actually that of McIlhenny and the daughter of Daniel and Sarah Marsh—Mary Eliza Avery. Though separated by an age difference of twenty-three years, they courted during her pre-adult years, and in 1859, when Mary was 21, they married on the island (Rothfeder, 26-
27). Although living in New Orleans, McIlhenny enjoyed gardening, planted pepper seeds from Mexico (Capsicum frutescens) on the island, and began experimenting with mixtures of salt, vinegar, and pepper to make a pepper sauce. However, the Civil War’s eruption two years later interrupted life for all associated with the island and the South.

During the war, Avery managed the mining of salt on the island, supplying salt to the blockaded Confederate states until the invasion and capture of the island and salt works by Union troops in 1863. The Averys and McIlhennys spent the rest of the war in Texas and upon their return found the island in ruins, although the pepper plants had survived. McIlhenny resumed his pepper sauce mixing; friends suggested the sauce for additional income during the difficult Reconstruction times; and the rest is history. The name Tabasco, chosen by McIlhenny, was a Central American Indian word that meant “land where soil is hot and humid.” After an initial trial run of 350 samples sent to wholesalers in New York in 1868, McIlhenny received thousands of orders and by 1870, a patent for his Tabasco brand pepper sauce had been granted. Thus began his full-time career in the manufacture of pepper sauce (http://www.fundinguniverse.com/company-histories/McIlhenny-Company-Company-History.html, 2, accessed 8/18/2010). The same basic process of mashing peppers on the day of harvest, mixing them with Avery Island salt, aging the mixture for thirty days in wooden barrels, adding the “best French wine vinegar,” and another thirty days of aging, stirring, and straining, is still practiced on the island today.

The management of the business has been carried on by members of the family for all but a brief period since then. Notable in the line of company presidents was E. A. “Ned” McIlhenny. Not only successful in the manufacturing business, he made major contributions to the preservation of the environment of Avery Island. As a world traveler and participant in numerous scientific expeditions prior to taking over the company, Mr. McIlhenny had become keenly aware of the fragility of native species. In 1892, he decided to re-establish the snowy egret, a Louisiana native that was nearly extinct because of the popularity of the feathers for ladies’ hats. Today “Bird City” rookery on the island serves as home for thousands of egrets and migratory birds. E. A. was also an enthusiastic amateur botanist and horticulturist, bringing to the island exotic plants from his many travels. The result became Jungle Gardens, begun in the 1890s as McIlhenny’s private garden, but opened to the public in the 1920s, and the Jungle Gardens Nursery. The development of this garden and growth of the nursery continued throughout his lifetime. At their peak in the first half of the 20th century, the gardens contained extensive collections of bamboo, camellias, and azaleas; remains of these plantings still survive in the gardens, which are open to the public daily. The headquarters of the McIlhenny Company sits on the location of the original Tabasco factory. A “new” factory was built near the entrance to the island. Tours of the factory are offered daily for visitors. The remainder of Avery Island is closed to the public and is inhabited by descendents of the family.
Figure 10: 1871 survey plan of Petite Anse Island showing the salt domes and bore holes. (Bernard, 28)
Figure 11: 1887 drawing of Tabasco pepper from E. McIlhenny, New Iberia, LA. (Bernard, 14)
Figure 12: Harvesting peppers on Avery Island. (Bergerie, 160)

Figure 13: Edmund McIlhenny’s hand written recipe for Tabasco sauce, overlain with a photograph of the first manufacturing facility, known as “the Laboratory.” (Bernard, 33)
Figure 14: The second Tabasco factory on Avery Island, circa 1920, with cold frame in foreground, used for growing pepper plant seedlings. (Bernard, 112)
Figure 15: Crates of Tabasco peppers. (Bernard, 105)

Figure 16: Pepper mash aging in white oak barrels on Avery Island. (Bernard, 207)
Figure 17: The rookery or “Bird City” at Jungle Gardens on Avery Island. Noted biologist Sir Julian Huxley visited Avery Island in 1916. (Bernard, 104)

Figure 18: While the salt dome here on Avery Island looks obscure to most observers, on an island along the Gulf Coast, this is an oddity and distinctly unique. (Spearing, 84)
Figure 19: Jungle Gardens. Bridge and garden house on mound in distance. (Bergerie, 145)

Figure 20: Aerial view of Avery Island, showing the higher topographic salt dome portion of the island with surrounding marsh and swamp. (Kniffen and Hilliard, 67)


Threats

The fact that the coastline of Louisiana is retreating poses a threat to the stability of the geology and ecology of the salt domes. The island’s loss of mature forest canopy in recent hurricanes has left it more vulnerable to erosion and to devastation from severe storms in the future.

Jungle Gardens is supported by the family corporation, and is a minor part of their business, probably requiring an annual subsidy. As an important part of the cultural history of the island, its future may be in jeopardy, as gardens require more than simple maintenance. The garden will need management, extensive replanting, and long-range planning if it is to survive as a recognizable entity.
Level 0: Atchafalaya National Heritage Area – Bayou Plaquemine and U.S. Government Lock

Brief Synopsis

Bayou Plaquemine was an important link for the southeast communities of Louisiana and Texas, and was mentioned in Iberville’s journals, as he toured the newly claimed territory for France. The Bayou was a distributary of the Mississippi River, allowing for boat navigation through the Atchafalaya Basin on to Texas. The area surrounding Bayou Plaquemine was settled in the 1700s due to its access corridor.

The Bayou Plaquemine Lock was designed by Colonel George Washington Goethals, engineer for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, who also designed and constructed the Panama Canal Lock. The lock was constructed over a fourteen year period, spanning from 1895 to its completion in 1909. At that time, the lock was the highest fresh water lift of any lock in the world at 51 feet, which was an engineering feat because of its unique gravity water flow system. Historically, the lock served as the northern-most terminus of the Intracoastal canal, allowing cargo to be transported between the Mississippi River to the Atchafalaya Basin and then on to Texas.

The Plaquemine Lock House is significant architecturally because of its Dutch influence. It is often called the “Dutch Castle on the Hill.” The building was constructed with white glazed ceramic tiles for its reflective qualities to make it easier for river traffic to locate. At the time there were no light houses along the Mississippi River.

The increased boat traffic during and after World War II put a strain on the locks and there was demand for a larger lock. Ultimately a new lock was constructed in Port Allen in 1961 and the Plaquemine Lock was decommissioned after 52 years of operation. Thirteen years after the locks closing, the Army Corps of Engineers built a levee across the mouth of Bayou Plaquemine, permanently closing its access to the Mississippi River.

Once the bayou was closed off from the Mississippi, the bayou began to degrade. The fish population declined due to stagnation, lower water levels, and increased bacteria due to low flow capacity. Bayou Plaquemine more recently began receiving fresh water again from the Mississippi River thanks to the Fresh Water Pump Project in 2006. The Army Corps of Engineers, Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, and the City of Plaquemine worked together to pump fresh water back into the Bayou as well as to re-establish the fish population.

The Plaquemine Lock and 14-acre area was placed on the National Register of Historic Places after Gary James Hebert fought to keep it from being destroyed. Today the lock house serves as a visitor center and museum for the historic site.
Figure 21: Location map of Plaquemine Lock Site. (http://www.crt.state.la.us/parks/printables/iplaqlock.aspx, accessed on May 27, 2010)

Figure 22: Image of the Plaquemine Lock structure as it exists today, functioning as a museum. (http://ltgov.la.gov/parks/iPlaqlock.aspx, accessed on May 27, 2010)

Figure 23: Bayou Plaquemine lock in 1909. (Spearing, 77)
Figure 24: Graphic showing the connection from the Mississippi River through Bayou Plaquemine and throughout the Atchafalaya Basin. (Reuss, 2004. 27)
Partial Literature Review and Bibliography


**Threats**

This site – along with seven other historic sites in Louisiana – has been closed due to budget cuts, as of July 26, 2010. The City of Plaquemine, Iberville Parish, and a newly formed friends organization are attempting to combine efforts and resources to reopen the lock as soon as possible using local resources.

The lock itself is in need of complete restoration. It was used continuously for over 50 years until 1961, when the Corps of Engineers closed off the connection with the Mississippi River permanently. No renovation work has been done since that time.

The lock house itself has minor cracking due to settling, but has been renovated and maintained. The support structures and maintenance sheds are all in working order.
Level One:  Atchafalaya National Heritage Area - Bayou Teche

Brief Synopsis

Bayou Teche is the most famous and, according to Harnett Kane, “the most handsomely endowed” bayou in the state, curling for 125 miles through south central Louisiana, west of the Atchafalaya Swamp (225). The slow-moving bayou runs through the four parishes of St. Landry, St. Martin, Iberia, and St. Mary. Notable towns located along the Teche include Port Barre, Arnaudville, Breaux Bridge (the crayfish capital), St. Martinville (of Evangeline fame), New Iberia (established 1779 on the Prairie terrace, early commercial center for rice and sugar cane), Jeanerette (the site of the Chitimacha Indian reservation, noted for its exquisite double-walled cane baskets), Berwick, Franklin, and Patterson.

The waterway, named for the Chitimacha Indian word for “snake,” was the main channel of the Mississippi River between 3,800 and 3,500 years ago. But its prehistoric past is not what gives the Teche its cultural primacy today. During the time of the Acadian migration from eastern Canada between 1765 and 1785, these settlers saw the Atchafalaya basin and its distributaries “as a highly porous landscape that allowed them to roam widely within it, to settle its western edge along Bayou Teche, and maintain constant contact between the Mississippi and the Teche” (Estaville, 85). Essentially, the culture of this part of the state developed along the Teche and because of the Teche, which provided the economic link to markets, and the social connections among and within the peoples of the region.

People of Acadian descent became cattle ranchers on the rich grasslands of the nearby Attakapas prairie, or engaged in small-scale farming and fishing along the bayou’s banks. Anglo settlers coming into the region after the Louisiana Purchase established successful sugar cane plantations, lining the bayou with mansions of architectural note. The Shadows-on-the-Teche in New Iberia, a property of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, is an example of a planter who built his family mansion on the bayou, although his cane acreage was located on nearby Grand Cote, one of the salt domes. The settlement patterns along Bayou Teche became an interesting patchwork of Acadian settlements side-by-side with Anglo mansions, shaded by ancient, moss draped live oaks. In some ways, the Teche’s banks remind one of the kinds of views that line the Mississippi, but smaller in scale, more intimate in view, without the barrier of the huge, engineered levees, and without the petro-chemical industry.

Although early travel on the bayou was by personal boat, by 1821 the Attakapas Steamboat Company served Bayou Teche, and in 1826 the steamer Louisville was the first to reach St. Martinville, the most important Cajun town on Bayou Teche (Estaville, 89). By 1850 four steamboats regularly travelled the two days from New Orleans up Bayou Teche, delivering and boarding freight and passengers at Franklin, New Iberia, and St. Martinville, and stopping for commerce at all intermediate landings (Ibid). Because movement by water was far easier and more expedient than by land, many daily activities that typically would have taken place in town instead occurred on the bayou via boat. For example, a letter from the daughter of the mistress of the Shadows in 1857 describes this bayou commerce: “There is a large flatboat filled with every variety of plants and evergreens gone up the Bayou. You will find the advertisement in the Banner. You must look out for her” (Weeks Family Papers, Allie to Mary Clara
Moore). In essence, markets that might otherwise have been located permanently in town instead floated to their customers via the bayou.

The Bayou Teche’s importance for transportation made it attractive for Federal troops during the Civil War. In November, 1862, four Federal gunboats sailed up the bayou, firing upon the Confederate ship “Cotton,” and seizing horses, mules, and sugar in large quantities. Troops set up headquarters on the first floor of the Shadows in New Iberia, damaging many properties in the area.

After the Civil War, schooners again sailed up the Teche, engaging in “lucrative extraregional commerce based on South Louisiana’s agricultural and timber production” (Estaville, 89). The “glory years of the cypress industry” were between the 1870s and the 1920s, when steamboats towed 600-700 year old red cypress logs through Bayou Teche and the Atchafalaya River (Spearing, 66). Farmers shipped tons of agricultural commodities to market from ‘Louisiana’s garden’ along Bayou Teche; customized steamboats hauled three to four hundred head of prairie cattle at a time to New Orleans auction lots; and swampers towed huge rafts of cypress logs out of the Atchafalaya Swamp (Estaville, 89). The trading boats, again steamed throughout the bayou country, though this water-borne commerce became much more specialized: “fish, fruit, and ice boats; restaurant boats, saloon boats, and showboats with musicians, dancers, magicians, gamblers, zoos, and later even silent movies, boats with photographers, doctors, and dentists, and, of course, storeboats packed from stem to stern with groceries, dry goods, hardware, notions, and other merchandise” (Estaville, 89-90).

But a transportation and communications revolution was slowly beginning to take place across the south Louisiana countryside by 1830 with the coming of the railroads. By 1848, mail between Franklin and New Orleans was delivered every third day. Eventually the efficiency of rail transport would change the patterns of shipping along Louisiana’s bayous, as would the management of the waterways by the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers. The construction of the levees along the Atchafalaya River in the 1930s resulted in a drastic reduction in the amount of fresh water in Bayou Teche (“Bayou Teche,” Wikipedia). The final and most radical change to transportation in the region was the construction of the interstate highway system, leaving Bayou Teche, for the most part, separated from the fast-track of interstate traffic, and therefore relieved of some of the pressures of development that might have destroyed its scenic and cultural values.
Figure 25: Typical Bayou Teche scene. (Weeks Hall in Kane, 224-225)
Figure 26: Oak and Spanish moss in front of plantation home along Bayou Teche. (Louisiana Dept. of Commerce and Industry, in Kane, 224-225)
Figure 27: Typical Acadian house along Bayou Teche, taken by Richard Koch, noted architectural historian and foremost HABS source. (Koch, in Kane, 224-225)
Figure 28: This scene along Bayou Teche in 1866 shows a “linear” sugar cane plantation running along the bayou, along with a detail view of a sugar house where cane was distilled into molasses and sugar. (Bergerie, 42)
Bibliography and Partial Literature Review


Threats

The threats include continued degradation of the water channel itself through abusive practices by speedboats on the water, and residents along its banks; and the destruction of places and landscapes of historic and cultural significance along the bayou in the name of “progress” or private property rights. Bayou Teche is on the EPA impaired list because the water quality is so poor that it cannot support fish and wildlife propagation. The Teche Project, a citizen-led group with widespread cooperation from public and private institutions and led by Kristen Kordecki, is working ardently to clean up Bayou Teche, reducing non-point source pollution, and supporting education about the bayou’s ecology, culture, and history. Increased education about the preservation of cultural landscapes is necessary to inform bayou communities about the intangible qualities of the Bayou Teche’s corridor—generational continuity, civic pride, scenic beauty, recreational opportunities, etc.

