

# Jouissons

NATCHITOCHEES PARISH AREA

Gate to Louisiana



## If you want to know more about the Cane River region

There are numerous collections and repositories in or near the heritage area. Archaeological collections can be found at Northwestern State University's Williamson Museum and at Los Adaes State Historic Site. Archival and library collections are available in the Cammie G. Henry Research Center of Northwestern State University's Watson Library, the Natchitoches Genealogical and Historical Association Research Library, and the Natchitoches Parish Library. There is a local history collection at the Old Courthouse Museum (a branch of the Louisiana State Museum), and there are plantation house museums at Beau Fort, Magnolia, and Melrose plantations. Through the years, many people have written extensively of the people, places and events of the Cane River region, among them are Kate Chopin, Lyle Saxon, Francois Mignon, Ross Phares and Ada Jack Carver.

### CANE RIVER NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA

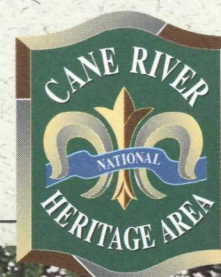
P.O. Box 1201  
Natchitoches, Louisiana 71458  
318-356-5555  
www.caneriverheritage.org or www.nps.gov/crha



For Tourist Information: 800-259-1714

Hours of operation at sites may vary

PHOTO CREDITS: Appreciation to John C. Gallet for many of the photographs used here, to Mark Bills for the photograph of Front Street, to Neil Johnson for the photograph of Ft. St. Jean Baptiste



# Plantations



## MELROSE

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK

Melrose is a now-legendary plantation that dates back to 1796. It was established by descendants of Marie Therese Coincoin, a former slave who became a wealthy landowner and businesswoman. In later years, under the ownership of Cammie Henry, Melrose became a mecca for artists, writers and historians.



Clementine Hunter



African House

Clementine Hunter, regarded as the South's premier folk artist, spent much of her life at Melrose.

The nine-building plantation grounds include: the Big House, The African House, the Yucca House, the Ghana House, the writer's cabin, the weaving house, the bindery and the barn. Melrose is privately owned and open daily. (Hwy. 119)



Pierre Emmanuel Prudhomme, founder

## OAKLAND

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK

Oakland is the most complete Creole plantation in the South, with 17 of its original outbuildings still remaining. The plantation house probably was constructed by slaves in 1818. The house exemplifies early construction methods and the use of such materials as hand-hewn timbers and bousillage fill. Also significant to the site is the plantation's historic landscape. Oakland remained in the original family through seven generations. The historic property is a National Bicentennial Farm and a unit of Cane River Creole National Historical Park. (Hwy. 494)

## MAGNOLIA

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK

The two and one-half story plantation house is one of the largest in the area, with twenty-seven rooms, including a Catholic Chapel in which Mass is still celebrated. The original house was constructed in the 1830s, burned by the Union Army in 1864, and rebuilt in 1899. It is privately owned and open daily.

The adjacent Magnolia Plantation Complex, 18 acres of numerous historically significant outbuildings, is publicly owned. The complex is a unit of Cane River Creole National Historical Park. The plantation is a National Bicentennial Farm. (Hwy. 119)

Oakland and Magnolia plantations are the only two National Bicentennial Farms west of the Mississippi River. Together they make up the Cane River Creole National Historical Park.



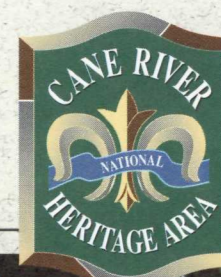
## CHEROKEE

The plantation house dates from the 1830s and is named for the Cherokee roses in the front yard. Its raised-cottage style is typical of early Louisiana plantations and reflects Creole construction techniques as well as the lifestyles of early French planters. Cherokee is elegantly furnished and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. (Hwy. 494)



## BEAU FORT

Built about 1790, Beau Fort represents the finest in original Creole architecture. Constructed of hand-hewn cypress and bousillage, its Old South amenities include an 84-foot gallery, French doors and a covered rear patio. Presently a working 265-acre cotton plantation, its field system remains intact. A National Register property, Beau Fort is privately owned and open daily. (Hwy. 494)



