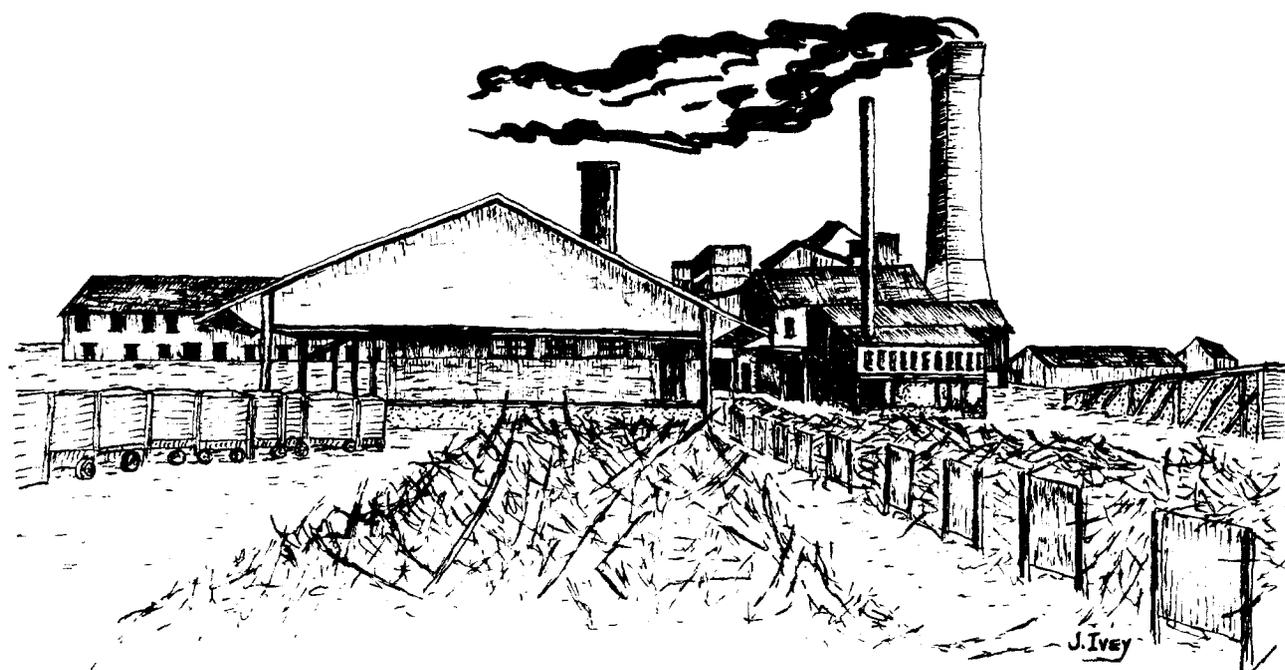


# HISTORIC RESOURCES STUDY

## THE BARATARIA UNIT OF JEAN LAFITTE NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

by

Barbara Holmes



**Estelle Sugar Mill, Barataria**

**Southwest Cultural Resources Center**  
**Professional Papers No. 5**

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**Santa Fe, New Mexico**

**1986**

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## INTRODUCTION AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

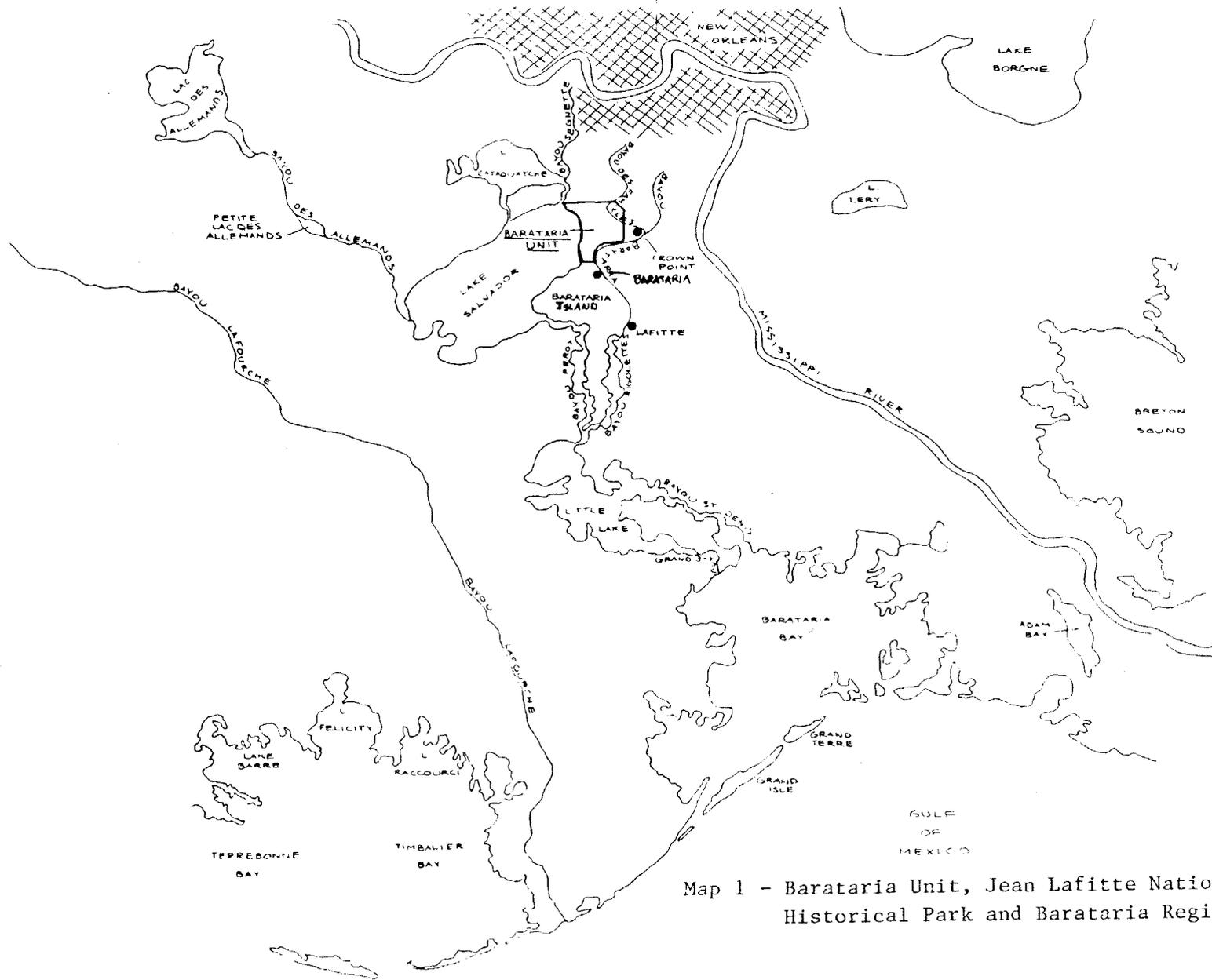
This is the report on the Historic Resource Study of the Barataria Unit of Jean Lafitte<sup>1</sup> National Historical Park (Map 1). A National Register nomination form for the area has been prepared as a part of this study and is attached as Appendix C. The report consists of an overview history of the Barataria Basin and an inventory of the historic resources found within the unit. The overview history not only describes the historic resources but also aids in interpreting their National Register significance.