Kordecki states that Bayou Teche is currently on the “303D” list by the EPA due to four major issues:

- High nitrogen content
- High phosphorus content
- Low dissolved oxygen
- Excess quantities of carbofuran, an insecticide used on corn and beans

Kordecki states that the waters of Bayou Teche are supplemented by pumping from the Atchafalaya River, and that situation probably causes some of the nitrogen, phosphorus, and carbofuran problems associated with the Teche, as a portion of these waters originate in the Midwest United States, in the corn belt and agricultural heartland. There is a project in the planning stages to research the origins of each of these water-quality problems to determine the percentages that originate from pumped water as opposed to those from the natural stream flow of the bayou.
Level 0: Atchafalaya National Heritage Area – Chitimacha Indian Reservation

Brief Synopsis

The Chitimacha Indian Reservation is located on Bayou Teche in St. Mary Parish and a Native American legend of “the dying snake” gives the Teche its name (http://onthebayou.org/html.bayou.html, accessed 6/25/2010). The Chitimacha Tribe used the Teche as one of their major trade networks and several mounds are located along the Teche.

The original boundaries of the tribe were “originally defined by four sacred trees: the first was at Maringouin, Louisiana; the second southeast of New Orleans; another at the mouth of the Mississippi; and the last a great cypress located in present-day Cypremort Point State Park” (http://www.dickshovel.com/chi.html, access 6/28/2010). It is believed that their population approached 20,000 at European contact in 1492, living in 12 distinct villages throughout the Mississippi River delta and Atchafalaya basin (http://www.chitimacha.gov/tribal_about_lands.htm, accessed 6/28/2010). In 1706, a member of the Chitimacha Tribe murdered Monsieur de St. Cosme, a French missionary. The French declared war on the Chitimacha and launched repeated attacks on their villages, killing most of the residents. Those that they captured were enslaved, and typically worked on plantations or within New Orleans (Du Pratz, 71-73).

The surviving tribal members basically lived apart from society in the Atchafalaya Basin, and the tribe almost went extinct. “Some 16 or 18 of the tribe were living on Grand river in 1881, but the majority, about 35, lived at Charenton, on the south side of Bayou Teche, in St. Mary’s parish, about 10 miles from the gulf” (Hodge, 286). At that point, there were only six distinct surviving families (http://www.chitimacha.gov/tribal_about/genealogy.htm, accessed 6/28/2010). Today, there are “about 350 Tribal members ... on the Chitimacha Reservation. Total Tribal membership is approximately 950” (http://www.chitimacha.gov/tribal_about_history.htm, accessed 6/28/2010).

The tribe was officially recognized by the United States government in 1917, and for many years, they were the only federally recognized Native American tribe in Louisiana. Culturally, the tribe has maintained their distinct customs, through dance, music, language, and crafts. They produced intricate baskets of native grasses and reeds, and this practice persists to this day (http://www.chitimacha.gov/tribal_life_arts.htm, accessed 6/28/2010).

The Chitimacha language went extinct in 1940 with the death of Delphin Ducloux (http://en.widipedia.org/wiki/Chitimacha_language, accessed 6/28/2010). Fortunately, two prominent linguists, Morris Swadesh and John R. Swanton had documented the language, grammar, and full dictionary in the early nineteenth century. It was their work which allowed the release on January 25, 2010, of “©Rosetta Stone” module of the Chitimacha language, which is available to the general public and is now taught on the reservation (The Advocate, 1/25/2010).

Because reservation and tribal lands are considered sovereign nations, they are not subject to many of the federal laws of the United States. Therefore, Native Americans have often been at the forefront of developing gaming facilities.
In 1985, the Tribe developed a 30,000 square-foot facility for bingo [Cypress Bayou Casino]. 450 slot machines were integrated into the bingo operation in December of 1993.

An expansion of approximately 85,000 square-feet opened in May of 1995. This expansion incorporated another 400 slot machines, as well as a lounge and two restaurants. (http://www.chitimacha.gov/tribal_about_gaming.htm, accessed 6/28/2010).

Figure 29: Chitimacha dancer and musician. (http://www.chitimacha.gov/htm, accessed 6/28/2010).

Figure 30: Chitimacha woman weaving using traditional materials of native grasses and cane. Basket is the traditional “snake” pattern, which is one of the primary Chitimacha symbols. (http://chitimacha.gov.htm, accessed 6/28/2010).
Figure 31: Chitimacha women with cane mat, “Little-Trout” design. (Gregory, et. al., 158)


http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chitimacha_language

http://onthebayou.org/html.bayou.html

http://www.chitimacha.gov/tribal_about_gaming.htm

http://www.chitimacha.gov/tribal_about_genealogy.htm

http://www.chitimacha.gov/tribal_about_history.htm

http://www.chitimacha.gov/tribal_about_lands.htm

http://www.chitimacha.gov/tribal_life_arts.htm

http://www.dickshovel.com/chi.html

Threats

Threats to the programs of the Chitimacha are in the area of critical funding to continue education of their tribal members and maintain their unique and distinct culture. The land is owned by the tribe, the casino and commercial businesses associated with it are profitable, and federal recognition of the Tribe protects the members from dislocation or encroachment.
Cinclare Sugar Mill, located north of Brusly, was the last working sugar mill in West Baton Rouge Parish when it ceased operation in 2005. Cinclare was listed on the National Register for Historic Places as a Historic District in 1968, because it is a rare surviving example of a south Louisiana sugar complex. The existence of the land holding as a working plantation can be traced back to the Louisiana Purchase of 1803, and it has been owned by the same family, the Laws of Ohio, since 1878 (Bradley, 7). Initially four different properties, owned by Jacques Molaison, Louis Daigle, Valentin Hebert, and Lyocade Hebert, these properties were consolidated into a single land holding in 1855 (Bradley, 36-37). The historic district consists of 46 buildings and two structures, including a sugar mill and associated support buildings, a big house or owners’ house, and housing for managers and laborers. The surviving buildings date from 1855, when the original plantation house for Marengo Plantation (the plantation’s earlier name) was built, to 1947, when the concrete block laborers’ houses were constructed.

The landscape of Cinclare is representative of that of much of south Louisiana where sugar cane cultivation has been dominant for the past two hundred years. The principal patterns that organize the landscape are the arpents of the land grants, based upon the French survey system; the ditch and field patterns; and the cluster arrangement of the buildings. As sugar cane production became increasingly mechanized over time, dependence on manual labor decreased, and, in turn, the patterns were altered to conform to the scale of the equipment that began to take the place of the individual hoe, and later the mule-drawn plows. The landscape experienced three major periods of change in its form: the antebellum and postbellum (1803-1880), the modern factory (1880-1930), and the contemporary (1930-present) (Bradley, xi).

During the first period, plantation labor was manual, the Mississippi River was used to transport the sugar to market, and the layout of the plantation elements was linear and oriented to the river. The second period was characterized by the development of the central factory system, with the larger mills becoming the refiners of sugar, and smaller properties shipping their cane to these central mills for processing. The Cinclare mill was modernized and expanded as it became a central factory, processing sugar from smaller plantations within a 75 mile radius (Bradley, 66). The railroad became the transportation mode for getting the sugar to market. A new big house was constructed in 1906, more akin to architectural styles of the Eastern Seaboard, and the original house was moved to a new row of houses for the emerging management class of employees. Additional laborers’ houses were added, including a “hotel,” or boarding house for seasonal labor. These additions to the housing stock gave the layout a more clustered plan than the linear one that likely characterized the earlier arrangement of the housing. In 1927, the year of the Great Flood, Cinclare, whose name was changed to the Harry L. Laws Company, purchased the nearby plantations of Choctaw, Balver, Rosewell, Catherine, and Orange Grove (Bradley, 66).

During the third period, a Great Sugar Decline forced those in the industry to find new efficiencies through increased mechanization and computerization in both the factory and in the field. Highway LA 1
and cane trucks became the principal means of transportation to market. The arrangement of plantation elements from the previous period remained with the addition of more housing (Bradley, xi), but most of the housing was now used for management and factory workers, with a dramatic decrease in field labor living and working on site. In 2005, the economy of scale was no longer in Cinclare’s favor, and the decision was made to close the mill. Today, sugar is still grown on the acreage surrounding the Cinclare Mill Historic District, but most of the support structures are no longer functioning in their original way. They are either vacant or being used for storage. As a collection of structures and landscape patterns, however, Cinclare is still a recognizable example of a complete sugar mill plantation complex, with remnant elements representing the continuum of 19th and 20th century elements of sugar cane growth and refining in south Louisiana.

Figure 32: Cinclare Plantation during processing season. http://habs.lsu.edu/cinc1/html/index.htm

Figure 33: Sugar mill road with boarding house. http://habs.lsu.edu/cinc1/html/index.htm
Figure 34: Main house. http://habs.lsu.edu/cinc1/html/index.htm

Figure 35: Mule Barn. http://habs.lsu.edu/cinc1/html/index.htm
Figure 36: Smokestack for sugar mill processing. http://habs.lsu.edu/cinc1/html/index.htm
Partial Literature Review and Bibliography


Threats:

Because Cinclare is no longer a working sugar mill, the remnant parts of the industrial operations of the complex are in jeopardy because they no longer serve a function beyond public education, historic preservation, and community cultural resource preservation. There has already been significant damage to some structures, including the mule barn, as a result of recent hurricanes, but that is in the process of being repaired, according to Butch Plauche, Chief Executive Officer of the Cinclare Sugar Mill operations. Plauche states that all of the facilities are maintained on a cyclical schedule and placed in mothballs. The housing stock is maintained as rental property, and is currently occupied.

Without a plan for an adaptive reuse, or the opening of the site as a cultural tourism venue, with significant state or local support, it is difficult to imagine that it will survive through future generations due to the fragile nature of many of the wooden structures.
Level 0: Atchafalaya National Heritage Area – Conrad Rice Mill

Brief Synopsis

Rice is as important to Louisiana cooking as crawfish, shrimp, okra, and any other number of food elements. Rice and its partner sugarcane are as ubiquitous to Louisiana agriculture as corn and wheat in the Midwest. Originally planted in Plaquemines Parish, south of New Orleans, in 1718, rice production spread through the southern half of the state as population expanded westward. Its culture exploded with the opening of the flat and low-lying prairies west of the Atchafalaya in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century (The encyclopedia Americana, 487).

Initially only grown in swamps and wetlands, the spread of agriculture to the prairies of western Louisiana produced an explosion in rice cultivation. The prairie region has what is called a very shallow “aquatude,” which allows the flooding of large land areas on which to grow rice. Liberty Hyde Bailey references the physical assets that promoted the growth of rice in his tome on American agriculture in 1907.

From Lafayette to the western border of the state, in a belt varying from twenty to sixty miles in width, rice is the exclusive farm crop. The region devoted primarily to rice is especially suited for this crop, there being abundant fresh-water supply from bayous and artesian wells for irrigating the rice. The land is level, so that large fields can be secured with few levees. The soil is underlaid with a stiff clay that prevents loss of water from seepage into the lower strata. The soil becomes firm quickly after the irrigating water is withdrawn, enabling the use of most improved harvesting machinery. (Bailey, 59)

The following two diagrams show the growth of rice production in Louisiana between 1869 and the 1904 to 1908 average. Production grew from 15,854,000 pounds in 1869 to an average of 418,062,000 pounds between 1904 and 1908. In those years, Louisiana produced half of the annual rice production in the continental United States, thus establishing Louisiana as a major grower of rice for domestic use and for export.

Figure 37: Rice Production in thousands of pounds, 1869. (Brigham, 124)
These quotes from “One hundred Years of American Commerce,” written in 1895, summarize the rise of rice production in Louisiana following the Civil War and leading up to the development of milling facilities similar to the Conrad Rice Mill.

The culture in Louisiana dates back to 1718, and it continued of minor importance, principally confined to the parish of Plaquemine[s], until after the close of the Civil War. At this time planters were rich in lands, but poor in purse, and the necessity of the hour was for a crop requiring the least possible outlay, yet offering an assured and prompt return. Sugar was out of the question, as the investment required was large, and the outcome questionable and delayed. As a result there was a general turning to rice, and this crop almost immediately sprang from local to national importance. By 1875 Louisiana furnished thirty per cent. of the total yield of the United States, and in each of
the five years following, 1880, averaged forty per cent.; 1885, sixty percent.; and 1890, sixty-five per cent. In 1895 it is seventy-five per cent. of the aggregate production.

In 1885 a new era was entered upon by the opening up of the southwestern part of the State, and it now contributes the largest portion of the entire product of the United States. This section, known as the “Calcasieu Country,” extending from the Atchafalaya River on the east to the Sabine River on the west, embraces several parishes containing thousands of acres of land, in a virgin state, and most admirably adapted to the culture. Like the country chosen by Lot of old, the section is level, yet well watered, rivers and bayous extending in every direction, making irrigation an easy matter. In this lies the secret of the gigantic strides made by the culture in that part of the State. When once the planter has his levees made, which can be done at a small cost with the improved machines in vogue, they can be kept up with slight expenditure, and good crops raised almost every year beyond any contingency. The streams also afford cheap transportation by barges. Another reason for the great enlargement of the culture in that locality is the fact that machinery can be employed from start to finish, the cost of production being nominally the same as wheat, while the yield per acre is manifold greater. (Depew, 264-265)

Depew references the fact that “machinery can be employed from start to finish,” and that is the origin of the many rice mills that existed in Louisiana at the same time as the Conrad Rice Mill. Conrad is now the oldest continuously operating mill in the state and country, and the brand is regionally recognized due to the longevity of the company and its reputation for quality (http://www.conradricemill.com/, 1, accessed on 5/21/2010).

Originally founded by P. A. Conrad in 1912, the Conrad Rice Mill was purchased by Mike Davis in 1975, and he has continued to operate and improve the facility to this day (City of New Iberia, 1). The facility is open to the public for tours and is an excellent industrial/agricultural example of early rice processing in Louisiana.

Figure 40: The Conrad Rice Mill. (http://www.engineeringsights.org/Sight Detail.asp?Sightid=55&)

Conrad Rice Mill, ca. 1999
Partial Literature Review and Bibliography


City of New Iberia. http://cityofnewibernia.com


King, Edward. 1875. “Chap. VII – The industries of Louisiana—a sugar plantation. The Teche Country” in *The great South: a record of journeys in Louisiana, Texas, the Indian territory, Missouri, Arkansas, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, Florida, South Carolina, North Carolina, Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia, and Maryland*. Hartford, CT: American Publishing Company. [This chapter contains many references to the rice industry in Louisiana, comparing it with the production of sugar and cattle ranching in the state].