# Historic Heritage Area Houses



## KATE CHOPIN HOUSE

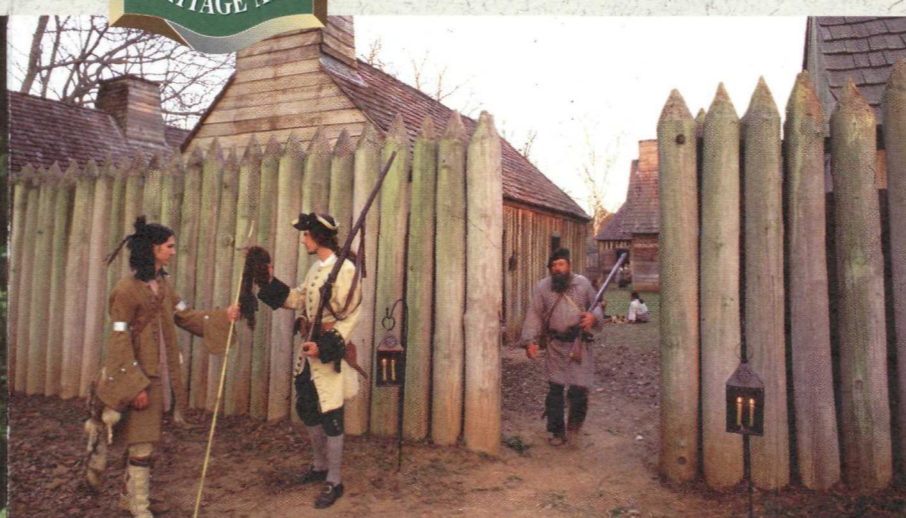
NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK

Constructed in the early 1800s, this house was later the home of Kate Chopin, the renowned novelist and author of *The Awakening* and many Creole stories. Its raised Louisiana-cottage style

illustrates French construction methods and is typical of rural community Creole homes. The complex includes a restored blacksmith shop and building that served as a doctor's office. It also houses the Bayou Folk Museum, which features among its contents many agricultural implements. It is open daily. (Hwy. 495)



# Fort Sites



Ft. St. Jean Baptiste

## FORT ST. JEAN BAPTISTE

STATE HISTORIC SITE

Louis Juchereau de St. Denis founded the first permanent European settlement in the Louisiana Purchase Territory in 1714. Two years later the French built the fort that served both as a center for trading activities and as a deterrent to Spanish advances from Texas into French Louisiana. The complex features a unique double-thickness palisade and contains 12 structures and an outdoor oven. (Hwy. 6)

## LOS ADAES

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK  
STATE HISTORIC SITE

The Spanish founded this presidio in 1721 to halt French expansion into Texas. Los Adaes played a key role in maintaining the balance of power between the two



Spanish Colonial Pottery, Los Adaes

countries, and, in time, became a symbol of the unique cooperation among the French, Spanish and American Indian people of the area. The Spanish closed Los Adaes in 1773. Because the site has never been cleared or cultivated, it remains rich in archeological discoveries. (Hwy. 6)

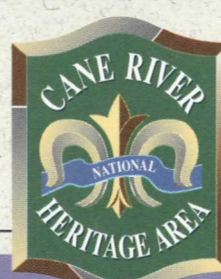
## FORT JESUP

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK  
STATE HISTORIC SITE

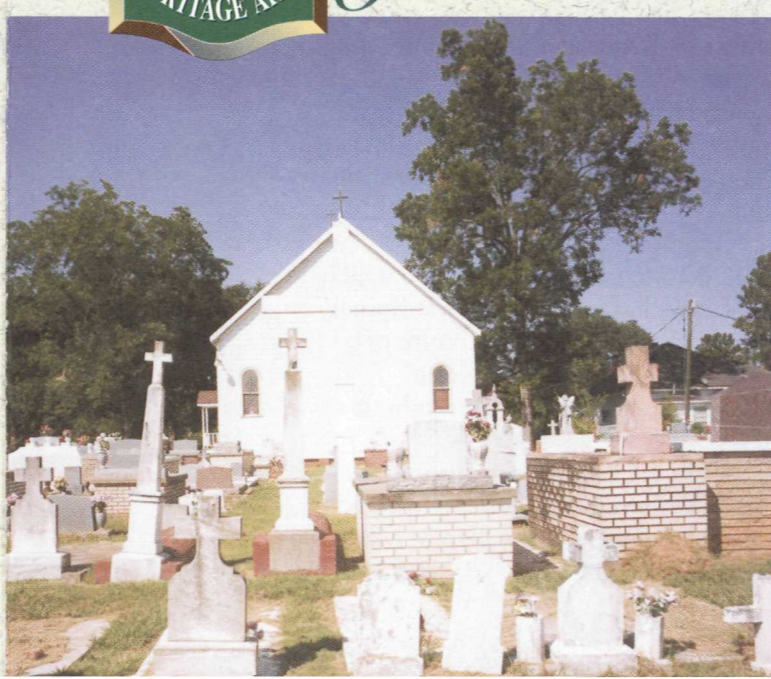
Fort Jesup was built by the United States in 1822, on the historic San Antonio Road. At the time, the United States claimed eastern Texas and Spain claimed western Louisiana. The fort stood in the middle of the disputed territory. For 25 years it was an important and sizable military post, with 82 structures within its confines. The original kitchen has been restored and refurbished and its officers' quarters reconstructed for use as a visitor center. (Hwy. 6)