The Barataria Basin is bounded by the Mississippi River on the north and east, Bayou Lafourche on the west, and the Gulf of Mexico on the south. As will be described in Chapter I, "Effective Environment," this large drainage basin tends northwest to southeast and is characterized by numerous lakes and small drainages bounded by the levees of one previous and one current course of the Mississippi River (Map 1). In terms of water drainage and topography, the study area is a well defined and relatively closed system, which is mainly why it was first chosen as the study area.

The Barataria Basin can also be defined as one region for historical and cultural reasons, which are crucial for the ongoing interpretation of the historic resources. Historically, exploitation of the area was facilitated by easy transportation along the numerous waterways, and whether they lived on the levees of the west, north, or south, inhabitants of the basin have participated in one resource system. Competition and cooperation were common between settlements bordering the basin. Multiple overlapping ties of economy and society, as well as a distinctive, shared history, built a sense of regional identity.

While concentrating on the events and people of the park and adjacent areas, the overview history makes interpretations pertinent to the whole basin. The heart of the basin is found in the communities of Crownpoint, Barataria, and Lafitte. These people maintain a lifestyle dating from the colonial period or earlier, live along the arterial waterways, and identify most strongly with the basin. The Barataria Unit of the park borders on these three communities; the people and processes that shaped the park also touched their lives.

The history begins with Chapter II, "Prehistory." There are two reasons for treating prehistoric resources the same way as historic resources. First, relationships between people and the land are a dominant theme in the settlement of the area, and the inhabitants of the basin approached their environment similarly in both the prehistoric and historic periods. Second, most of the historic resources are not standing structures, so the obvious distinction between architectural history and archeology does not apply. Both considerations enhance continuity in subsistence and settlement patterns between the prehistoric and historic periods.



Map 1 - Barataria Unit, Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Barataria Region.

First European settlement of the area began under the French in the first half of the eighteenth century and continued under Spanish rule. Chapter III covers the colonial periods of both nations and the early American period through the Battle of New Orleans in 1815. The activities of Jean Laffite and his men spanned 1805-1814, and although brief, had a significant impact on the economic development of the area. His enterprise followed a pattern established during the colonial period, that of an outside, largescale entrepreneur coexisting and cooperating with the local, subsistenceoriented inhabitants.

Building upon the settlement system established by colonial landgrants, the study area developed into an important agricultural region. Chapter IV covers the growth and decline of the sugar plantations. The dual economy emerges very strongly at this time an economy that embraced not only large, absentee landowners, but also small, subsistencelevel hunters and fishermen.

Chapter V, "The Making of Modern Barataria," traces the economy and settlement patterns of the region since the decline of the plantations. The structure of future economic growth was established at this time. Largescale extractive industries such as logging and shrimping set a pattern of outside investment and control over the resources. New forms of transportation, canal projects by the Army Corps of Engineers, and the discovery of large oil and gas fields eventually brought the Barataria Basin within the daily economic sphere of the metropolis. Faced with rapid economic and settlement shifts, the inhabitants of the basin have started to look to the history of their region for meaning and continuity in their lives.

Chapter VI summarizes the general economic patterns of the history of the basin. It affirms that while the current inhabitants are facing dramatic changes in their lives, they can also continue to enjoy an important heritage.

An annotated bibliography and Appendix A are intended as guides for future research. Because this report attempted to cover a number of topics, it exhausted no single subject pertaining to the park.

Appendix B, "Inventory," lists and describes historic constructions within the core area of the Barataria Unit. Most of the resources listed in the inventory are constructs such as shell mounds, canals, and field-drainage systems, and only a few are buildings. The historic activities which built these constructs also altered the environment in ways recognizable today; together the natural environment and historical resources constitute a changing historic landscape which remains a very important feature of the park.