Pope, Beryl White. 1934. “The place of the native carbohydrate foods such as rice, corn and sweet potatoes in the daily menus of South Louisiana people.” Thesis: Louisiana State University.


Threats

As with any enterprise which is based on agricultural commodities, a drop in prices could adversely affect the operations of the Conrad Rice Mill. Additionally, the typical Louisiana threats of hurricanes and severe storms are always an issue with architectural buildings and engineering machinery. Ongoing maintenance of the facility appears to be adequate and appropriate for a property of this age.

Visitorship has declined since Hurricane Katrina in 2005 and the decline in the national economy in 2007. However, the Mill does not depend on tourism revenues for continued operations and has not suffered as a historic resource.
Level 0: Atchafalaya National Heritage Area – Franklin Historic District

Brief Synopsis

The Franklin Historic District is an interesting study in town structure, as its original orientation followed Bayou Teche, and then later development clustered in proximity to the railroad when it arrived in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Because the United States developed from east to west, railroad lines typically cross rivers and bayous at important urban or transshipment centers. This is the case with Franklin, where the rail line linked the town with New Orleans, and greatly increased the speed with which goods and passengers could be transported between the two locations.

Franklin was founded “in 1800 by Guinea Lewis, an English immigrant and resident of Pennsylvania who named the settlement in honor of Benjamin Franklin.” It serves as the parish seat of St. Mary Parish (Blackburn and Brown, in State of Louisiana, 3). “The majority of [the] first settlers were from the Atlantic seaboard, chiefly of English descent” and many of the early settlers came to Franklin after the Louisiana Purchase in 1803 (Louisiana Writer’s Project (LWP), 395-396). Therefore, Franklin has very few Creole or Acadian structures, even though it served as the inland gateway to the Teche sugar cane region. It is one of the centers of Greek revival architecture within the Acadian parishes (State of Louisiana, 3). The Franklin First United Methodist Church was established in 1806, making it the first Protestant church established in Louisiana (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Franklin,_Louisiana, accessed 06/22/2010).

Because the town’s primary historic development occurred during the steamboat and then later rail era, the historic structures also fall into these eras, when modes of transportation to and through the town increased. Unfortunately, the early pre Civil War development of Franklin is not well represented with historic structures. One reminder of the antebellum past is a home called Shadowlawn (which was actually rebuilt in 1926 following a fire (LWP, 397). The other is an area on the south end of Main Street that includes six large Greek revival houses with spacious lawns and gardens.

The commercial district along Willow Street retains roughly 60% of its original structures, though the intrusions are not significant nor of an overwhelming scale (State of Louisiana, 1). The City Market still stands within this commercial area.

The last developing portion of the historic district is the area of the town associated with the growth of the railroad commerce and with the sawmill industry. “These houses fall within three main categories: shotgun houses, raised cottages with late nineteenth century details, and L-shaped houses with side gables and semioctagonal bays” (State of Louisiana, 1).

The breakdown of housing stock within the historic district follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Units</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1830 – 1850</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1851 – 1880</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1881 – 1910</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>33.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911 – c. 1930</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>38.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrusions</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>21.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Based on the above breakdown, fully 72% of the structures within the historic district are late nineteenth and early twentieth century houses and commercial structures.

The following Statement of Significance based on criteria A and C is associated with Franklin’s historic district:

1. It has 420 structures with approximately 20% intrusions. As such it constitutes what is certainly the largest concentration of historic buildings in St. Mary Parish and probably the largest in the Bayou Teche country. In this regard it is noteworthy that like Franklin[,] most of Louisiana’s historic districts (outside of New Orleans) have a relatively large number of late nineteenth century buildings as compared with earlier periods. However, on the average most historic district have between 100 and 200 buildings.

2. Franklin is one of the centers of Greek Revival architecture in French Louisiana. The district has 9 Greek Revival homes, each of which would qualify [as] a fully fledged plantation house if it were set in the country. Five of these have pedimented porticos, which indicates a strong English influence seldom found in the Greek Revival in the Acadian parishes. In addition, many of the finest Greek Revival houses are set along the south end of Main Street. With its wide neutral ground [median] and live oaks, this area of Main Street constitutes one of the most stately boulevards to be found in Louisiana.

3. Most old town central business districts in Louisiana date largely from the turn-of-the-century. Of these, Franklin’s commercial district stands well above average in terms of architectural quality. This is because of the following:
   a. The old, open air, truss roofed city market still stands. Though many towns had them, few survive.
   b. The average turn-of-the-century central business district in Louisiana is mainly characterized by 1 and 2 story, false front buildings with brick panels and corbel tables. There may also be 1 or 2 buildings with competent classical details. Comparing this with Franklin one sees Willow Street with its 26 bay grouping of colossal order classical buildings and Main Street, which is characterized by frontal gables reaching 3 stories, classical arched windows, crenel[l]ations, and ornamented parapets. (State of Louisiana, 2-3)

Main Street in Franklin is part of the State of Louisiana’s Main Street program.
Partial Literature Review and Bibliography


Threats

Franklin is located inland from the Gulf of Mexico but still very close to the coast. As such, hurricanes are always a threat to its historic architecture. Because Franklin has such a large inventory of working class homes from the turn of the century, the State of Louisiana has identified this as a threat in and of itself:

The area is important to preserve because it represents a type of resource which is not as likely to survive as a more pretentious neighborhood. Old working class areas are often the targets of highway projects, urban renewal, and other modernization efforts. This is undoubtedly why so few good examples remain in the state. (State of Louisiana, 4)

Marla Chirdon of the Franklin Main Street Program identifies, “lack of a downtown identity, building vacancies, economic disinvestment and population out-migration” as the principle issues that she deals with and attempts to mitigate in the Franklin historic area.
Level 0: Atchafalaya National Heritage Area – Frogmore Plantation and Cotton Gin

Brief Synopsis

Frogmore Plantation, begun in 1843, is located on the western delta of the Mississippi River outside the town of Ferriday, Louisiana, and across the bluff from Natchez, Mississippi. Frogmore is an 1,800 acre working cotton plantation and is the site of 18 restored antebellum structures located on the plantation grounds (http://www.frogmoreplantation.com/historical.htm, accessed 5/25/2010). The guided tour of the grounds begins in 1790, and profiles changes in agriculture through the decades. Slave customs, work habits, and then sharecropping are the main focus throughout the tour.

The plantation houses an 1884 Munger Steam Gin, developed by Robert Samuel Munger, which added a suction feature for drawing the ginned cotton from the pins and further added to the efficiency of cotton gins (http://www.grogmorepoantation.com/historical.htm, accessed 5/25/2010). Other plantation outbuildings are the sugarcane mill and barn, the commissary, an overseer’s cottage, a cooking cabin, the kitchen for the slave quarters, slave cabins, sharecropper’s cabins, smokehouse, outdoor privy, and pigeonnier. Visitors then go on a “modern” tour where they pick cotton, weigh it on digital scales, and then watch the cotton enter a new computerized cotton gin.

The actual plantation house is a simple “Louisiana frame raised cottage, three rooms wide, with a five-bay gallery and double pitch roof. Raised a full story above grade, the house is almost completely open at the ground floor level (State of Louisiana, 1). The house exhibits elements derived from both French and English architectural customs.

Specific dates c. 1843
Builder/Architect Builder – John F. Gillespie

State of Significance
Criterion C

The Gillespie house, despite the changes, retains all its essential features. It is one of the oldest structures in the area and stands as a fine example of a raised plantation house. In addition, it shows the combination of English and French characteristics which was common to many Louisiana plantation houses in the nineteenth century. Today houses of this type are rapidly disappearing.
Also located on the plantation is an important Native American single platform mound from the Coles Creek period, dating between 700 to 1,200 A.D. (State of Louisiana, Frogmore Mound, 1). The mound is oriented to the cardinal directions, with the long axis running directly east and west. The mound is approximately 50m x 80m. Previous archaeological examinations of the mound occurred in 1936, and documented that the mound was roughly 100 x 100 feet square and eight feet high (Ford, in Cusick). The mound is immediately adjacent to U. S. Highway 84. It is not known whether the 1936 measurements were accurate, but the mound appears to maintain an incredible amount of structural integrity.

Later more extensive work was performed in 1994 by James Cusick of Earth Search, Inc. of New Orleans, Louisiana. Cusick noted the following concerning the significance of the Frogmore Mound:

**State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.**

Frogmore is one of the best preserved platform Coles Creek period mounds in north Louisiana. Except for two graves and the 1994 archaeological investigations, the mound appears to be undisturbed. The pristine condition of the summit makes it very possible that non-invasive surveys can identify structural features that may have been associated with mound summit use. Secondly, the intact nature of the mound increases the likelihood that architectural information on how mounds were constructed exists. Cusick et al’s (1995; 12-11) trench excavation identified a thin layer of organic material at 40 cm BS, thereby indicting that organic preservation is good. Third, their work also identified the undisturbed remains of a submound walled circular structure. The style, size, and method of construction compares favorably with other ceremonial circular Coles Creek period structures (Brown 1985; Cusick et al. 1995; Ford, 1951; Neuman 1984; Woodiel 1993), suggesting that this structure too was ceremonial. Finally, an intact midden under the mound and the buried midden north of the mound have been
identified. Macrobotanical remains were common in the midden fill, indicating that dietary, economic, and seasonal data on a Coles Creek village remains undisturbed.

Dr. Cusick’s concluding remarks on Frogmore noted that under Criterion D, the site addresses a number of cultural themes and research goals of the Comprehensive Archaeological Plan (Smith et al. 1983) of Louisiana:

These include definition of settlement strategy and subsistence in the Coles Creek period, and the construction of models for the rise of ceremonialism and hierarchical social systems. In addition, the plan expresses the desirability of preserving representative examples of Coles Creek mound sites (1995:12-29).

Frogmore’s excellent state of preservation is rare for any period of prehistory.

Figure 42: Frogmore Mound, Ferriday, Louisiana. (State of Louisiana Department of Historic Preservation)
Partial Literature Review and Bibliography


http://www.frogmoreplantation.com/historical.htm


Threats

Typical threats relate to weather related damage and other Deep South issues such as rot and insect infestation. It is not known at this time how reduced tourism throughout the country will affect sites such as Frogmore and its associated mission.

The current owners of Frogmore are Buddy and Lynette Tanner, and they continue to upgrade and maintain the facilities at Frogmore and its surrounding lands. The most persistent threat to Frogmore is the planned relocation of Highway 84 from the perimeter of the property to a new location which would bisect the property and destroy the historic integrity of the landholding. They have fought back repeated attempts by the state to build the highway through their property, through succeeding governorships and varying Louisiana Department of Transportation managements. Each time there is a change in leadership in these positions, they have to revisit this effort, and renew their opposition to the placement of the highway within the historic core of the property. An additional threat of highway relocation is that it would also adversely affect their E.P.A. permit for their computerized cotton gin, as the gin and highway would then be contiguous, and would exceed federal mandates for air quality.
Level 0: Atchafalaya National Heritage Area – Grand Coteau Historic District/Sacred Heart Academy

Brief Synopsis

The Grand Coteau Historic District is located north of Lafayette, Louisiana, midway between Lafayette and Opelousas, Louisiana. The location is along a relic channel of the Mississippi River, in the Bayou Teche valley. Grand Coteau literally translates to “large hillock,” but the landform is actually a prairie complex, and mostly flat (Louisiana Writers’ Project (LWP), 629). In its early history, Grand Couteau was a “vacherie” or cattle ranching area, but in the early nineteenth century became a center of Catholic religious and educational activity. The district contains: “over 70 structures designated as architecturally significant. Creole, French, Acadian, Anglo-American, and Victorian styles are reflected in the houses, stores, and religious institutions” (http://www.grandcoteau.org/, accessed 5/25/2010).

The Academy of the Sacred Heart was established in Grand Coteau in 1821, and has operated continuously since that time, educating Catholic women from Louisiana and around the world. In 2006, a Catholic boys school was established, the St. Berchmans School, beginning with a kindergarten class and adding an additional grade with each succeeding year (http://www.berchmans.org/site76.php, accessed 5/27/2010). A shrine to Saint John Berchmans has been erected on the grounds of the Academy due to the miraculous recovery of Mary Wilson, a young postulant in 1866. The shrine is in the form of a small chapel (LLC, 96, 630).

The College of Saint Charles was founded in Grand Coteau in 1835 by Archbishop Blanc of the Society of Jesus. The site was chosen due to the beauty of the landscape of the area and proximity to other Catholic institutions in the city (Fortier, 294). In its later years (1891) the College was converted into a seminary, and served that purpose until 1922.
Figure 43: West elevation of the Academy of the Sacred Heart, on February 27, 1940. Photographed by Lester Jones for the Historic American Buildings Survey.
Figure 44: Petetin’s Store, circa 1834. Photographed by Lester Jones for the Historic American Buildings Survey, February 27, 1940.
Partial Literature Review and Bibliography


Moore, Frank, ed. 1865. The rebellion record: a diary of American events, with documents, narratives, illustrative incidents, poetry, etc. New York, NY: D. Van Nostrand, Publisher.

Threats

Sacred Heart Academy has a friends group that supports the school and churches, and helps to maintain all of the structures on the grounds. The school has stable enrollment, and the recently opened boy’s school, the St. Berchman’s School has only added to enrollment and stability.

While the school is close to Bayou Teche, it resides on a higher prairie and potential flooding threats are minimal.

The surrounding area, is primarily rural, agrarian, and includes many cattle ranches. Threats from inappropriate intrusions are also minimal.
Brief Synopsis

The town of Donaldsonville is located at the confluence of Bayou Lafourche and the Mississippi River. Bayou Lafourche was a distributary of the Mississippi River before levees were constructed to block high water flow into the bayou during spring floods and other precipitation events. William Donaldson owned the land where the town is now located, and in 1806, he hired surveyor Barthélémy Lafon of New Orleans to prepare street plans with allowance for public parks for the future residents to enjoy. Lafon surveyed and planned most of the Garden District in New Orleans (Toledano, 20). Prior to Lafon’s survey and Donaldson’s development, the area was named Ascension, and that is the parish in which Donaldsonville is the parish seat (Louisiana Writer’s Project, 550). Donaldsonville briefly served as the state capital in 1830 and 1831.

While much of the city was destroyed during the Civil War, the arrival of the New Orleans, Mobile, and Chattanooga Railroad in 1871 brought on a new period of rapid development, and it is this post bellum, reconstruction, and late nineteenth and early twentieth century era that is represented by the extensive historic district that encompasses fifty city blocks and 635 structures. Many of the residential structures are working class in scale, with very few examples of monumental architecture. Among religious structures, the Ascension Roman Catholic Church, which is a community landmark, approaches the scale of a cathedral.