Ft. Jesup



# Points of Interest



## ST. AUGUSTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH

This church congregation was established around 1803 by Augustine Metoyer—the *Grandpere* to whom many Cane River descendants trace their ancestry—and his brother, Louis. The unique cemetery behind the church contains French-inscribed wrought-iron crosses and tombs built like small houses. Augustine Metoyer, Cane River folk artist Clementine Hunter and author Francois Mignon are among those buried here. (Hwy. 484)

## MONETTE'S FERRY

The Civil War Battle of Monette's Ferry, a critical engagement of the Red River Campaign, was fought here in April, 1864. (Hwy. 1)



Marie Therese Antie, a Metoyer descendant

## REBEL STATE PARK

STATE HISTORIC SITE  
This marks the gravesite of the Unknown Confederate Soldier. Tended by local residents for one hundred years, it gained official designation in 1962. Also home of the Louisiana Country Music Museum. (Hwy. 120)

## ADAI CADDO INDIAN COMMUNITY

The Adai Caddo Indian Community is the site of St. Anne's Catholic Church, a National Register property and the oldest church in the Louisiana Purchase. The Adai Caddo Living History Museum will open in 2003. (Hwy. 485)



Traditional dancers

## OAKLAWN PLANTATION

Built in the 1830s, this bousillage, three-story home is one of the finest examples of Creole architecture in the area. The 680-foot oak-forested *allee* leading to the house is the third longest in Louisiana. Oaklawn is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. (Hwy. 494)

## ADDITIONAL POINTS OF INTEREST

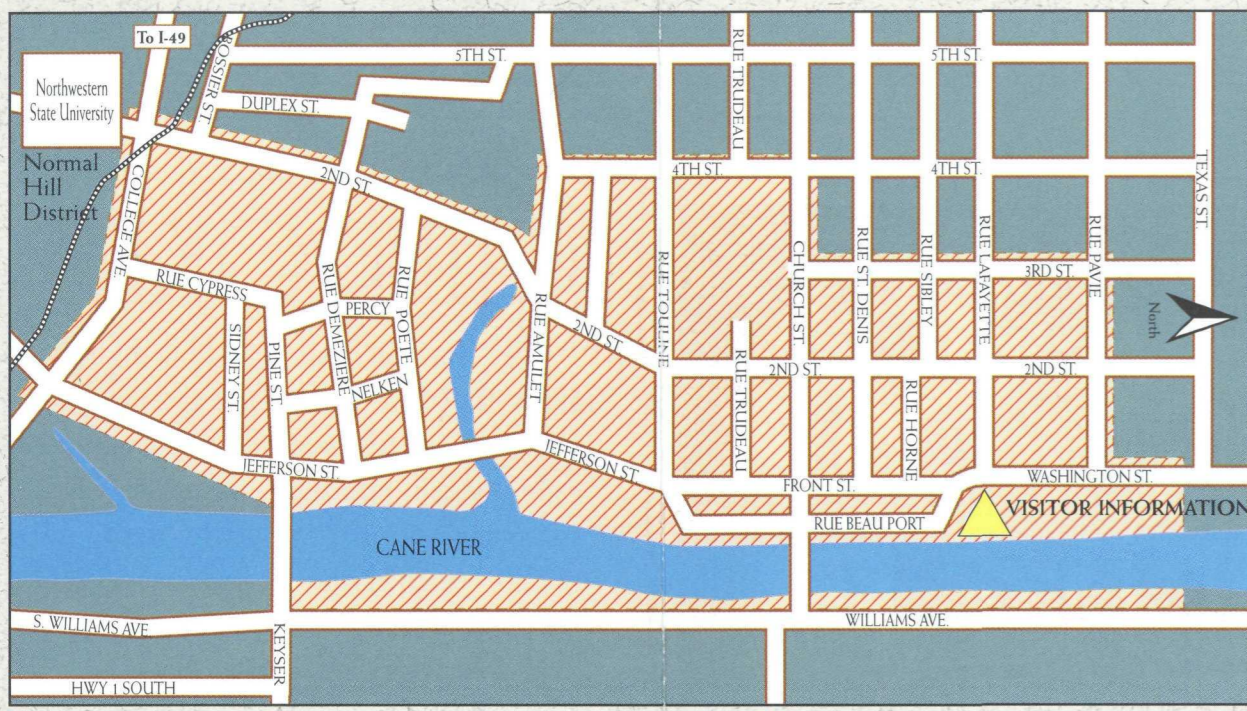
There are many other important sites in the heritage area which, because of space limitations, have not been detailed here. Among them are the Jones House and the Rachal House at Isle Bevelle, the Carroll Jones House, and Cedar Bend and Atahoe plantations. Also, several small, culturally significant churches are located throughout the area. Many of these sites are identified with roadside informational signs.