During the course of this study, the author found it necessary to change many of her preconceptions of Barataria Basin, as well as to challenge her own skills in documenting the dual economy. Barataria is not just a remote coastal basin inhabited by the heirs of a folk tradition; it is also a region which has been actively brought into the economic sphere of New Orleans and the nation.

The extent and nature of Barataria's participation in the outside world was unknown at the beginning of the research, but as it became apparent, the research began to include documentary resources as well as oral history. The documentary source material is scattered through numerous archives, some of which are poorly kept and even less well known. These difficulties, along with the large scope of the project and a short deadline, required a shotgun approach: almost every resource was used for what it readily revealed, but none to its full potential. This method was necessary to maximize the return of data for available time, and is justifiable only in an overview project of this sort.

Throughout the project the author has been indebted to Ms. Betsy Swanson: first, in communicating her personal understanding of the basin's historical complexity; second, in contributing to the author's data, and third, by her continuing concern for and constructive criticism of the final product. The shortcomings of the report are, of course, the author's own. Other individuals whose assistance and guidance are most gratefully acknowledged are Dr. Melody Webb, Dr. Terje Birkedal, Mr. Edward C. Bearss, the staff of the various repositories (including the National Archives, Washington National Records Center, Bureau of Land Management Eastern States Office, Map and Manuscript Collections of the Historic New Orleans Collection, Special Collections of the Tulane University Library, Louisiana Room of the New Orleans Public Library, Orleans Parish Notarial Archives, Jefferson Parish Notarial Archives and Old Judicial Records, and Historical Center of the Louisiana State Museum), the park staff, and the people of Barataria.

#### Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup>The spelling of Jean Laffite's last name has been debated among historians and Laffite has been recognized among them as correct. The people of Barataria, however, spell his name as Lafitte, which is also the spelling of the town and park.

## CHAPTER I ENVIRONMENT AND MAN

### Geology

Three major courses, or episodes, of the Mississippi River formed the Barataria Basin. Shorter periods of lobe building, in which an area of land is built by deposition of river sediments, occurred within each of these episodes. The Bayou Lafourche Lobe, forming the western boundary of the study area, began about 4,500 B.C. and ended by 3,900 B.C. After a brief sojourn directly to the east in the Terrebonne Lobe, the river shifted to the southeast, when bayous des Familles and Barataria channeled most of the river's water between 3,300 B.C. and 1,800 B.C. With dry land levees forming on both the west (Lafourche) and east (des Familles Barataria) sides, Barataria Basin began to form. The river then shifted back and forth on both sides of the basin, creating the Bayou Blue Lobe to the west (1800-1700 B.C.), the Mississippi Lobe to the east (A.D. 1000 to today), and the Lafourche Lobe to the west (A.D. 1200 to 1920).

As each channel received water, it also deposited sediment over its banks and at its mouth. The channel lengthened, and the lobe grew. Natural levees got higher, wider, and longer. Once the river shifted its course and the flow of water decreased significantly, deposition stopped. Opposing processes then took over. Waves from the Gulf of Mexico ate away the edges of the lobe. As loosely laid levee soils compacted, the land began to sink. A general downwarping trend of the coastal shelf under the delta contributed to the subsidence.

The modern shape of Barataria Basin resulted from these events and processes. The later lobes the Mississippi and Lafourche have higher, larger, and longer lobes than the earlier des Familles Barataria Lobe, and as a result, more dry land. While the Mississippi course now channels almost all the river flow, until this century Bayou Lafourche continued to receive water. Bayou des Familles was cut off much earlier from the river, except for occasional levee breaks (crevasses). All three lobes encompass a low area, called an interlevee basin, which never received significant deposits. Shaped by coastal currents, the remaining front edges of the old lobes became barrier islands and now partly block the basin from the Gulf of Mexico.<sup>1</sup>

### Topography and Water

When the river floods its banks, it deposits most of its sediment near the river, and so the natural levee is highest at river's edge. The levee soil is relatively dry and composed of river clays, called mineral soils. Behind the levee, the ground descends beneath the water to form a swamp. Trees grow on the levee and in the swamp. Farther back, in the marsh, decaying vegetation forms a rich layer of organic muck, called organic soils. Low sedges and grasses grow in the marsh. Lakes form in the middle of the interlevee basin, farthest from the levee.

Water changes from fresh to saline along a gradient moving from the northwest to the southwest, or from the top of the basin to the gulf. Before the river was artificially leveed, yearly flooding and a slight, continuous flow through the bayous provided fresh water from the river to the basin, but today, rainwater is the major source. Saline water enters from the Gulf of Mexico through the passes between the barrier islands and mixes with the fresh water in Barataria Bay and farther north to form a brackish zone. The brackish zone shifts north or south according to the amount of rainfall. In the freshwater marsh of the upper basin, water flows from the top of the basin to the southeast. Water level changes are not great and relate to seasonal changes in rainfall and wind direction. In the middle and lower parts of the basin, the effects of tides and storm surges are more evident.

### Flora and Fauna

Ground elevation, soil type, water type, and water abundance determine the location of plants and animals in the basin. In the upper basin, where the water is fresh, the bottomland hardwood and swamp forests grow on the tops and backslopes of the levees, and the fresh marsh and associated bodies of water are found behind the levee. In the lower basin, where the water is brackish or saline, brackish and salt marshes and estuaries are found behind the levees (Map 2).