Statement of Significance
Criteria A and C

The Donaldsonville Historic District is of state significance in the area of architecture because it is the finest collection of structures from the pre-Civil War era to 1933 to be found in any of the Mississippi River parishes above New Orleans. Far from being unique, Donaldsonville is essentially similar in character to other old River Road communities; it is just more impressive. The district is also of state significance in the area of community planning because it incorporates formal planning features, which is unusual within the above context.

Donaldsonville is comparable to other Mississippi River towns in Louisiana in that it has a number of pretentious Queen Anne Revival and Eastlake residences and a number of Italianate commercial buildings, as well as some plainer frame commercial buildings. Like other older towns, Donaldsonville’s patrimony mainly represents the period 1861 to 1933.

However, four factors set Donaldsonville apart from other Mississippi River towns and qualify it as a significant piece of urban geography: First of all, Donaldsonville's historic area is unusually large and cohesive. It has 635 structures closely packed in a fifty block area with only twenty-three percent intrusions. This is something which no other Mississippi River town in Louisiana north of New Orleans can match. The sheer magnitude of Donaldsonville as a resource is impressive.
Secondly, Donaldsonville is unusual in that it retains a sizable complement of working class areas complete with housing (shotgun houses, cottages and bungalows) as well as neighborhood stores. Historic working class areas are often the targets of urban renewal efforts or have suffered considerable loss due to fire or abandonment. Donaldsonville's working class areas are well preserved with little alteration, and they are not significantly depleted. Moreover, they contain some fine examples of shotgun houses with elaborate Eastlake galleries both front and side. (Side galleries are unusual among shotgun houses.)

With 375 shotgun houses, bungalows and cottages in Donaldsonville, it appears that only Plaquemine is a serious rival as a center of working class architecture along the River Road north of New Orleans. It should be noted that, on the whole, Plaquemine's working class areas are somewhat later than those in Donaldsonville and are less ornamented.

Thirdly, Donaldsonville is noteworthy because of its fine collection of late nineteenth and early-twentieth century commercial buildings. It possesses a broader range of commercial structures than is usually found in most Mississippi River towns north of New Orleans. In addition to the usual false front structures and provincial Italianate buildings, Donaldsonville also possesses several neoclassical buildings and 2 fine Romanesque Revival office buildings. Moreover, the Lemann Store (N.R.), with its cast-iron gallery, its three story sprawling mass, and its rich ornamentation, is probably the finest Italianate commercial building in any Mississippi River town in Louisiana north of New Orleans. The overall mixture of commercial structures yields a two story scale and a far more impressive urban style than is usually found in River Road towns.

Finally, Donaldsonville is one of only three Mississippi River towns in the state north of New Orleans which go beyond the normal speculative grid plan. Donaldsonville's plan incorporates Baroque features such as a semicircular park and an axial street leading to an open public square. St. Joseph and Beauregard Town in Baton Rouge are the other two towns which incorporate formal planning features. But St. Joseph's courthouse green is merely a large public square and hence is less sophisticated than Donaldsonville's plan, and although Beauregard Town's plan is more sophisticated, very little of it survives. Hence Donaldsonville probably represents the best example of formal town planning remaining in the Mississippi River parishes above New Orleans.

(As a former state capitol and center for economic activity, Donaldsonville represents the kind of small community which still maintains its historic identity and integrity, and adds to the cultural opportunities that visitors to the state can experience along the River Road.)


Threats

Donaldsonville is like any other small town with limited economic prospects. Threats to the historic fabric are primarily in keeping interested residents maintaining the extensive stock of homes, commercial structures, churches, and landscapes (cemeteries) in the area. Donaldsonville is not threatened by the Mississippi River and is far enough inland that it is not in danger of severe danger from hurricanes.

Danielle Marion-Doyle with the Donaldsonville Downtown Development District states that city ordinances protect historic structures, and the demolition cannot occur without proper permits and waiting periods. The area is economically disadvantaged, and this is a continuing threat, as homeowners cannot maintain nor upgrade their structures appropriately. There are many vacant buildings, and “demolition by neglect” is a continuing issue. The historic district suffered some damage during Hurricanes Katrina and Gustav, and homeowners and property owners are still repairing damage from these two significant weather events.
Level 0: Atchafalaya National Heritage Area – Holy Rosary Institute

Brief Synopsis

Holy Rosary Institute was founded in 1913 in the eastern suburbs of Lafayette, Louisiana, and is staffed by the Sisters of the Holy Family, a congregation of African American women founded in New Orleans in 1850 (Savage, 259). The original building that serves as the core of the campus was begun in 1913, with the official dedication occurring in the spring of 1914. The building was funded by a donation from Sister Katherine Drexel, who was a well-known benefactress of Native American and African American missions throughout the United States. The original building housed the dormitories, convent, and classrooms. (http://www.restoreholyrosary.com/our_dream, accessed 6/24/2010).

Sister Katherine Drexel was the daughter of Francis A. Drexel, who was an heir to the investment banking firm of Drexel, Morgan & Company in Philadelphia. The firm was instrumental in providing bond funding for the expansion of the United States railroad system, the U.S. Treasury, and for providing banking services for the Vanderbilt family. The firm later became J. P. Morgan Company. Her other notable investment in the education of African Americans in Louisiana was her purchase of the site and buildings for Xavier University in New Orleans. Without her financial gifts, neither Xavier nor Holy Rosary Institute would have existed. She was canonized as a saint by the Catholic Church in 2000.

Gloria Linton, head of The Friends of Holy Rosary provided extensive information about ongoing programs, plans for future renovations and repair, and threats to the existing campus structures:

The institute closed to students in 1988, and the last graduating class matriculated in 1993. Since that time, the institute has a series of ongoing programs which utilize the remaining buildings and generate limited income:

- Volunteers of America – housed in Assumption Hall, working with disadvantaged youth who have been removed from their regular school for discipline problems. This program attempts to maintain their graduation track and ensure that they complete high school.

- Head Start – Smile Community Head Start Center

- Earth Share Gardeners – students from the University of Louisiana, Lafayette have created an organic community garden on the school grounds, and work on weekends and evenings maintaining the gardens and educating area residents.

- Holy Family Apartments – 200 active unites.

- Holy Family Mall – adjacent strip mall with income producing tenants.

Projects in development include:
• Planning for the 100th Anniversary of the school in 2013, with a small reunion planned this coming Labor Day (2010). The Alumni association consists of doctors, dentists, attorneys, religious leaders, and other professionals. Because the school was a boarding school, the alumni organization is widespread throughout the United States.

• The development of a Health and Social Services Unit to house the elderly in an assisted living facility within a new building on the grounds. This unit is planned in association with Xavier University in New Orleans, and will serve as a teaching center/internship opportunity for nurses from Xavier. Dr. Francis at Xavier has been very supportive of these efforts, as his brother was a Bishop in Lafayette and his brother and two of his sisters attended Holy Rosary.

• The SLMA, or South Louisiana Multi-Cultural Association building across from the cafeteria, which will house office space for various agencies in Lafayette.

• All buildings will be restored/renovated using Green Technology, and they are using the services of Steven Shelton of New Orleans to achieve this goal. Students from Xavier will also be involved in the restoration process using these techniques and there will be a permanent training center housed onsite to teach others about the use of green technologies in the renovation of buildings.

• Renovation of the cafeteria building in association with the Earth Share community garden group, which will then provide culinary lessons to underprivileged community members to help them improve their diets and increase their food security. They will also teach health units as part of the culinary and extensive nutrition classes.

• Pharmacy for the surrounding community, serving the underprivileged and residents in the immediate area.

Statement of Significance
Criterion A

Holy Rosary Institute was founded in 1913 by the Reverend Philip Keller, a priest of the Diocese of Galveston, Texas, now the Diocese of Galveston/Houston. In its inception Holy Rosary Institute provided vocational and technical education for black females, thus embodying the racial ideology of Booker T. Washington, who remained the dominant spokesman for blacks in the United States until his death in 1915. The main thrust of Washington's famous 1895 Atlanta speech was that blacks must first establish themselves economically before agitating for social or political equality. He stressed that this economic advancement would come through industrial/technical training. His own Tuskegee in Alabama provided such an education and Holy Rosary Institute reflected Washington's ideas.
In addition, the founding of Holy Rosary must be viewed within its historical context. The late nineteenth and early twentieth century is generally regarded as the nadir of race relations in the United States. Blacks in the South were disfranchised, legally segregated, impoverished, and uneducated. What schools there were for blacks were separate and decidedly inferior. It was within this context that Holy Rosary Institute was founded in 1913.

Holy Rosary also has served as a Normal School to train teachers for rural black schools and is presently one of the few remaining black Catholic high schools in the United States.

From 1913 Holy Rosary Institute has been staffed by the Sisters of the Holy Family, a congregation of black religious women founded in New Orleans in the 1850's. The priests and brothers of the Society of the Divine Word, a religious congregation of men dedicated to the spiritual care of blacks, have been associated with the school since 1930. (State of Louisiana, 1).

During the Great Mississippi River Flood of 1927, the grounds of the Institute were used as a tent camp for African American refugees from flooded parishes (Brasseaux & Conrad, 54). The site contains many massive live oaks and important statuary.

Figure 45: Holy Rosary Institute main building. This is the structure that was funded by Sister Katherine Drexel. (State of Louisiana)


Threats

The attached images show the current condition of the main building which is the centerpiece of the campus. Without immediate funding and restoration, this building and others on campus will continue to deteriorate. Without adequate and up-to-date building facilities, schools cannot exist. This is an immediate threat.

Figure 2: Holy Rosary Institute main building. These images show a building in desperate need of attention and repair. http://www.restoreholyrosary.com/our_dream, accessed 06/24/2010.

The Institute was first placed on the Louisiana Preservation Alliance (now the Louisiana Trust for Historic Preservation) list of 10 most endangered properties in 1999, and this was the catalyst that started the development of the friends group and efforts to save the structures.

In 2010, the Institute was placed on the Louisiana Trust for Historic Preservation 10 most endangered properties list for the second year in a row. This qualified it for assistance from the Trust’s grants expert out of New Orleans – Michael White.

They are in the process of transferring the Institute and associated properties from the Catholic Diocese of Lafayette to the Sisters of the Holy Family and the Friends organization. Associated properties are the strip mall adjacent to the main campus, a 200 unit apartment complex, etc.

The Friends is in the process of gaining 501(c)3 tax status, and should have that designation by the end of August. The Friends group has about 75 members.
Other threats:

The campus was heavily damaged during Hurricane Gustav in 2008, and there are ongoing repairs funded by FEMA occurring in the main building and at the Holy Rosary Apartments.

Tree canopy needs to be thinned and trimmed away from buildings, as limbs are now growing into the sides of building structures.

Recently (summer 2010), 40 interior doors were stolen from the main building, but most have been recovered and the vandals have been apprehended.
Level 0: Atchafalaya National Heritage Area – Indian Mounds of Point Coupée

Brief Synopsis

There are ten remaining mounds in Point Coupée Parish that are associated with various periods of Native American culture in Louisiana:

- Poverty Point circa 2000 BC to 600 BC
- Marksville circa 200 BC to 100 AD
- Cole’s Creek circa 400 AD to 1100 AD
- Plaquemine circa 1100 AD

The largest of these mounds – the Livonia Mound – is 31 feet tall, and is a conical burial mound of the Coles Creek Period, dating from 400 AD to 1,100 AD (Http://www.angelfire.com/la3/livoniamound/, accessed on 6/1/2010, Costello, 2).

Situated on the east bank of Bayou Grosse Tête, about 150 ft. from water’s edge, this mound commands a strategic site approximately 500 ft. south of the confluence of Bayous Fordoche and Grosse Tête. It has a basal diameter of 165 ft.

Scientists contend that the Livonia mound could have served as a burial mound for several aboriginal settlements in contact with one another along Bayou Grosse Tête. Shells and sherds collected here by scientists in 1975 suggest a Cole’s Creek date. (Costello, 2)

There are additional ceremonial and burial mounds as follows:

The Mound Bayou mound, located south of United States Highway 190 in the Morganza Floodway, sits about 120 feet to the west of Mound Bayou on the periphery of the Sherburne Oil and Gas Field. A circular platform or “temple” mound, it measures approximately 190 ft. in diameter and 4.4 ft. in height. Its western flank appears to have been silted over due to drainage from the nearby Atchafalaya River levee. The Mound Bayou mound was reportedly about two feet higher before lumbering projects began in the area. In 1937, archaeologists assigned a Cole’s Creek affiliation to the mound, at which time a second mound, supposedly 50 yards away, was noted. Subsequent investigation failed to locate a second mound in the area. Sherds collected from the Mound Bayou mound also indicate a Cole’s Creek date.

The Monk’s mound, a 15.1 ft. high conical or “burial mound, stands about 450 ft. east of Bayou White Vine and approximately .8 south of Raccourci-Old River in northern Point Coupée. It measures about 130 ft. in diameter. Sherds and chips scientifically located at the site in 1971 suggested Marksville and Cole’s Creek affiliations.

The Thom site, midway between the Morganza and Fordoche communities, on the east bank of and about 150 ft. from Bayou Fordoche, contains six, and possibly seven, truncated pyramidal mounds. Five of these “temple” mounds are situated around a 370 x 180 ft. plaza. Four of these five have astronomical implications as they are aligned to
the four cardinal points. Six borrow pits are also on the site. Archaeologists have assigned a Cole’s Creek affiliation to the site and a late Cole’s Creek to Plaquemine period affiliation to the sherds located thereon.

Measurements at the Thom site area as follows: Mound “A” has a basal dimension of 130 x 125 ft. and a height of 8.1 ft. Mound “B” has a basal dimension of 90 x 65 ft. and a height of 1.3 ft. Mound “C” has a basal dimension of 115 x 75 ft. and 1.6 ft. tall. Mound “D” has a basal dimension of 205 x 105 ft. and a height of 2.9 ft. Mound “E” has a basal dimension of 85 x 85 ft is 4.5 ft. tall. Mound “F” has a dimension of 103-75 ft. and a height of 1.5 ft. A seventh formation, possible Mound “G”, has a dimension of 50 x 35 ft. and a height of .8 ft.