## BADIN-ROQUE HOUSE

This National Register property is a rare example—one of only four remaining in the United States—of a *potaux en terre* (posts in the ground) cottage. It was probably built in the early 1800s and typifies bousillage construction techniques. It has a single central chimney and dirt floor and offers a first-hand view of Creole frontier life. (Hwy. 484)



Interior, circa 1947



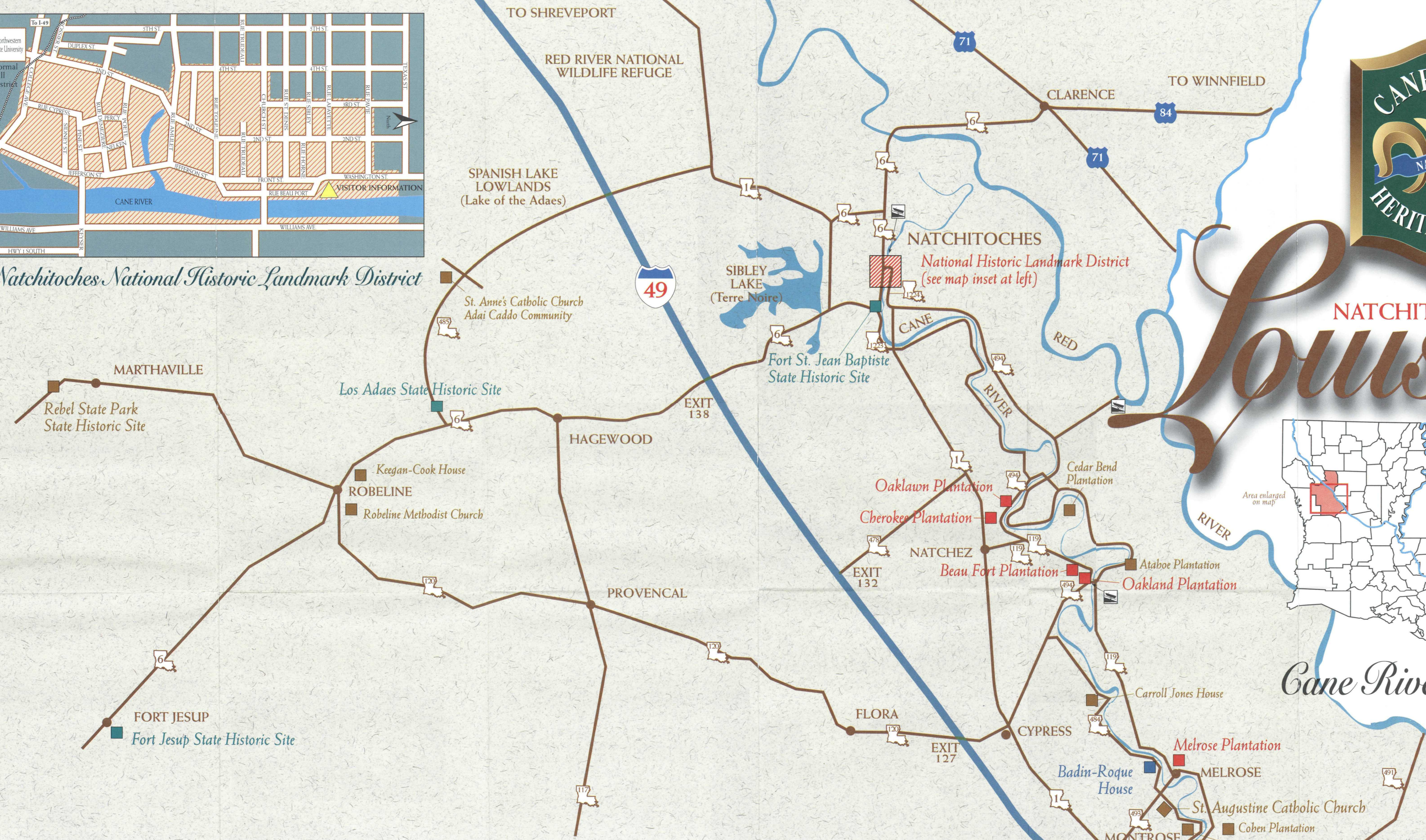
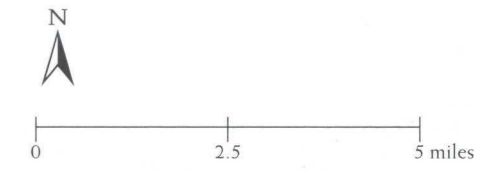
*Natchitoches National Historic Landmark District*