The bottomland hardwood forest grows on the levee tops, which are normally dry except at high flood stage. Dominant plant species include live and water oak, red maple, hackberry, and various other hardwoods (Plate 1). Spanish moss grows on the oaks. The palmetto grows between the bottomland hardwood and swamp forests. The swamp forest takes hold on flooded levee soils, where dominant species include the cypress and tupelo gum trees (Plate 2). Deer, swamp rabbits, raccoons, wood ducks and alligators live in the bottomland hardwood and swamp forests; crawfish and channel catfish in the associated bayous. Historically, people have cut the oak and cypress for lumber; gathered Spanish moss for stuffing; hunted deer, rabbits, alligators, crawfish, and catfish for sale and home use; and hunted and sold the wood duck for its decorative feathers.

Behind the levee lies the marsh (Plate 3). Marshes grow on soils formed by a mat of dead and rotting vegetation, held together by the root mass of the marsh grasses and sedges. The water level is at the top of the soil, which can become flotant (detached from the bottom matrix). The Barataria Unit includes mostly freshwater marsh which contains the greatest variety of plant species. Numerous small ponds form throughout the marsh, and since they are bordered by marshes of both the eastern and western levee systems, even the large lakes such as Salvador or Cataoutche can be considered fresh marsh bodies of water. Numerous animal species include the puddle ducks, such as the mallard; diving ducks, such as the redhead; wading birds, such as the snowy egret; nutria; mink; various finfish such as the bluegill and largemouth bass; and the freshwater clam. People hunted ducks for home and the market and the snowy egret for its feathers; caught fish for subsistence and sport; and gathered clams for their meat and shells.





Plate 1. Live oak in bottomland hardwood forest.  
Photo courtesy of Betsy Swanson



Plate 2. Cypress trees in the swamp.  
Photo courtesy of Betsy Swanson



Plate 3. Transition from bottomland hardwood and swamp forests along  
levee to marsh.

Photo courtesy of Betsy Swanson

Only the southwestern portion of the park consists of brackish marsh. As a rule, plant diversity decreases as salinity increases. However, salinity does not reduce productivity, and the brackish marsh has a very dense plant cover, dominated by wire grass and salt grass. The best muskrat trapping occurs here, and valuable fur-bearing animals such as the raccoons, mink, and nutria can be found as well. Subsistence and market fishermen catch alligators, sheepshead, spot, silver perch, pinfish, and blue crabs, which are all found in the associated brackish waters. The female blue crab spawns in the saline waters of the gulf and lower Barataria Bay. Maturation and mating occur in brackish waters, after which the adult male moves to less brackish waters and the female to saline water. Peneid shrimp immigrate in the opposite pattern, spawning and feeding in the brackish marsh and maturing in more saline areas. The shrimp industry is the most valuable fishing enterprise in Louisiana today, and the Barataria estuary is one of the two most productive shrimping areas in the state. While alligators range all the way from the swamp forest to the salt marsh, they will be most common in the salt and fresh marshes once they recover from excessive harvesting, and an important trade in their meat and hides still exists. Brackish water clams are more abundant than fresh water clams, and have had greater economic significance.

Marine waters are gradually inundating the basin, causing a gradual increase of the salt marsh from the Barataria Bay northwest. Dominated by oyster grass, the salt marsh has the lowest number of plant species. Salt marsh waters are about half as productive as other wetland waters in terms of human food resources, but the protein-rich algae produced in this area are eaten by fish from other areas. Fewer fur animals are trapped in the salt marsh than in the fresh or brackish marshes. Food fish found in salt marsh estuaries include red drum, spotted sea trout, sand trout, and others. Blue crabs are very abundant in salt marsh estuaries as are shrimp. Menhaden, small fish used for feed and fertilizer, commonly live in salt marsh estuaries, but are harvested offshore. Cultivation of oysters, one of the more significant market items for the basin, occurs in this area. Offshore fisheries include shrimp, menhaden, and various economically important fish such as the pompano, kingfish, black drums, and flounder.<sup>2</sup>

The transitions from levee to swamp to marsh to water and from fresh to saline marsh and water provide a closely interlocking environment. Many of the animal species mature in one area yet breed in another, or nest in one and forage in another. The variety of environments found in the basin accounts for its richness and productivity. With a wide variety of plant and animal resources available within one area easily accessible by boat, people have become a part of the pattern, developing an economy based on seasonal exploitation of the resources as they become available.

#### Historic Changes

People have been shaping the basin since they first settled there. Prehistoric inhabitants built mounds that vary in size from one foot

TABLE 1

## Plant and Animal Species of Economic Importance in the Barataria Basin

PLANT		ANIMAL	
live oak	<u>Quercus virginiana</u>	deer	<u>Odocoileus virginiana</u>
Spanish moss	<u>Tillandsia usneoides</u>	swamp rabbit	<u>Sylvilagus aquaticus</u>
palmetto	<u>Sabal minor</u>	raccoon	<u>Procyon lotor</u>
cypress	<u>Taxodium distichum</u>	wood duck	<u>Aix sponsa</u>
tupelo gum	<u>Nyssa aquatica</u>	alligator	<u>Alligator mississippiensis</u>
		crawfish	<u>Procambarus clarkii</u>
		catfish	<u>Ictalurus sp</u>
		mink	<u>Mustela vison</u>
		bluegill	<u>Lepomis macrochirus</u>
		largemouth bass	<u>Micropterus salmoides</u>
		freshwater clam	<u>Unio sp.</u>
		muskrat	<u>Ondatra zibethicus</u>
		otter	<u>Lutra canadensis</u>
		alligator gar	<u>Lepisosteus spatula</u>
		sheepshead	<u>Archosargus probata</u> <u>cephalus</u>
		black drum	<u>Pogonias cromis</u>
		flounder	<u>Paralichthys lethostigma</u>
		oyster	<u>Ostrea sp.</u>
		spot	<u>Lerostomus xanthurus</u>
		silver perch	<u>Bairdiella chrysura</u>
		pinfish	<u>Lagodon rhomboides</u>
		brackish water clam	<u>Rangia cuneata</u>
		blue crab	<u>Callinectes sapidus</u>
		red drum	<u>Pogonias cromis</u>
		spotted seatrout	<u>Cynoscion nebulosus</u>
		sand trout	<u>Cynoscion arenarius</u>
		menhaden	<u>Brevoortia patronus</u>
		pompano	<u>Trachinotus carolinus</u>
		king fish	<u>Mentiarthus littoralis</u>

high and tens of square feet in area to fifteen feet high and thousands of square feet in area. In most cases their handiwork persisted as landmarks for later residents. Mounds were later reused as sites, forts, meeting places, and cemeteries (Plate 4).