The Lettsworth Bayou site, located about 500 ft. southwest of the bayou of that name and approximately 2.8 miles from the juncture of the Red, Atchafalaya and Old Rivers, is marked by a 9.8 ft. truncated pyramidal or “temple” mound. Its basal dimensions are 130 x 120 ft. Scientific surveys yielded ceramic artifacts of the Cole’s Creek and Plaquemine periods. Skeletal remains were found in the mound when a member of the family who owns the property dug there as a boy in the late 1950s. (Costello, 3-4)

Various other midden sites and possible village sites have been identified throughout the parish, typically on the natural levees of the various bayous and rivers that lace the Parish.

Figure 46: The Livonia Mound, the largest of the ten remaining Indian Mounds in Pointe Coupée Parish.
Costello points out that various crevasses over the years have heavily damaged many of the sites, and that the 1912 crevasse at Taurus and at Monks almost obliterated many of the mounds in the floodway.
Before the completion of the higher levees in 1930 and then the flood control structures in later decades, repeated crevasses reduced the integrity of almost all archaeological sites on the west side of the river, as crevasses became more and more violent due to the increase in water height within the river banks before a crevasse occurred (Costello, 2010).


Threats

Based on documentation by Jones and Shuman in Costello, continued siltation of the sites is an ever present problem, and has obscured various parts of the mounds and indeed completely covered some mounds that had been identified during the twentieth century.

A sudden avulsion (change in river course) by the Mississippi River would place all of the mound structures underwater, and they would no longer be accessible to researchers and scientists.

The mention of borrow pits in the vicinity of the mounds should be an alarm that some sort of electronic system needs to be put in place to prevent accidental disturbance of the mounds.

Theft by grave robbers and the curious is always an issue with Native American mounds.
Level 0: Atchafalaya National Heritage Area – Madewood

Brief Synopsis

Constructed between 1840 and 1848 by Thomas Pugh, who immigrated to Louisiana from the east coast of North Carolina, Madewood represents the influence of the Tidewater region of the East Coast, and the arrival of Anglo-American influence in Louisiana as opposed to the French Creole and Acadian influences or early settlers.

For the design of his plantation home, Pugh retained the services of Henry Howard, who was one of the most famous and esteemed Louisiana architects of the time. Howard is known for his designs of antebellum homes in New Orleans’ Garden District, and for the balance, symmetry, and formal beauty that these homes display (Starr and Brantley, 126). The range of styles that Howard employed is demonstrated by his articulation of a Tidewater mansion on Bayou Lafourche, within the center of French Acadian Louisiana.

“Madewood, on the left bank of Bayou Lafourche, measures sixty feet by sixty-eight feet and displays a front-facing gable, Ionic portico, columns, and wing pavilions as characteristic Greek Revival traits. It has a central hall measuring eighteen feet wide that extends the full length of the main house, a single front door, inside-end chimneys, and interior stairs” (Rehder, 82, 288-289). The structure contains over 600,000 individual brick; with the foundation courses reaching eight foot underground (Rehder, 289). Even the internal columns within the home are brick construction covered with plaster. The walls are twenty-four inches at ground level, and eighteen inches at the houses peak.

“The façade, characterized by Greek Revival ornamentation, has six Ionic pillars supporting an overhanging portico and pediment. Georgian symmetry is reflected by [the] two matched wings flanking the main structure” (Rehder, 289). One of the wings houses the ballroom measuring twenty-four by forty-eight feet, a pantry, and kitchen. The other wing houses the living arrangements for the current owners (Rehder, 289). “Flooring, porches, shutters, and the roof support are all cypress,” also harvested onsite from the back-swamps of the plantation holdings (Rehder, 289). The home is surrounded by six acres in the picturesque style that was the dominant landscape form then popular in England, Scotland, and Ireland (Rehder, 285).

Another distinct difference between Madewood and earlier plantations is the spatial organization of the buildings and landholdings, consisting of a “nodal-block” form. Because earlier settlers of French origin already owned most of the land along the river or bayou itself, later settlers, by necessity, were forced to buy wider rectangular blocks of land further back from the river, with small landholdings projecting towards the water body on which they located by which to transport their goods to the river or bayou banks.

Along upper Bayou Lafourche, the purchase of wide parcels of frontage from small farmers occurred so infrequently that plantation holdings became large backland parcels with very narrow access parcels to the bayou. ...As subsequent land acquisitions took place, landholdings began to fill out. However, the initial site locations in the early
nineteenth century established the pattern of nodal block plantations so well that today’s patterns are simply vestiges of the past. (Rehder, 96-97)

![Nodal block plantation map](image)

**Fig. 2.17.** Nodal-block plantations dominated the landscape in the upper Bayou Lafourche area in Assumption Parish.

**Figure 48:** Here, the main house is separated from the quarters, sugar house, and offices of the plantation landholdings. (Rehder, 96)

In the above example you see the grouping of worker’s housing, sugar mill, overseer’s office, and other auxiliary buildings necessary for the running of the sugar cane plantation in a distinct “block” pattern. Earlier French Creole examples located further downriver, and closer to the Gulf of Mexico retained a distinctly linear pattern, radiating out from the bank of the river or bayou to the distant back-swamps.

Madewood is located on Bayou Lafourche, which is a distributary channel of the Mississippi River and was actually an earlier delta course of the Mississippi between 1,000 to 300 years B.P. (Newton, 24). Because of this association, the high natural levee on which the plantation property exists is a similar width as existing levee systems along the current course of the Mississippi River, which is between one and two miles, with the plantation home situated roughly one quarter mile from the banks of the bayou (Rehder, 281-282).
Figure 49: Bayou Lafourche represents the fifth Mississippi Delta course in the above diagram, which was active between 1,000 and 300 years before present. (Newton, 24)

The plantation house is now owned by the Marshall family of New Orleans, while the surrounding sugar-cane acreage is owned and managed by the Thibauts, who purchased the property in 1946. The Thibauts sold the main house and the six acres of picturesque grounds surrounding the home to the Marshalls in 1964 (Rehder, 285). As an intact assemblage of house, grounds, workers quarters, overseers home, maintenance sheds, and surrounding agricultural lands, Madewood is a rare and excellent example of Anglo-American influence in the midst of French Louisiana.
Figure 50: Madewood Plantation, for the Historic American Buildings Survey, 1938. (photograph for HABS by Johnston)
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Threats

Madewood experiences the typical threats associated with distance from the Gulf of Mexico and associated severe weather events. The fact that the building is constructed primarily of brick, mortar, and stucco has served to protect the main structure from significant decay, and the care by the Marshall family in its maintenance and necessary renovations has made it one of the premiere properties in the region.
Level 0: Atchafalaya National Heritage Area – Maison Olivier

Brief Synopsis

Maison Olivier, in St. Martinville, St. Martin Parish, is an early Acadian two story home with a brick lower floor and columns, and an upper floor constructed of cypress timbers in filled with *bousillage en poteau*\(^3\), and then covered with clapboards (Goeldner, 1). This was a very common form of home construction in early Louisiana architecture. The cypress beams used in construction are hand-hewn and fastened with wooden pegs.

The gallery on the front or west façade is recessed in the gabled mass of the building with six brick columns at the ground floor and wood posts and railings above. The gallery at the rear is a lean-to having five wood posts at both levels and the partially screened stair at the northeast corner.

The ground floor is paved with red brick. Its two principal rooms open from the front gallery but do not connect with each other although their simple fireplaces are back to back. Two smaller rooms at the rear are separated by an open area to which all four rooms have access. The second floor has four rooms also, arranged without interior communication between the north and south halves of the house. Access to the attic is through a narrow stair from the parlor. Interior walls are plastered and woodwork is of the simplest rectangular boards. Hinges and hardware are primitive. Windows are heavily shuttered. (Goeldner, 3)

Originally dated to 1765, later research has placed construction circa 1815 (http://www.stateparks.com/longfellowevengeline.html, 2, accessed on 5/21/2010).

This significant Creole structure “has been associated with the legend which is the basis for Longfellow’s ‘Evangeline,’ However, documents refute the belief that Louis Arceneaux, born in Louisiana, could be the prototypical Gabriel and do not establish his residence in the house” (Goeldner, 3). The house is located within the Longfellow-Evangeline State Historic Site, and is the central feature of the site.

The Attakapas Indians were the Native American tribe associated with this region of Louisiana, and later the area became part of a royal French land grant. “In the early 1800s, Pierre Olivier Duclozel de Vezin, acquired this property to raise cotton, cattle, and eventually sugarcane” (http://www.crt.state.la.us/parks.ilongfell.aspx, accessed on 5/21/2010). The property became the first park of the Louisiana State Parks system [1934], and in 1974, it was designated a National Historic Landmark.

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\(^3\) *Bousillage placed between timber wall studs was the primary wall infill material between building posts in Louisiana’s early years. It is typically a mixture of mud or clay with animal hair, Spanish moss, straw, or small sticks.* (Massey and Maxwell, 72)
Very few Creole structures of this size and condition remain in the state, and Maison Olivier is a superior example of this unique architectural form. “Simple in form and detail, the Acadian House [Maison Olivier] is significant in being an authentic survival of a once common regional building type adapted to climate and immediately available materials. It is related to the resettlement of Acadians in Louisiana” (Goeldner, 2).

Maison Olivier. (http://www.flickr.com/photos/11701520@N03/4570120760/, accessed 5/21/2010)
Partial Literature Review and Bibliography


Threats

Typical threats to any structure in Louisiana are related to storm damage from a hurricane or tornado and from termite infestation of the wood structure of the home. Threats from flooding are minimal. The State of Louisiana owns and maintains the structure and ensures the survival of its significant features. Because it is located within the confines of the Longfellow-Evangeline State Park, threats of surrounding contextual intrusion are reduced.
Level 0: Atchafalaya National Heritage Area – Marksville Prehistoric Indian Site

Brief Synopsis

Located in Avoyelles Parish, the Marksville Prehistoric Indian Site is comprised a roughly 38 acres, enclosed in an earthen embankment in the shape of a horseshoe, and includes six ceremonial burial mounds (Works Progress Administration (WPA), 641). This embankment is on top of a Pleistocene terrace called the Avoyelles Prairie, which was left by the previous ice age, and the two ends of the embankment terminate at the edge of the bluff of the terrace (Spearing, 133, 157). Many of the artifacts uncovered in the early archeological examinations of these mounds are now housed in the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC (WPA, 641).

Louisiana Highway 1 goes by what is now the Marksville State Commemorative Area. It is believed that the area also included a city of Native Americans of the Marksville Tribe, although the population has not been determined at this point. The period that the Marksville Tribe occupied the area is known as the “Early Marksville” period and ranges from 2,200 BC to roughly 200 AD (Kidder, 69).

The mounds and the encircling embankment are the most notable features of the site, and the large mounds, “were constructed in several stages over many years. The first stage usually was a flat, low platform approximately three feet high and 40 feet in diameter. Burial ceremonies may have been held months or years apart and those who died between ceremonies were gathered up and buried together” (http://www.crt.state.la.us/archaeology/virtualbooks/LAPREHIS.marca.htm, accessed 6/2/2010). Typically burial within the mounds was for “certain high status people and they were buried with objects made of copper, stone, bone, shell, pottery, and rare minerals” (Ibid).

Figure 51: One of the ceremonial burial mounds within the Marksville State Commemorative Area. (Spearing, 160)
Partial Literature Review and Bibliography


Threats

The State of Louisiana owns and maintains the site and ensures the survival of its significant features. No serious threats exist as most of the site consists of remnant landforms not subject to erosion. Desecration of mounds is always an issue when there is not full time security.

Unfortunately, the site was closed as of July 28, 2010 due to state budget cuts. There is a skeleton staff at the visitors center who continue to patrol the site.
Level 0: Atchafalaya National Heritage Area – Montegut School

Brief Synopsis

Constructed in Montegut, Louisiana on Bayou Terrebonne in 1912, the Montegut School was built by local residents during a period of time called the “coming of age” of public education in Louisiana. Denham Springs High School, outside of Baton Rouge consolidated its public school program in 1908, Moreauville High School in Avoyelles Parish consolidated its school in 1926, and other communities throughout the state were instituting the same kinds of consolidations that were intended to improve facilities and provide educational access for Louisiana residents. Raymond Viguerie, Sr., who was the President of the School Board, sold the land for the building to the school district for $100.00. The land was part of Point Farm Plantation, owned by the Viguerie family (Chauvin, 9).

The Montegut School exhibits classically influenced features, and the original structure was a symmetrical frame structure with a three part articulation. Originally built a full story above ground level on heavy piers, the lower floor was closed in as more space was needed for additional facilities, and flanking wings were added in 1954, which have created an “H” shaped footprint. These additions “replicated the look and materials of the original,” and therefore no discernible reduction in integrity has occurred because of these additions (State of Louisiana, 1).

The school was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1993 (http://www.nationalregisterofhistoricplaces.com/la/Terrebonne/state.html, accessed 6/24/2010).

The statement of significance for the building is included below:

Significant dates 1912
Architect/Builder unknown
Criterion A
The Montegut School is locally significant in the area of education because it represents the "coming of age" of the educational system in lower Terrebonne Parish.

Like the rest of rural Louisiana, Terrebonne Parish was slow in making free public education available to children. In the years following the Civil War the prevailing attitude was that education should be the responsibility of the family rather than of state or local government. As a result, there was very little money for education and no real public support. The few schools existing at this time were either church-sponsored or private affairs teaching only rudimentary skills such as reading, writing, and mathematics. In lower Terrebonne Parish where Montegut is located, this problem was compounded by the extreme remoteness of the area. Because it borders the Gulf of Mexico, Terrebonne is one of Louisiana's wetlands parishes. The settlements in its lower regions are far apart and separated by vast expanses of swampland. Early roads were especially poor, and for many years the only practical method of transportation was by boat via several area bayous.

As the turn of the century approached, a more positive attitude toward education began to develop in lower Terrebonne Parish. Organized by citizens who sponsored bazaars
and other entertainments in order to raise funds, several local school associations erected small schools for area children. These one-room structures were usually crude, stark, unpainted, and improperly heated. They often lacked ceilings, and their furniture was generally homemade. Blackboards were usually placed between windows, forcing the students to look directly into a bright glare. Children of all ages and grades were accommodated in these buildings, making it extremely difficult for individual children to receive the attention necessary for a quality education. By 1905 the Montegut community had erected a "creditable" one-room school.

After 1905, two developments occurred which encouraged improvement in education. In 1906 Terrebonne Parish passed its first special tax in support of schools. This meant that the school board was able to match monies supplied by communities desiring better facilities. Then, in the 1910-1911 school year, the parish opened its first consolidated school. Consolidation was made possible because the parish implemented a state plan for the transport of students. However, due to local topography, Terrebonne officials opted for the use of boats as well as the wagons used by other parishes for this purpose. Consolidated schools replaced the previous one-room schools as fast as the construction of new schools permitted.