*Côte Joyeuse*

NATCHITOCHES PARISH AREA

*Louisiana*



- NATCHITOCHES HISTORIC DISTRICT
- PLANTATIONS
- HISTORIC HERITAGE AREA HOUSES
- FORT SITES
- POINTS OF INTEREST
- BOAT LAUNCH
- VISITOR INFORMATION

*About the Cane River National Heritage Area*

The Cane River National Heritage Area, established by Congress in 1994, is a largely rural, agricultural landscape known both for its historic Creole-style architecture and its unique people and culture.

The area has been shaped by almost 300 years of events—large and small, difficult and joyous. Today it is home to a history and culture that has evolved from those events and from the people who have lived there: the Europeans, the American Indians, free and enslaved Blacks, and the Creoles of French, Spanish, African and American Indian descent.

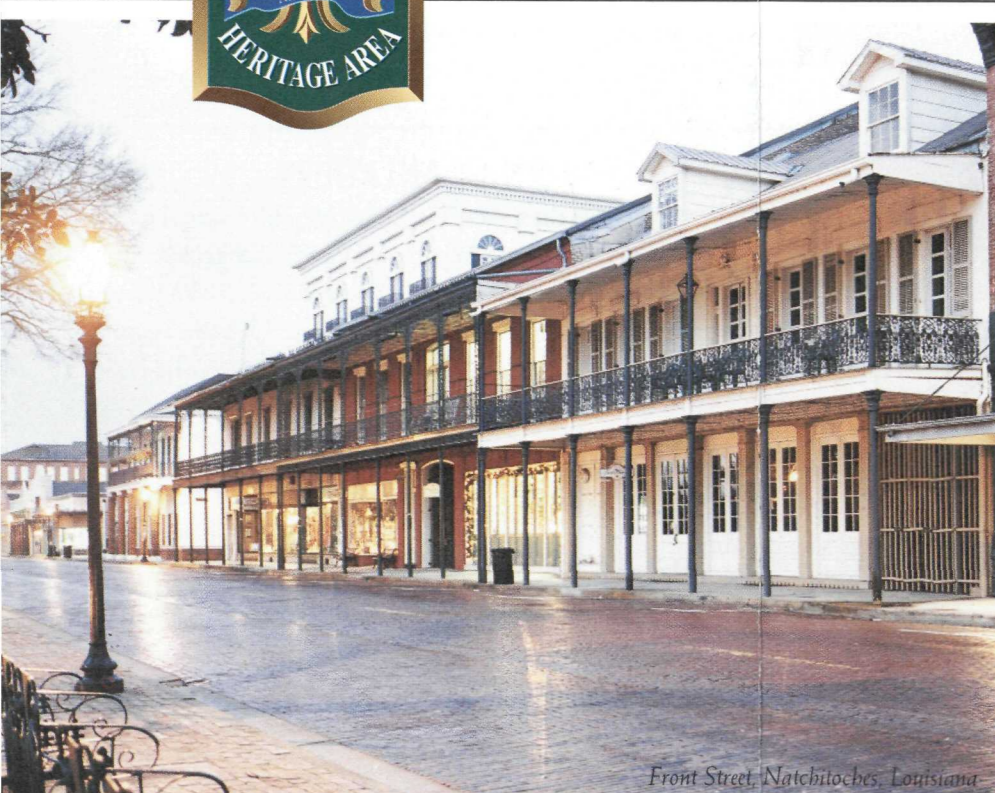
Located primarily in Natchitoches Parish, the Cane River National Heritage Area includes six National Historic Landmark sites, a 33-block National Historic Landmark District, three State Historic Sites at former military forts in the area, Cane River Creole National Historical Park (two sites), and many historic plantations, homes, and churches. Nearly all of the properties included in this map are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Administered by the National Park Service, the National Register is the nation's official list of historic properties worthy of preservation.