Historic changes in the environment may not be as striking, but are more pervasive. Colonial settlers logged the oak forests on the levees, and in the swamps, logging of cypress from the colonial period on has left only the small trees. Farmers cultivated the levees until the twentieth century, when the land reverted to pasture and then to fast-growing trees and bushes. With cultivation came the digging of levees, canals, and ditches for field drainage. Necessary for logging, canals interrupted and shifted the natural flow of water through the basin. For example, the west end of Bayou Coquille, a distributary of Bayou des Familles, once emptied into Lake Salvador in the vicinity of Chenier Grandes Coquille. The western half of this bayou became invisible on the surface, partly because of subsidence, but also because Kenta Canal pirated its waters. Built in the second half of the nineteenth century, this logging canal was dug in straight lines, causing water to flow faster and more easily through it than through the meandering Bayou Coquille. After the completion of the Mississippi River levees, canals took an increasing amount of fresh water out of the basin. Oil industry canals proliferated and salt water intrusion, creating changes in the flora and energy balance of the basin, became an increasing cause for concern.

The canals had other significant impacts. Recent ones dug for oil well access and pipelines have cut through the marsh root mass, causing it to lose its hold on the underlying soil and subjecting it to erosion from wave action. In such cases, canals have grown while the marsh was lost to erosion.

Pollution also became a major problem in the Barataria Basin, effecting the important blue crab and oyster fisheries. While pollution may be an inevitable consequence of the basin's proximity to New Orleans and the industrial corridor along the river, it is of special concern because the basin is a major food producing region of the country.



Plate 4. Fleming cemetery on a prehistoric shell mound.

## Endnotes Chapter 1

1. R. D. Adams, B. B. Barrett, J. H. Blackman, B. W. Gane, and W. G. McIntire, Barataria Basin: Geologic Processes and Framework (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Center for Wetland Resources, 1976); Sherwood M. Gagliano, Richard A. Weinstein, Eileen K. Burden, Katherine L. Brooks, Wayne P. Glander, "Cultural Resources Survey of the Barataria, Segnette, and Rigaud Waterways, Jefferson Parish, Louisiana" (Photocopy, Coastal Environments, Inc., 1979). This section and the following one are drawn largely from these two works. For further information see D. Frazier, "Recent Deltaic Deposits of the Mississippi River, their Development and Chronology," Transactions of the Gulf Coast Association of Geologists Society 17 (1967): 287315; Roger Saucier, Recent Geomorphic History of the Pontchartrain Basin, Louisiana (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Center for Wetland Resources, 1962). Specific dates and sequences of lobe building are still subject to modification with further research.

2. Information for this section is compiled from L. M. Bahr and J. J. Hebrard, Barataria Basin: Biological Characterization (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Center for Wetland Resources, 1976); Richard Beavers, "Archaeological Site Inventory, Barataria Basin Marsh Unit Core Area, Jean Lafitte National Historical Park, Jefferson Parish, Louisiana" (MS on file, Jean Lafitte National Historical Park, 1982).

## CHAPTER II THE INDIGENOUS OCCUPATION

The indigenous occupation of the Barataria Basin established a mixed economic pattern which persisted to the modern age. As soon as the river built the levees bordering the basin, people moved into the area, taking advantage of the abundance and variety of resources. The basin, like the Mississippi Delta as a whole, developed an economy different from the rest of the Mississippi Valley. Agriculture never completely replaced hunting and gathering as the major means of subsistence, probably because of the rich natural environment of the delta. The river affected settlement in the basin in another fundamental way. The Mississippi Delta was located at the junction of two major routes of prehistoric communication: the Mississippi River and the Gulf Coast. These trade routes created complex patterns of cultural change in the delta, which in spite of, or perhaps because of these patterns, retained a distinctive regional identity.

### Earliest Occupation (500 B.C.-A.D. 700)

The study area first began to take its current shape about 500 B.C.-A.D. 200 with the building of the des Familles Barataria Lobe.<sup>1</sup> The river's earlier occupation of the Lafourche lobe to the west meant that the des Familles Barataria course created a brackish embayment and possibly a series of brackish-to-fresh lakes toward the north of the basin. After A.D. 200, the river switched to the Mississippi and Lafourche delta complexes and abandoned the des Familles Barataria course. Activity in the basin was limited to the lower basin, first with landbuilding from the Lafourche channel from the west (A.D. 200-700), and later with landbuilding from the Mississippi channel to the east (A.D. 700-1200). Thus, the river first formed a dry levee system down the Des Familles-Barataria course, and then created the basin, building the Lafourche levee from the northwest. Flow down the des Familles-Barataria bayous became sluggish, and as the Lafourche levee lengthened, the upper basin lakes turned fresher.