The 1912 opening of the consolidated Montegut School brought a vast improvement in the quality of education received by the children of lower Terrebonne Parish. The new facility had a library, office, auditorium, four classrooms with accompanying cloakrooms, and modern furniture appropriate to a school. For the first time area students could be separated by age and educational level, and teachers were not allowed to instruct more than two grades. Consolidation encouraged better attendance, eliminated tardiness, and opened the children's previously limited horizons to the outside world by transporting them beyond their immediate neighborhoods. Finally, as one of the earliest consolidated schools in rural Terrebonne Parish, the Montegut School inspired other villages within the parish to provide similar facilities to educate their children. Thus, as a symbol of education's "coming of age" in lower Terrebonne Parish, the Montegut School is a strong candidate for National Register listing. (State of Louisiana, 1-2)
Figure 52: Front façade of the Montegut School showing the three part articulation with recessed central entrance section. (State of Louisiana, Division of Historic Preservation)
Partial Literature Review and Bibliography


Chauvin, Phillip, Jr. n.d. “Raymond Viguerie Oral History Tape.” Montegut, LA.


Threats

Montegut is located on the natural levee banks of Bayou Terrebonne, and is not highly subject to riverine flooding. However, it has been threatened by storm surge flooding from hurricanes in the past, and will undoubtedly be threatened by storm surges in the future.

Wind damage and the typical Louisiana threats to frame, wood structures will continue to persist.

As with any structure designed almost a century ago, obsolescence is an issue that might face this facility in the future. Sensitive designers can update and upgrade facilities, and it will be important for the community to realize that and enhance the cultural resources that they have.

Currently, the local community maintains the structure and ensures its integrity.
Mr. Charlie was one of the first submersible, offshore drilling rigs of its kind. The rig was designed out of necessity to provide an easier and cheaper way to drill for oil offshore. Mr. Charlie was a floating city which provided living quarters for up to 58 workers. The rig was built on top of a barge that was 220 feet long and 85 feet wide, with a platform 60 feet above the barge. The drilling equipment and living quarters were built above the barge. The drilling rig was transported to a location to drill, and once in position, the barge would fill its tanks with water, submerging the barge onto the gulf floor.

The oil rig was designed and built in 1953, and placed in service in 1954. When offshore drilling began in 1947 off the coast of Morgan City, drilling in the gulf was a new frontier. There was not a good or proven way of drilling off shore in shallow waters. The contractor would load up boats, bring all the equipment to a site, build the rig, drill, dismantle and start all over again at the next spot. This method was expensive and time consuming. Alden J. “Doc” LaBorde was a naval engineer who decided to try and solve the problems of offshore drilling. His plan was to create a transportable barge with everything already on it; this way the barge could be floated to any location and could then begin operation. This concept allowed for the barge and drilling equipment to be submerged directly onto the ocean floor, creating a stable drilling platform. Once the drilling was finished, water was pumped out and the barge and all equipment were floated to the next location.

His original rig was named after the owner of Murphy Oil Corporations’ father, Charles H. Murphy, who had inspired him to develop and perfect this method of submersible offshore drilling platform. Murphy Oil Corporation was the first oil company to endorse the idea of the submersible rig and provided the initial funding for its creation. Shell Oil Co. wanted to open a new drilling area off the coast, but the traditional methods were not cost effective. In 1954 Shell Oil hired the Mr. Charlie Rig for its first offshore well near the mouth of the Mississippi River, with one stipulation. If the Mr. Charlie could perform like “Doc” Laborde said, then Shell would then hire the rig to do all its drilling for the entire area. The rig worked as planned and was in continuous operation until 1986.

Mr. Charlie was built to last, however the rig wasn’t designed to drill in water over 40 feet in depth. With drilling pushing further and further from shore, Mr. Charlie ran out of places to drill as exploration efforts were required in deeper and deeper locations. A group of oil men in Morgan City who had worked on Mr. Charlie decide it was historically significant and that it needed to be preserved. The barge and equipment were offered to the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC, but due to its size, the museum was unable to accept the offer. The group of workers then created the non-profit International Petroleum Museum & Exposition so that the Mr. Charlie and other oil drilling artifacts could be preserved and exhibited for the public for education and as a repository for these important industrial pieces of equipment. Mr. Charlie now resides in Morgan City and serves as a museum to educate the public about the oil and gas industry as well as for training oilfield workers.
Figure 53: Mr. Charlie working in the gulf June 1, 1954. (http://www.life.com/image/50671035, accessed June 2, 2010)

Figure 54: Mr. Charlie as it sits today as a museum in Morgan City. (http://www.ccshost.com/btnep_educators/client_files/editor_files/30%20Mr%20Charlie%20The%20Rig%20Museum.pdf, accessed June 2, 2010)
Partial Literature Review and Bibliography


http://www.life.com/image/50671035
Threats

The Rig is operated by the International Petroleum Museum & Exposition which maintains Mr. Charlie by using the structure as a training facility and museum – basically operating as a dual-purpose facility. Due to the current moratorium on deepwater offshore drilling, training operations have essentially ceased, and the revenue stream that the museum depended upon has been cut substantially. Once the ban is lifted, management believes that revenue will return to normal. The site receives no state funding and is entirely maintained by training revenue and stipends from oil companies (Allen).
Level 0: Atchafalaya National Heritage Area – New Iberia Shipwreck – New Iberia

Brief Synopsis

It is important to immediately distinguish that the New Iberia Shipwreck is not a “ship” in the ocean going sense, but remnants of a type of vessel that travelled extensively in the bayous of Louisiana and in other parts of the country, such as the Ohio Valley. It is a “sidewheel steamboat,” and remaining examples are very rare, especially in the pristine condition that this wreck was discovered (Allain). That being said, it is an important connection to the primarily water-based transportation system that was the foundation of commerce within the bayous and rivers of Louisiana, and represents an exceptional find due to its preservation within the anaerobic climate of water and mud that it currently rests in.

According to research by Charles E. Pearson into historically documented wrecks occurring in Bayou Teche, the wreck is the remnants of the steamer Teche, its namesake bayou (Pearson, 113-123). According to further research, the Teche was constructed in 1860 by the United States Navy, and was used to transport goods during the Civil War (Delgado, 17). There still exists reasonable doubt to confirm this designation, so application to the National Register under that criteria has not been attempted at this time. The wreck does qualify under criteria C and D, using the following logic:

Criterion C: Design/Construction – the property qualifies for inclusion because it is the remains of a western river steamboat4 and embodies the distinctive characteristics of its type, period, and method of construction.

Criterion D: Archaeology, the shipwreck qualifies because it contains data which can be used to address research questions about the range of variation in the design and construction of Western river steam boats as actually built, and the function of particular elements that were previously unknown and may be examples of local or regional innovations in design. (State of Louisiana, 10)

The state, through the efforts of Paul Allain and David Palmer of the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, was successful in receiving National Register status on a statewide basis, and this is the first shipwreck in Louisiana to receive that designation (Allain).

The historic context of the shipwreck is especially critical to its history and relevance to this project. The flat-bottomed, western river steamboat was of “critical importance to the economic and social history of the Bayou Teche region, providing a major transportation link for moving people and a variety of manufactured and agricultural products in and out of the southwest part of the state” (State of Louisiana, 10). Steamboat travel and transportation began on the Teche circa 1819, and continued unabated until the advent and proliferation of railroad lines in the later part of the nineteenth century.

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4 “Western” here means the areas to the immediate west of the East Coast, which is how they were referenced during the territorial expansions of the nineteenth century.
The depth of these boats was between three and four feet, allowing them to travel far up the bayous and rivers of the Atchafalaya and even into its tributaries.

In New Iberia in 1840, there were three steamboat landings: Serrett, Iberia, and Fisher streets. Each of these locations provided wharves and warehouse space for transshipment into and out of the area. The principal goods transported were sugar and molasses, but there was also a mix of cotton, lumber, leather, hemp, eggs, chickens, fruits, vegetables, rum, and moss.
Figure 55: Pearson, et al. 2007.
Figure 56: Two types of bayou transportation in the nineteenth century. (Kane in Reuss, 2004. 68)
Partial Literature Review and Bibliography


Threats

There are multiple threats to this shipwreck as it sits within the confines of the Bayou. A serious flood could completely obliterate the site and remove the remnant artifacts buried in the silt and under the water. Passing boats could snag portions of the site and distort the artifact field. According to Paul Allain, a local Iberville Parish historian, guide piles have been installed to prevent this from happening.

Mr. Allain said there are two immediate threats occurring at this time:

- Runoff from the surrounding context is eroding the site and silting up portions of it.
- There is no designated “no-wake” zone in the bayou along the site and waves from passing boats are damaging portions of the exposed archaeology.

Grant funding has been applied for to construct a bulkhead and dock to protect the site from both of these intrusions, and the governing body in charge of the site is awaiting notification of receipt of the grant monies. The funding source is the Wallop-Breaux Fund.

There are trees on adjoining property that are leaning over the bayou, and if they were to fall on the site, they could destroy the artifacts and damage the integrity of the site.
Calder would have understood Old River Control: the place where the work is attached to the ceiling, and below which everything – New Orleans, Morgan City, the river swamp of the Atchafalaya – dangles and swings. (John McPhee, 1989, “The Control of Nature”)

Old River is a distributary channel between the Mississippi River and the Red River where they join to form the Atchafalaya River and basin. Just as the Red River was partially blocked by logjams which made it impassible for navigational purposes, so was Old River. Originally, the Red River looped towards the Mississippi, and during high water in the spring, the Mississippi overflowed its banks and joined this loop to form the Atchafalaya. Sometime in the second quarter of the nineteenth century, Captain Henry Shreve cut a channel directly through the loop to allow navigation down the Red River and into the Atchafalaya.

At that point in time, there was still a massive logjam blocking Old River between the Mississippi and the Atchafalaya, which prevented steamboats from traversing what was a much shorter and quicker route to the Gulf of Mexico and on to Texas. In 1863, the State of Louisiana authorized the removal of the logjam, and thus began the gradual expansion of Old River, the Atchafalaya Basin, and the building of land along the Gulf at the river’s terminus.

A report by the Mississippi River Commission to Congress in 1953 confirmed what many were already speculating – that the Mississippi River would eventually experience an “avulsion” and change course so that the primary river flow would then be down the Atchafalaya and out at Morgan City. This would render the old Mississippi River channel a saline estuary, and would also render it unusable as the primary mode of river traffic for the heartland of the country.

By congressional fiat, the Army Corps of Engineers was given the job of regulating the flow of the river through a newly constructed Low Sill and Overbank structure, and preserving the then current 30 percent distributary discharge from the Mississippi to the Atchafalaya. The corps achieved this engineering feat in 1963, and through various emergencies and potential avulsions, they have maintained this precarious balance between the Mississippi River and the Atchafalaya. They have succeeded by first reinforcing the Low Sill structure which almost failed in 1973, and then by opening new distributary outlets below Old River at the Morganza Spillway and other auxiliary structures to transport excessive spring flooding from the Mississippi River.

As a cultural landscape driven by river water and the surrounding levee systems that contain its overflow, Old River is the most important historical feature between the Mississippi and Atchafalaya Rivers, and serves as the primary source of navigation and waterflow through the Atchafalaya Basin.
Figure 57: Detail of Old River area and auxiliary structures and spillways between the Mississippi and Atchafalaya Rivers. (http://users.stlcc.edu/jangert.oldriver/oldriver.html, accessed on Feb. 1, 2010)

Figure 58: "Near Torras, La., on the Old River - raising a levee with earth from wheelbarrows." May 5, 1927. (Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C. 20540)
Figure 59: Mississippi River, Old River control structure inflow and outflow towards Atchafalaya Basin. (Reuss, 2004. 229)
Partial Literature Review and Bibliography


Barbé, Donald E., Kevin Fagot, and John A. McCorquodale. 2000. “Effects of Dredging due to diversions from the Lower Mississippi River.” Journal of Waterway, Port, Coastal and Ocean Engineering, 126(3)121-129.


Cifuentes, Luis, Sarah D. Oktay, and Peter H. Santschi. 2007. “Carbon isotopes and iodine concentrations in a Mississippi River delta core recording land use, sediment transport, and dam building in the river’s drainage basin.” Marine Environmental Research, 63(3)278-290.


United States Army Corps of Engineers, Mississippi River Commission. 1954. *Review report on Mississippi River and tributaries with respect to Old River control*.


Threats

Threats to the Old River system would primarily be due to a sudden and catastrophic avulsion where the Mississippi River permanently changed course. Steps taken to prevent this threat are extensive and ongoing due to the efforts of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The entire subject area is traversed north/south by Louisiana State Highway 15, although there are no points directly on the highway that allow a motorist to pull off, stop, and observe the structures, primarily due to security concerns. The Old River Lock and Old River Control both have boat ramps maintained by the USACE. There are also non-electric campgrounds and picnic areas at the Old River Lock according to the Corps website (http://corpslakes.usace.army.mil/visitors/projects.cfm?Id=B513301, accessed Feb. 1, 2010).
Brief Synopsis

Parlange Plantation House was built at the end of the eighteenth century for the Marquis Vincent de Ternant, whose descendants still occupy the house. Initially, indigo was planted as a cash crop, but it was soon replaced, because it was harmful to those who cultivated it. Vincent de Ternant died in 1757. His son Claude inherited the plantation and changed the cash crop to sugar cane and cotton. Claude’s first wife died after eight years of marriage, and he then married Virginie Trahan, a young woman of French heritage whose family had settled in the Attakapas Territory. The couple traveled often to France and acquired many of the elegant French furnishings that originally decorated the house. Virginie was in her twenties when Claude died; she later married a French army officer, Colonel Charles Parlange, who had come to North America during the Mexican Wars. The plantation has since been designated by his family name. According to the 1860 census, Virginie and Charles Parlange were prosperous plantation owners with 129 slaves who cultivated the land (Costello, 70-71). Their only son, Charles, was trained as a lawyer and established a firm with his partner E.D. White, before becoming a state senator, United States district attorney, lieutenant governor, justice of the Louisiana Supreme Court and a Federal Judge in charge of the Eastern District of Louisiana (National Register Nomination).

At Virginie’s death, Charles and his wife moved to New Orleans, leaving Parlange vacant for the first time since its construction. Charles’ son Walter left a lucrative law practice in New Orleans to return to his ancestral home and transform Parlange once again into a working plantation. His son, the late Walter Charles Parlange, Jr., a decorated B17 bomber pilot during War World II, continued in his father’s footsteps. He contributed to the Parish as a member and president of the Pointe Coupee Police Jury for 32 years, and co-founded the False River Water Works, which assures clean water for the people in the community. His second son Brandon, a civil and marine engineer who has been recognized for his work in historic preservation, is Parlange’s current steward. The original land holding encompassed 10,000 acres; today, the plantation consists of 1,267 acres of pasture and woodland under cultivation, principally with sugar and cattle.