The central corridor of the Cane River National Heritage Area begins just below the City of Natchitoches and meanders south along both sides of Cane River Lake for 35 miles. The lake is formerly the main channel of the Red River before the river changed course in the nineteenth century. While much of the roughly 116,000 acre heritage area is privately owned, many sites are open to the public.

Key sites in the heritage area are highlighted in this guide and located on the map. They, along with many other significant sites, are marked by informational signs.



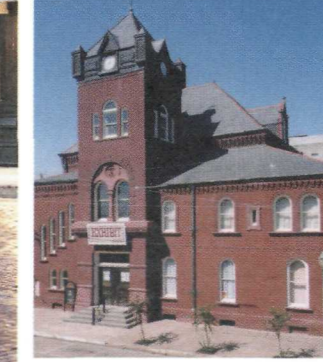
*Natchitoches National Historic Landmark District*



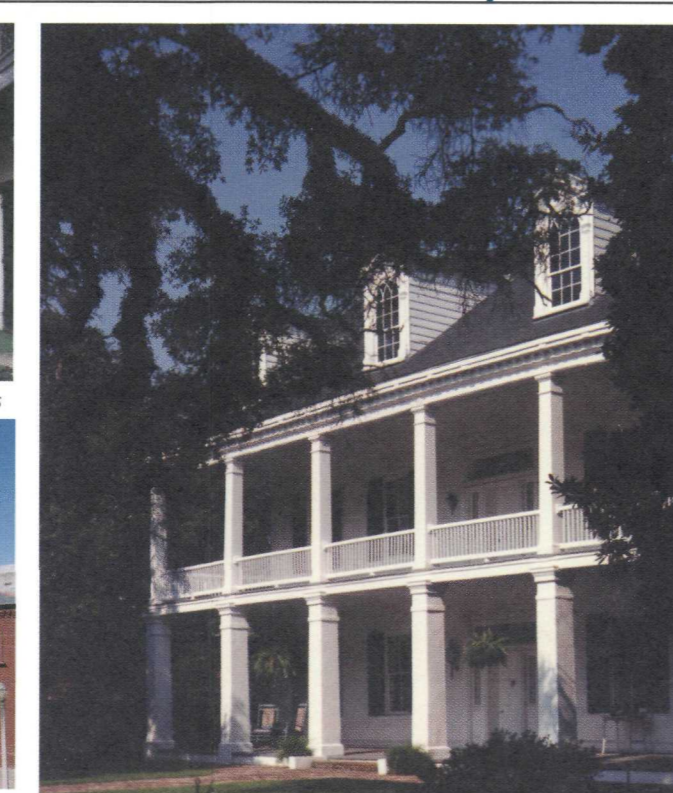
*Front Street Natchitoches, Louisiana*



*Spiral Staircase, circa 1830s*



*Old Courthouse Museum*



*Prudhomme-Rouquier House*

The City of Natchitoches was established in 1714 by Louis Juchereau de St. Denis, making it the oldest permanent settlement in the Louisiana Purchase territory. The French settlement had two purposes: to establish trade with the Spanish in Texas, and at the same time, to deter Spanish advances into Louisiana. Natchitoches soon became a flourishing river port and crossroads, giving rise to vast cotton kingdoms along the river. Planters built magnificent plantations down river and built fine homes in town for social events. The city's National Historic Landmark District, which fronts Cane River Lake, includes many historic homes, churches and commercial structures. A mixture of Queen Anne and Victorian architecture, along with Creole-style cottages, can be seen throughout the district. Sites open to the public include the Prudhomme-Rouquier House, the Old Courthouse Museum (a branch of the Louisiana State Museum), and the Bishop Martin Museum on the grounds of Immaculate Conception Catholic Church.