While the basin was forming, the people of the Tchefuncte culture (550-100 B.C.), who later evolved in the Marksville (100 B.C.-A.D. 300) and Troyville (A.D. 300-700) cultures, moved into the area.<sup>2</sup> The Tchefuncte people left little evidence of their presence in Barataria Basin: only a few of their sherds have been found on the surface of sites which mostly date to a later time period, and only one test excavation on the Coquilles site revealed early lower cultural levels with Tchefuncte sherds.<sup>3</sup> This may mean that the Tchefuncte people used the basin only slightly, perhaps seasonally, or that their descendents built their sites on the same locations and thereby obscured the earlier occupations. The people of the Marksville and Troyville cultures left more evidence behind them. The Coquilles site, located at the confluence of bayous Coquille and des Familles, was a large village and probably a social and ceremonial center. It was surrounded by small sites on both bayous which may have also been built by these people.

Increasing numbers of sites have been attributed to the later cultures, and archeologists believe that the population in the basin increased slowly.

The early inhabitants of the basin hunted and gathered a broad range of resources according to their availability during various seasons of the year. Summer and fall were the times of greatest abundance. Water levels were low, so people could gather in villages on the levees and impound great numbers of fish in the shallow water of the lakes.<sup>4</sup> Hunters killed deer in the forests of the levee and swamps with spear and atlatl, approaching bucks in rut by wearing deerskins and making sounds to attract them.<sup>5</sup> They also hunted small mammals such as opossums, racoons, swamp rabbits, and muskrats.<sup>6</sup> The inhabitants gathered wild fruits and nuts: sassafras, honey locust, magnolia, and persimmon and in the summer; live oak, black walnut, pecan, mulberry, hackberry, and hickory in the fall; and the palmetto, wild millet, and white pond lily in the summer.<sup>7</sup>

During the winter, people scattered across the basin to live in hunting camps closer to the lakes and bayous, where they harvested smaller and less diverse resources. Clams and oysters were collected from the brackish and saline waters, shellfish were cleaned on the spot, leaving piles of shells and very little else.<sup>8</sup> Hunters looked for a rich prize in the black bear hibernating in the forests and relied on the abundance of migratory birds on the fresh water lakes.<sup>9</sup> While the des Familles-Barataria course was the main channel of the river, spring flooding probably disrupted occupation of the levees. The inhabitants of the Coquille site during the Tchefuncte and Marksville periods may have left the delta altogether for several months during the floods, moving to the hills north of Lake Pontchartrain. There, they hunted small game like cottontail rabbits, gray foxes, and squirrels, and gathered early fruit like mayhaws and blackberries.<sup>10</sup> After the river abandoned the des Familles course, it would have been possible to occupy the des Familles-Barataria levees year-round. However, people continued to follow a seasonal pattern, living in villages on the levees for three seasons, and camping and collecting on the lake shores and smaller levees in the winter.

The early inhabitants of the Barataria area were some of the first in the Mississippi River Valley to make pottery, which they decorated with stamping and incising. Their technology improved greatly during this period, as firing temperatures increased, and crushed pottery was added as temper to minimize shrinkage during firing. Pottery was used for cooking and food storage. They also made tools out of bone or shell for woodworking, digging, cutting, scraping, sewing, and fishing. Stone tools were very rare, as stone did not occur naturally in the delta. A few projectile points, drills and knife blades were made from stone imported from further north.<sup>11</sup>

These early hunter-gatherers lived and worked in three types of settlements: scattered houses, camps, and villages. Individual houses, or perhaps small groups of houses, were located at regular intervals for

several miles up and down the levee of Bayou des Familles on both sides of its confluence with Bayou Coquille, and probably up and down the levee of Bayou Barataria on both sides of its confluence with Bayou Villars. These houses were probably occupied from the spring through the fall. The occupants dumped their household trash around their houses, which gradually accumulated into shell and earth middens. The middens were higher and better drained than the rest of the levee, so old house sites were preferred. During the winter, groups of people camped for short periods and collected food near the swamp, marsh, and lake. Since these sites were not used by many people for very long, houses were not built on them, although campfires and shelters probably were. The inhabitants camped near food sources to facilitate gathering, preparation, and consumption. Next to the small, sluggish bayous, low ridges of shells built up from the collection and shelling of the brackish water clam.<sup>12</sup> The meat was either consumed in the winter camp, or carried to the residents of the villages. These early inhabitants also built social and ceremonial centers at the confluence of bayous des Familles with Coquilles and of Barataria with Villars, where they constructed mounds for the burial of their dead or as foundations for chiefs' houses or temples.<sup>13</sup> Deliberately constructed shell piles, these mounds elevated their leaders and the dead both physically and metaphorically. Houses flanked the village center in its immediate vicinity and up and down the bayous.

Social organization during this period changed from independent bands of related families to centralized villages with leaders and priests. The degree of power held by the upper classes probably increased slightly when the people settled down to live year round in or near their central village; it never became pervasive, though, because people continued to live in isolated and scattered camps, or at least use them occasionally.