The house overlooks False River, an oxbow lake formed by a cutoff meander of the Mississippi River. When Iberville first surveyed the Mississippi, it still flowed through what is now False River. The cutoff of the oxbow was complete by 1722. [http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/travel/louisiana/par.htm](http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/travel/louisiana/par.htm)

The architecture of Parlange is distinguished by National Historic Landmark status, granted in 1970, because it is, “one of the best examples of a French colonial plantation house of the two story raised-cottage type and exemplifies the style of the semi-tropical Louisiana river country house.” Two dovecotes or pigeonniers ornament the land between the house and False River. These octagonal

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5 When Iberville first surveyed the Mississippi, it still flowed through what is now False River. The cutoff of the oxbow was complete by 1722. [http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/travel/louisiana/par.htm](http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/travel/louisiana/par.htm)

structures are built entirely of brick. The first floors were originally used as quarters for the tutor and the gardener, and the upper level for doves (Wilson, 73). The nineteenth century gardener at Parlange was trained at Jardin des Plantes in Paris. These “are the only polygonal examples of pigeonniers to survive in Louisiana; they measure seven feet to a side and are thirty-eight feet tall with two full masonry stories” (Poesch, 144-145). With high-pitched octagonal roofs crowned with turned finials, they are as elaborate and elegant as the details of the house’s interior, and give a certain formality to the otherwise romantic landscape. Today, the pigeonniers are still used; one as guest quarters for family and friends, and the other as an office.

The house’s main floor is set on a raised basement with brick pillars to support the second story gallery. These pillars are made of wedge-shaped bricks, stuccoed, with square bases and capitals. All of the bricks used in the principal structures were manufactured at Parlange. The upper story walls are of cypress, hewn on the plantation. These wall structures are then infilled with bousillage, a mixture of mud, sand, Spanish moss and animal hair, plastered and then painted. The ground story, set on a brick floor, contains seven service rooms, including laundry, wine cellar, and provision storage.

A gallery or verandah with a balustrade encircles the four sides at the second level. Shuttered doors providing cross ventilation in all directions are placed at intervals across the main living level, or first floor in the French sense. Slender turned cypress colonettes atop the brick pillars support the high, hipped dormered roof covered with split cypress shingles. This main floor consists of seven rooms arranged in a double line. The principal front rooms were a salon and chambre “with smaller rooms at either end, the whole arranged en suite (in a row)” (Costello, 83). “Each room on the upper story has a fireplace on the partition wall, the three being served by two chimneys. The hipped roof extends at a lower pitch over the galleries....This was the typical plantation house of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries” (Wilson, 65-66).

The fireplaces at Parlange “are deep and project far into the room. The proportions are attenuated as the overmantel stretches the height of the high ceilings.” The hand carved mantel in the salon has double Ionic columns, “supporting an arch on which the shelf rests” (National Register Nomination, part 7). The principal public rooms of the house still contain furniture that dates from the house’s construction period, including rugs, furniture suites, tapestries, and paintings of seven generations of the Parlange family. Inventories from early generations demonstrate the kind of life that was lived at Parlange. The succession inventory of Vincent Ternant, Jr., in 1842 included more than 200 books, fine furniture and mirrors, hundreds of pieces of china, and wine and champagne glasses. The inventory of his son, Marius Ternant, from 1861, listed 139 pieces of silver flatware (Costello, 86, 89).

According to architectural writer Mills Lane, “Except for the front stairs,...Parlange represents the perfect idealization of the traditional Louisiana plantation house” (Lane, 56). A small rear wing was also added in the late twentieth century, connected to the main house by a breezeway. Parlange has remained amazingly unchanged through the years, with the stairs being the only major alteration. A mid nineteenth century addition, these stairs lead directly to the main floor and replaced the original stairs that would have been entirely within the cover of the gallery to afford easy and protected exterior circulation. This was typical of Louisiana colonial houses.
Also typical of Louisiana plantations was a collection of ancillary structures in support of life in the main house. The house would also have had a fenced working yard, probably behind it, that included outbuildings necessary for the operation of the plantation household, including storehouses, smokehouse, kitchen, blacksmith shop, animal coops, clothes drying area, wood storage, etc. Further from the house and closer to the cane fields would have been the quarters, simple brick dwellings arranged along a plantation road. Parlange also had a hospital on site for the slaves’ medical care, a feature only found on the largest of plantations. The hospital was a two-story brick building with four rooms on each floor; it stood halfway between the house and the quarters (Poesch and Bacot, 134). Over time each of these features in the landscape have disappeared.

While today’s setting for the Parlange house consists of magnificent live oaks and cedar trees, pigeonniers, and a barn to the left of the house that is used for hay and vehicle storage, originally formal parterre gardens were in front of the house. During the Civil War, Parlange served as the Union headquarters for General Nathaniel Banks and his army, and then as Confederate headquarters for General Dick Taylor. The garden was purportedly destroyed by these occupations. Today a smaller informal garden graces the right-hand side of the house, designed by the late landscape designer Steele Burden.

Figure 60: Parlange Plantation, northeast elevation, September, 1936. Taken by Richard Koch for the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS).
Figure 61: Parlange approach road from northeast. May, 1936 by Richard Koch, HABS.

Figure 62: Parlange, fireplace mantel in dining room. May, 1936. Richard Koch for HABS.
Figure 63: One of the Parlange pigeonniers.  

Figure 64: Parlange Plantation, ground floor plan. HABS, LA-34.
Figure 65: Parlange Plantation, main floor plan. HABS, LA-34.
Partial Literature Review and Bibliography


Threats

There are no current threats to the plantation at the present. Walter Charles Parlange, Jr., died in May, 2010, leaving his widow Lucy Brandon Parlange as sole owner. The Parlanges have three grown children and one grandchild. Plans for Parlange Plantation, once it passes into the next generation are unknown. The Parlanges have carefully stewarded their homeplace through many generations in order to maintain its historic integrity. There is always the possibility that, should the property be sold outside the Parlanges, this stewardship of the property’s integrity might no longer be the priority of new owners, posing a threat to the survival of the resource’s historic fabric, although it is certainly the intent of the present owners and potential heirs to maintain the property as a family residence.
Level 0: Atchafalaya National Heritage Area – River Road, Louisiana

Brief Synopsis

The River Road in Louisiana is part of the final route that begins in Minnesota as part of the Great River Road, under the auspices of the Mississippi River Parkway Commission, founded in 1938. A very confusing aspect of “the River Road” is the fact that it is actually a collection of different roads and not one distinct parkway or scenic byway that is easy to follow. Mary Ann Sternberg’s 1996 work on the River Road summarizes the issue very succinctly:

One of the quirks of a trip along the River Road is the inconsistent numbering of each roadway. Covering a distance of about a hundred miles, the continuous, levee-hugging east bank route successively follows Louisiana Routes 48, 628, 44, 942, 75, 141, and 327; on the west bank, the highways are La. 18, 20, 405, and 988. To me, this inconsistency effectively illustrates why the River Road has an identity problem and has not been properly appreciated en tout. (Sternberg, xiv).

The development of this system is explained by the fact that the roads along the levee were never intended to be a “highway” system, or unified roadway. From their origins, they were local roads, used by farmers, industry, and residents to go short distances between neighbors or to the closest town (Sternberg, 41). In fact, the road is a secondary artery along the river, with the Mississippi River itself serving as the primary mode of transportation, cultural dissemination, economic connection and growth, interstate commerce and travel, and the source of geological and hydrological development in prehistoric and modern history.

The earliest known existence of inhabitation in the area that encompasses the River Road is in what is now St. James Parish, dating from about 3000 B.C. (Sternberg, 1). The “modern” road that was the very beginning of what we now call the River Road was the result of colonial laws requiring that grantees receiving property along the river not only build levees to control annual flooding, but also construct a route along the land-facing side of the levee.

In 1732 the French colonial government, aware that control of the river was inadequate, demanded that levees be six feet wide at the crest, with a foot-and-bridle-path on the land side and a twelve-foot-tall boat-hitching post on the river side. (Sternberg, 33)

Thus began the process that would eventually result in wider pathways for carts, carriages, and then automobiles and large trucks in the twentieth century.

This process of acculturation along the landward side of the levees continued mostly unabated until 1935, with the construction of Highway 61 between Baton Rouge and New Orleans, on the east side of the Mississippi River. Although political legend alleges that one of the primary forces behind the construction of this new transportation corridor was Huey Long, in order to expedite his rapid movement between the capital city and the many attractions of New Orleans, the construction of Highway 61 (Airline Highway) occurred during the Great Depression, as part of a series of governmental work programs used to lessen the dire circumstances that many United States residents found themselves in by creating construction jobs related to infrastructure and public parks, especially in the poorer states of the South, like Louisiana (Sternberg, 41).
The Airline Highway was a magnet that reoriented many riverfront towns away from the Mississippi. New business districts developed along this fast road, causing the River Road to lose its status as the area’s preeminent roadway. (Sternberg, 41)

In a similar fashion, Louisiana Highway 1 now serves as the major arterial on the western side of the River, reorienting the settlements and towns directly along the river towards the faster, better constructed highway, and reducing the dependence on the River Road as a primary mode of automobile and industrial traffic.

Just as the roads have changed, the primary enterprises that operate along the river have evolved and changed as society advanced from a primarily agricultural economy to the industrial economy that we see today. In 1909, Standard Oil constructed an oil refinery in Baton Rouge, and the age of petrochemical plants along the Mississippi River began. Tourists from other states and foreign locales expect to fly into New Orleans, rent an automobile, drive up the River Road and experience the plantations and historical agricultural features so often associated with the historical River Road. What they see is an evolving landscape, made up of sugar mills stacks, power plants, fencerows, batture land, chemical plants, and small communities. Just north of Darrow, Louisiana, on the east bank of the river, visitors see Ashland – Belle Helene, Duncan Kenner’s 1842 classic masterpiece of columns and porticoes. The house is not open to the public and is owned by Shell Oil Company. The juxtaposition that disturbs many visitors is the looming presence of Shell Oil’s massive refinery operation in the background behind Ashland. The layers cross each other in a sometimes indistinguishable jumble.

The use of the land along the River Road has evolved and changed through the centuries—from wilderness to settlement, from small tracts to large plantation layouts, from plantations back to small landholdings, from natural greensward to agriculture and then to industry, from lowland to communities and from communities to pasture again, and from secure to inundated, or flooded to livable. The entire history of the area is one of continual transformation. (Sternberg, 42)

One thing has remained constant. The river as the major arterial of commerce – whether agricultural or industrial – is preeminent. Whether serving Native Americans in canoes, inland American entrepreneurs on flatboats, plantation owners by steamboat, or large industrial plants by ocean going vessels, the river – and the associated levees and roads – is the central linkage and continuity that ties together the small communities, states, regions, and country served by its 2,300 mile length to its headwaters in Minnesota.

The challenge along the River Road is the presentation or interpretation of this landscape to the visitor who expects one thing and finds something completely different. Suzanne Turner in 1989 authored a scholarly article that examines this juxtaposition and tries to make sense of the sometimes jumbled assemblage of landscape types and cultural scenes that the visitor encounters along the River Road:

The resultant scene seems jarring, with stately plantation homes adjacent to stark refineries, with cane fields interspersed among tank farms. Huge power lines run along the river for reasons not to different from why steamboats plied the river a century and a half earlier. It is too easy to say that the purely agricultural landscape was beautiful, and that the landscape of a diverse economy seems dissonant. The river and the land have been the direct source of the area’s vitality: there are layers of patterns on this landscape that, when deciphered, contain important threads of continuity. In my view,
such a landscape, if interpreted, offers more telling insights than the “pure” and beautiful ones of the early nineteenth century. Its message is all about how people have used resources, how the place has changed and how it has sustained generations. (Turner, 8).
Partial Literature Review and Bibliography


Threats

As discussed by Sternberg in her 1998 book on the River Road, the corridor suffers from a distinct identity crisis, brought on by the lack of a unified identification system for the road in its entirety, and the shift throughout the twentieth century away from the riverfront to faster and wider (and oftentimes safer) arterial highway systems. The current director of Louisiana Byways states that new signage has been designed and will be installed soon that simplifies this problem.

The juxtaposition between the old agrarian landscapes of the past and the new massive complexes related to petrochemicals and industry provide a unique opportunity, but also a challenge for interpretation.

Doug Bourgeois of Louisiana Scenic Byways states that there are currently no design standards for new construction or development along river road. One of the most recent threats is from a casino that is locating in lower East Baton Rouge Parish, which is requesting the relocation of the road away from the river levee and batture, in order to provide additional land on which to construct their facility.
Level 0: Atchafalaya National Heritage Area - Robin House and Barn

St. Landry Parish on Bayou Teche

Brief Synopsis

The region where the Robin House is located, in lower St. Landry Parish along the Bayou Teche, is one of the areas of earliest settlement in the state, with the parish established in 1807. The Robin House is important because the design and construction of the structure represents the important architectural traditions that characterized the area during its early period; it is doubly significant because it has survived, with relatively little alteration to its original fabric. Even rarer is the survival of the historic barn associated with the Robin House. Although early houses have been preserved because they maintain utility as living spaces, barns and other smaller agricultural outbuildings have typically either been demolished or left to deteriorate once they have lost their utilitarian value. Changes in farming technology have made most 19th century barns obsolete, and to have a surviving antebellum barn is particularly unique. The State Division of Historic Preservation estimates that less than ten antebellum barns survive in Louisiana (Robin House National Register Nomination).

There are many unanswered questions concerning the history of the Robin House, including the date of its construction, yet certain facts can be ascertained either from archives or from the building structure itself. It is known that there were Robins living on the property as early as 1815. Some features, including handmade wrought iron hardware and an asymmetrical façade, would suggest a date as early as 1820, while others suggest 1835. Either an older house was remodeled in 1835, or the entire house may date from that time period. What is important to note are the features that associate it with the French Creole house of modest size (not plantation scale). These characteristics are an asymmetrical façade; bousillage walls; framing held together with mortise, tenon, and pegs; elevation on brick piers; umbrella roof with gabled ends; floor plan of gallery, central salle flanked by rooms of equal size, and rear cabinet and loggia with curved steep stair leading from loggia to attic; exposed beaded ceiling beams and boards; two wraparound mantels; sets of batten double doors featuring beading (Robin House National Register Nomination).

In addition to its clear French Creole lineage, the Robin House includes some qualities of the Greek Revival introduced to French Louisiana by the influx of Americans coming into the region after the Louisiana Purchase, but not exhibiting itself in architecture until the 1830s and 1840s. The elements are “two frontal roof dormers featuring pilasters with molded capitals and pedimented gables with raked cornices, boxed columns (with molded capitals) creating a symmetrical gallery with five bays (the center bay being slightly more narrow than the others), and a simple entablature outlining the gallery roof” (Robin House National Register Nomination).

Like many early houses, the Robin House underwent minor alterations over the years, including the enclosure of the loggia, and in the 1890s, alterations to the French doors with replacements in the Eastlake style. Curved brackets were added to the boxed columns of the gallery. A small room was added to the back. Despite these changes, the integrity of the French and Greek Revival features is strongly intact.
The Robin House is important not because it is unique, but rather because it is typical. From the colonial period up until the 1840s, the parish, particularly the banks of Bayou Teche in the rural countryside, would have been lined with similar houses. The house survives and reminds us of this straightforward, vernacular building tradition that has characterized so much of south Louisiana’s earliest days of settlement.

The Robin Barn, standing in association with the house, reminds us that to live in Louisiana in the early nineteenth century meant to live on the land, using that land as a means of survival and livelihood. Very few early Louisianans lived without keeping farm animals that were used for transportation and for field work. “Historically the landscape would have been dotted with several thousand barns, but today they are rare survivors.” Of the few surviving antebellum barns in the state, the Division of Historic Preservation knows of only two that are French Creole—one at Whitney Plantation, and the Robin Barn. The barn is constructed using a unique French technique called piece-sur-piece, found only in this barn, and in the Pointe Coupee Parish Museum near New Roads (Robin House National Register Nomination). This method is thought to have originated in the early seventeenth century in Nova Scotia with military engineers building a fort at the first North American French settlement. It was adopted into vernacular use and spread throughout Canada and the Mississippi Valley. “Individual squared logs were either locked together with half- or full-dovetail corner notches, ...or retained in corner posts by tongue-and-groove.” The technique provided better insulated, more durable walls requiring less repairs than columbage (half-timber or bousillage) (Edwards, Creole Lexicon, 153-155).

The ensemble of the Robin House and Barn are an outstanding representation of the building traditions of the earliest settlers of St. Landry Parish, and indeed of south Louisiana. The two structures are poignant reminders of the fact that rural life in early Louisiana always involved life in the landscape, and the use of the materials at hand, and traditions passed down from forebears to make a living by working the land.
Partial Literature Review and Bibliography


____________________. 1988. *Louisiana’s remarkable French vernacular architecture, 1799-1900*. Fred B. Kniffen Cultural Resources Laboratory, LSU Department of Geography and Anthropology, Baton Rouge, LA.


Threats

It is unclear whether the Robin House is inhabited at the present time. If not, the house and barn are extremely vulnerable to the elements, fire, and vandalism. The owners need assistance in order to renovate and maintain the property as it currently exists.
Brief Synopsis

The Shadows-on-the-Teche has attained national landmark status for several reasons; because of the quality of its architectural design, the survival of the house and changing landscape from their beginnings, and the continuity of ownership through four generations of a single family creating a site with continually overlapping layers of American history. Equally remarkable is the survival of the Weeks Family Papers, consisting of over 17,000 family documents – including correspondence, invoices, and legal records dating from 1782 to 1958. The Shadows, built for sugar planter David Weeks between 1831 and 1834 along Bayou Teche on East Main Street, served as the main house for the planter and his family, even though the majority of his considerable sugar holdings were located at Grand Côte (today’s Weeks Island), roughly sixteen miles away on Vermillion Bay. Weeks was the son of an Englishman who had emigrated to America, living first along the eastern seaboard, moving to Natchez about the time of the American Revolution, and finally settling near St. Francisville. David Weeks was born in the St. Francisville area, and as a young man, he worked with his father accumulating farmland in both the Felicianas and the Atakapas region, planting cotton in the former, and sugar cane in the latter.

In 1818, David married Mary Clara Conrad, who was born in Virginia. Mary Clara’s family moved to Natchez around 1805, and later settled on a plantation on Bayou Teche between New Iberia and Jeanerette. The newly married couple lived first in St. Francisville, and then on Grand Côte. Weeks disliked the remoteness of the island and decided to build a house appropriate for his wife and their growing family closer to town. He selected a tract of 158 acres on the edge of New Iberia, then called “New Town.” By the time of the house’s construction, Mary Clara and David had eight children, one of whom had died shortly after birth. In 1834, when the house was nearly complete, David sailed to Connecticut in search of a cure for continuing, chronic illness. He died while away, tragically never having lived in his new home.

The architectural design of the Shadows was atypical for rural Louisiana at the time, representing a marriage of the Louisiana form of Greek revival with the Creole. The house has one of the first monumental galleries in the state, but retained French features such as exterior stairs, open loggias between the two rear rooms, and a dining room on the ground floor with parlor above (Poesch, 110). This typical Louisiana Colonial floor plan included broad galleries, no interior hallways or major staircases, and “numerous opposing windows and doors” for cross-ventilation in Louisiana’s sub-tropical climate (Kahle, 15).

David Weeks’ death left his widow Mary Clara in charge of not only the management of a large house and household, but also with responsibility for David’s plantation holdings, dealings with overseers, purchases of supplies, marketing of crops, and for meeting the needs of the 150 enslaved men, women, and children who were under her care. In 1841, she found a supportive partner in her marriage to John

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7 In 1984, the Weeks Family Papers were donated to the Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collection at Louisiana State University, and are now housed in Special Collections in Hill Memorial Library at LSU.
Moore – a widower, lawyer, and former representative in the Louisiana House of Representatives – who lived near Washington, Louisiana. Although their assets were kept separate by their marriage contract, Moore was an important advisor to Mary Clara and her children on daily business and life affairs. Moore served in the United States Congress, and his new wife travelled to Washington, D. C. on occasion. After his re-election in 1851, she visited only once, preferring to stay at the Shadows, managing the plantation and domestic affairs of her extensive holdings.

In 1844, Mary Clara’s oldest son William F. Weeks, returned home from college in Virginia to manage the Weeks’ family plantations. The cane crop of 1861 was the best in Louisiana to date, and the Weeks’ crop at Grand Côte was profitable as well (Kahle, 36). This prosperity probably led the family to commission the artist Adrien Persac to produce front and back portraits of their New Iberia home, which today serve as important documents of the shadows’ appearance at the middle of the nineteenth century. It would not be long before these images of an ordered and peaceful landscape would be shattered by the coming of the Civil War. Although several of Mary Clara’s grown children, including William, along with husband John Moore, left the Teche area seeking refuge in either Texas or north Louisiana, she stayed behind at the Shadows to watch over her home and agricultural properties.

In November 1863, Union General William Buel Franklin moved into the Shadows and set up his headquarters on the ground floor of the house, while Mary Clara, her house servants, and her sister-in-law remained on the second and third floors. Mary Clara’s health declined, no doubt impaired by the stress of having her home surrounded and occupied by Union troops, and on December 19, 1863, she died and was buried in her garden (Kahle, 39).

After the war, William Weeks and his family moved back into the Shadows and became caretakers of the family homeplace. In 1895 William died at the Shadows, shortly after the birth of his only grandchild, William Weeks Hall, son of Lily Weeks and Gilbert Hall. It was this grandson who would eventually rescue the grand house from the decline that it suffered after William Weeks’ death, and who would undertake its restoration beginning in 1922. “Weeks” Hall, an artist, intellectual, and dilettante of sorts, determined to not only restore the house with the help of New Orleans restoration architect Richard Koch, but also to design a garden upon the remnants of his great grandmother’s garden. Continuity with the past generations of his family was all-important to Hall. He surrounded the garden with a dense bamboo hedge to shut out the gas stations and other signs of twentieth century “progress” that increasingly began to interfere with the serenity of the Shadows. Hall’s intention from the outset was to design the property so that it could be easily maintained after his death, as he planned to bequeath both the house and garden to a public agency for preservation.

In the end, Hall was not able to convince any state or federal agency to accept his gift of the Shadows, but shortly before his death in 1958, the then-young National Trust for Historic Preservation agreed to accept the generous donation of this exceptional property. The Trust – as steward of the Shadows – has applied “best practices” to the presentation of this resource to the public, and continues to research and update the interpretation of the story of the Shadows, its landscape, and the Weeks Family to visitors who come from all over the world to tour this storied home and its surrounding gardens on Bayou Teche.
Figure 66: Shadows-on-the-Teche (front view) by Adrien Persac, 1861. (Kahle, 36)
Figure 67: Shadows-on-the-Teche, David Weeks House, East Main Street, New Iberia, LA. (Lane, 64)
Figure 68: Floor plans for first and second floors. (Kahle, 16)
Figure 69: Photograph taken by Weeks Hall, circa 1940, of his new “Square Garden.” (Kahle, 56)

Figure 70: Workers gathered on a bridge at Weeks Island. (Kahle, 44)
Figure 71: Morton Salt Mines on Weeks Island. (Bergerie, 129)


Center for Louisiana Studies, University of Southwestern Louisiana. 1980. Green Fields: Two Hundred Years of Louisiana Sugar. Lafayette, LA: Center for Louisiana Studies, University of Southwestern Louisiana.


_____________. 1984. Shadows-on-the-Teche…and the family who owned it. Lafayette, LA: Center for Louisiana Studies, University of Southwestern Louisiana.


Shadows-on-the-Teche. Administrative files, archival photo collection, slide collection. New Iberia, LA.


Weeks, David, and Weeks Hall. The Historic New Orleans Collection. Manuscript Division.
**Threats**

Shadows on the Teche currently has a staff of four, down from eight before Hurricane Katrina. Lack of sufficient staff to properly operate programs and exhibits is tied to reduced funding. Visitorship has been half what it was pre-Katrina, forcing continued staff reductions.

Shadows no longer receives funds from the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Operation grants from the Institute of Museum and Library Services have also ended, due to the suspension of that organization’s general operating support grant program.

The museum house is currently 100% self-supporting, with roughly 25% of its budget coming from visitorship and the remaining budget from fund-raising efforts in the local community. Despite a strong and loyal friends organization and successful annual fund-raising events, continued funding is a pressing issue and will continue to be so in the foreseeable future (Kahle, 2010).
Brief Synopsis

The Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist in Lafayette is located on Main Street in Lafayette and was the third building constructed on land donated to the Catholic Church by Jean Mouton in 1822. The structure is Dutch Romanesque⁸, and is constructed primarily of brick painted bright red, with stone trim (Louisiana Writers’ Project, 275). Little is known about the architect other than that Father W. J. Teurlings visited his parents in the Netherlands in 1912, retained the services of an architect there named Cousins, and received the completed drawings by post some months later. The cathedral was constructed between 1913 and 1916.

The Cathedral maintains a museum on the church grounds which displays vestments, documents, and other items related to church history. One of the largest live oaks in Louisiana is located on the grounds, the St. John Oak. It is the third oldest member of the “Live Oak Society,“ and is estimated to be 500 years old. Last measured in 2008, the oak was “9 feet in diameter, with a circumference of 28 feet 8 inches; it stands approximately 126 high with a spread of 210 feet across” http://www.saintjoohn cathedral.org/Our_Church.html, accessed 6/25/2010).

⁸ The term "Romanesque" was coined in 1818 by Charles-Alexis-Adrien de Gerville to describe the form of art and architecture that preceded Gothic. Most Romanesque churches (the primary type of Romanesque architecture) have the following characteristics:

- harmonious proportions
- stone barrel vault or groin vault
- thick and heavy walls
- thick and heavy pillars
- small windows
- round arches supporting the roof
- round "blind arches" used extensively for decoration inside and out (especially out)
- nave with side aisles (though some modest churches are aisleless)
- galleries above the side aisles, separated from the nave by a triforium
- a transept (section crossing the nave at a right angle, giving the church a cross shape)
- an apse (semicircular niche, usually in the east end)
- an ambulatory (often with radiating chapels) around the apse
- multiple towers, usually at the west end and over the transept crossing
- sculptured decoration on portals, capitals and other surfaces (except in Cistercian monasteries)
- painted decoration throughout the interior

Below is the “Statement of Significance” from the National Register files maintained by the State of Louisiana Archives.

SPECIFIC DATES 1913-1916
Architect: Cousin/ Builder: Eugene Guillot
Statement of Significance

St. John the Evangelist Cathedral is a local architectural landmark which is known throughout the region for its elaborate and imposing design both inside and out. Its striking, bold, and somewhat unromanesque use of Romanesque architecture makes a strong statement of the importance of the cathedral in the town and in the diocese. The design has a high degree of individuality which can be seen in its somewhat retardaire use of polychromy and its unstudied boldness. St. John's makes a significant contribution to the Lafayette townscape, which cannot boast of many noteworthy buildings. The cathedral is also noteworthy for its elaborate painted interior by a local artist.

Father W. J. Teurlings, pastor of St. John's Parish in Lafayette from 1906 to 1929, was the leader of the project to build the new church from the early planning stages to the completion of construction. The main justification for the new edifice was that the congregation had outgrown its old church building, which dated from the mid-nineteenth century.

It was in 1909 that Father Teurlings and his congregation began to plan. "Ah, but I had big plans in my head" he recalled years later in his autobiography. "A dream of a church, strictly church-style, perfect in its proportions and delineations." Father Teurlings visited his parents in Holland in 1910, and on this visit he met an unemployed architect whose surname was "Cousin," who agreed to draw the plans for the church. Mr. Cousin finished his drawings a few months after he met Father Teurlings and mailed them to Lafayette from his home in Nymegen in the Netherlands. It is sometimes claimed that the design closely follows a church in Holland.

Father Teurlings called on Eugene Guillot of New Iberia to be the contractor. Many of the congregation's farmers dramatized their enthusiasm for the project by using their wagons to haul building materials from the railroad depot to the site. Such volunteer work helped cut costs. According to Father Teurlings, the church cost approximately $50,000. The cornerstone was laid in November, 1913, and construction was finished in 1916.

Less than two years later, southwestern Louisiana was declared an independent diocese with Lafayette as its seat. St. John's Church became St. John’s Cathedral with Father Jules Jeanmard as its first Bishop.
Figures 72 & 2: The exterior of the church showing the central steeple with bell tower, flanking towers. Interior image shows the vaulted ceiling with polychrome paint scheme.

Figure 3: The St. John Oak, believed to be over 500 years old.
Partial Literature Review and Bibliography


Threats

There are no known threats to the cathedral other than the standard Louisiana extreme weather events that characterize the climate.