The inhabitants of Barataria kept in touch with their neighbors on the coastal areas and up the river valley. Tchefuncte potters combined certain aspects of technology and decoration found in the eastern coasts with their own ideas, creating one of the earliest pottery assemblages of the Mississippi River Valley. Late Tchefuncte and early Marksville potters developed several distinct decorative motifs, which became popular throughout the Mississippi Valley to the north.<sup>14</sup> Ideas were exchanged in both directions. The Adena and Hopewell people of the Ohio River Valley developed elaborate and monumental funerary cults which diffused southward throughout the Mississippi Valley. The contemporary Marksville people of the lower Mississippi Valley may have developed a similar funerary pattern about the same time.<sup>15</sup> The practitioners of the Marksville funerary cults stored their dead in charnel houses until they could build large earth mounds for permanent, multiple, reentered burials.<sup>16</sup> Although the Baratarians built platform mounds for structures, there was no evidence of such burial mounds in the delta: perhaps an early example of the cultural distinctiveness of delta and basin.<sup>17</sup>

### Later Prehistoric Occupation (A.D. 700-1700)

After A.D. 700, the Lafourche and Mississippi courses remained the major waterways of the Mississippi River. Levee building continued at the lower end of both sides of Barataria Basin, while the lakes in the upper basin expanded and became fresher. The Troyville culture developed into the Coles Creek culture (A.D. 700-1100), and later, the Plaquemines culture (A.D. 1100-1700). The number of people living in the basin increased,<sup>18</sup> and the old hunting and gathering economy persisted. Inhabitants hunted birds and game, fished, and collected the brackish water clam, discarding large numbers of clamshells on their middens.

The economy may have experienced a slight but significant shift during this time. Agriculture was the economic base upon which the growing population of the Mississippi Valley developed the Hopewell and Marksville cultures, and cultivation of corn had been practised in the upper valley for over a century. The peoples of the delta certainly knew about agriculture but were very slow in adopting it. The increases in population, social complexity, and sedentism, in the delta were probably based on increasingly intensive use of the area,<sup>19</sup> may have included agriculture, but did not rely exclusively upon it.

Social stratification and centralized control increased. The large complex of three sites at the confluence of bayous Villars and Barataria, consisting of villages with large mounds for temples or chiefs' houses, reached its height of importance at this time.<sup>20</sup> People continued to live in separate hamlets up and down bayous des Familles and Barataria, but they owed allegiance to the central complex.

Contact with people of the upper Mississippi Valley continued, but was far from cordial. The Mississippian culture, characterized by rigid social stratification and an elaborate religion associated with a highly developed art form, spread rapidly from the central Mississippi Valley south and southeast. The Mississippian people expanded their sphere of influence by conquest and colonization, but were stopped in the lower Mississippi Valley at the present location of Vicksburg by a tribe later known as the Natchez in the historic period.<sup>21</sup> The Mississippians continued their expansion to the southeast outside the valley, taking over most of the rest of what is now the state of Mississippi. Coming from the coast, the Mississippians influenced people living at the eastern end of the delta, without actually conquering them.<sup>22</sup> Though buffered from the main thrust of the Mississippian invasion by northern residents, the inhabitants of Barataria adopted certain pottery techniques from the eastern coastal peoples, from which they must have learned of the turmoil going on around them.

### Historic Indigenous Occupation (A.D. 1600-1800)

Known French Records of French settlers indicate that the village sites of the Chawasha, Washa, and Chitimacha Indian tribes were located on the edges of the Barataria Basin, on the Mississippi and Lafourche levees.<sup>23</sup> The Mugulasha and the Bayogoula lived nearby on the

Mississippi. At the time of French contact, the Chawasha were settled mainly on the Mississippi course, and the Washa on the Lafourche.<sup>24</sup> Called "small or petty nations,"<sup>25</sup> by 1739 these two tribes together numbered only thirty warriors. The historical record probably reflects significant population loss from disease. The Chitimacha settled on the west bank of Bayou Lafourche and further west on Bayou Teche; perhaps one band lived on each bayou, each with several villages (Plate 5).<sup>26</sup> Reported village locations for all three tribes changed frequently during the early decades of the eighteenth century.

Since indigenous settlement along bayous des Familles and Barataria continued into the late prehistoric period, there should have been American Indian villages along the des Familles-Barataria course at the start of the historic period, but no such sites have been identified. In 1803, the Washa claimed to have lived on the island of Barataria (surrounded by Lake Salvador, Bayou Villars, Bayou Barataria, Bayou Perot, and Bayou Rigolettes) when the French first entered the area.<sup>27</sup> Further historic and archeological work is necessary to substantiate the aboriginal occupation of this area by the Washa and Chawasha.<sup>28</sup>

The Chitimacha were farmers and hunter-gatherers. In the nineteenth century, they planted corn, sweet potatoes, pumpkins, turnips, and wheat; gathered wild plant foods; hunted deer, raccoons, and ducks, and fished.<sup>29</sup> While the Chitimacha of the nineteenth century were several hundred years removed from their ancestors who lived in the basin at the time of first contact with the French, their economy had not changed substantially. Fur trappers and traders themselves, the French (and later the Spaniards) encouraged hunting at the expense of agriculture, and during the nineteenth century, plantation development tended to displace small farmers into hunting and gathering niches. Nevertheless, the Chitimacha continued to farm in the nineteenth century, perhaps out of an adaptation dating from prehistory; and living in a similar environment, the Washa and Chawasha probably followed a similar pattern.

The three tribes changed their village sites frequently. Extreme population loss from epidemic disease could have caused village abandonments and consolidations, as demonstrated by studies conducted elsewhere in the Southeast.<sup>30</sup> Also, the French resettled and consolidated Indian villages on major waterways near military posts, not only for the protection of friendly villages and the convenience of the fur trade, but also to place unfriendly villages under a watchful eye. Finally, the tribes competed fiercely for economic middleman positions in the French trade, heightening rivalries that were already expressed in constant warfare. Warfare led to frequent shifts in village sites.

Aboriginal warfare did not follow European conventions, but featured surprise attacks, shifting alliances, and the taking of captives. For example, the Mugulasha and Bayogoula occupied the banks of the Mississippi River, upstream from New Orleans and near the headwaters of Bayou Lafourche, respectively. In 1695 the French discovered that the Bayogoula had been so reduced by disease that the Bayogoula invited the Mugulasha to move in with them for mutual defense,



and even accepted the Mugulasha Chief as their own.<sup>31</sup> In 1700 the Bayougoula turned on their guests, killed the Mugulasha warriors, and took their women and children captive. The Taensa, originally living north of the Natchez near Vicksburg on the Mississippi, were forced by enemy attacks to flee south and take refuge with the Bayougoula.<sup>32</sup> Perhaps prompted by a knowledge of their hosts' earlier treachery, the Taensa massacred the Bayougoula in 1706.

Warfare with the Chitimacha also followed a similar pattern of shifting alliances. Initially friendly to the French, in about 1706 they flagrantly baited the French by killing one of their priests.<sup>33</sup> As a result, the Indian allies of the French living to the north and east waged war on the Chitimacha for twelve years. Chitimacha bands contributed many Indian slaves to the French colony, which may have encouraged the French to postpone making peace between the warring tribes.<sup>34</sup> The Indian allies of the French were motivated in part by gifts and political advantage, and when a 1718 peace treaty forced the Chitimacha to abandon Bayou Lafourche and settle near New Orleans, the allies may also have had designs on their land.

This provides a clue to a possible underlying cause of the indigenous warfare: territorial expansion of the people of the Mississippian culture, a pattern established in late prehistory. Linguistic studies identify the patterns of prehistory with the historic tribes. Indians of the southern half of the Mississippi River Valley and adjacent areas spoke languages that have been classified into five major linguistic families: Muskogean, Chitimachan, Attakapan, Tunican, Souian and Caddoan. (Map 3) A degree of linguistic affinity indicated a degree of historical relatedness. Within the Muskogean family a subdivision was found between the main branch and the Natchez group. The Tunican tribes, recognized as part of a different linguistic stock, were politically affiliated with the Natchez during the early historic period and had probably been so united against the late prehistoric Mississippian expansion. The main branch of the Muskogean family, notably the Choctaw and Chickasaw to the east of the river valley, were the ethnographic descendents of the Mississippian peoples.<sup>35</sup> They expanded at the expense of the Tunicans (among others), who fell back on the Natchez, a related but independent branch of the Muskogean family. Together they successfully resisted large scale Muskogean (Mississippian) expansion in the lower Mississippi Valley. Smaller tribal Muskogean excursions into the river valley south of the Natchez muddied the linguistic picture, but never dominated the area in terms of political control or material culture. The Natchez remained ascendent in the southern Mississippi Valley.

Although inhabited by the Bayougoula and not by the Washa, Chawasha, or Chitimacha tribes, the Bayougoula site typifies the material culture of the early historic period in the Mississippi Delta and Barataria Basin. The site contained pyramidal, flat-topped mounds, probably foundations for temples, placed at either end of a plaza, which the French said was "like a parade ground." The French also described a palisade, ten feet high, made of cane. Archeologists found remains of



narrow wall trenches circumscribing an area probably rectangular in shape. The temples and chiefs' houses on the mounds of this site have been described as round, made of poles and mud, and covered with cane mats. Archeological evidence from postholes indicates the floor plans were rectangular although the roofs may have been domed. The village contained 107 commoner's houses, which archeological evidence shows were rectangular in floor plan, about 20 feet by 15 feet, and made of two rooms. The Bayogoula were reported to bury their dead on platforms, which archeological data corroborates. Grave goods were mostly European trade items, and pottery consisted largely of types also found on the Natchez ancestral sites.

Historic observation and ethnographic data supplement these findings. Corn was an important food crop. Villages were fortified. Houses were built in a rectangular floor plan out of poles gathered into a domed roof. Walls and roofs were made of wattle and daub, thatch, and cane matting. The chiefs' houses and temples were built the same way, only larger, and on mounds (Plate 6).

The houses and mounds were placed around a plaza used for ceremonies and games. Furniture included three-legged or four-legged stoves, platform beds, and cane mats. Chiefs' mattresses were filled with feathers; those of commoners, with Spanish moss. Bear and bison skins were used for blankets. Bows and arrows, knives, and ball-headed clubs of wood or bone served as weapons. Household utensils included pottery vessels, bison-horn spoons, wooden mortars and pestles, cane baskets, hafted-flint skin scrapers, bone awls, bison-bone digging tools, stone celts, nets, and digging sticks. Delta inhabitants traveled by pirogue over water; their chiefs were carried by palanquin over land. In winter people wore bison-skin robes, skin leggings, and skirts; in summer men wore breechclouts, and women wore skirts. They decorated themselves with feathers, tatoos, bone bracelets, pearl necklaces, and shell ear ornaments (Plate 7). Heads were deformed by cradleboard binding. European goods included flintlock guns, brass kettles, iron knives and axes, glass bottles, cloth, glass beads, pipes, and jews harps.<sup>36</sup>

The Chitimacha lived under the influence of the Natchez Indians, the ascendent culture of the southern Mississippi Valley. Like the Natchez, these descendents of longterm delta residents developed from a conservative Plaquemines culture. However, a Chitimacha site has as never been excavated so the extent of the similarities or between the two groups has not been established. The relationships of the Washa and Chuwasha, inhabitants of the eastern delta, are also unknown. Early in the historic period, these small tribes were absorbed into others, but it is likely that they too were culturally related to the Natchez.

### Conclusion

At the time of French contact, the Chitimacha, Washa, and Chawasha inhabited the edges of Barataria Basin and perhaps its interior. Farmers and hunter-gatherers, they did not rely on one economic

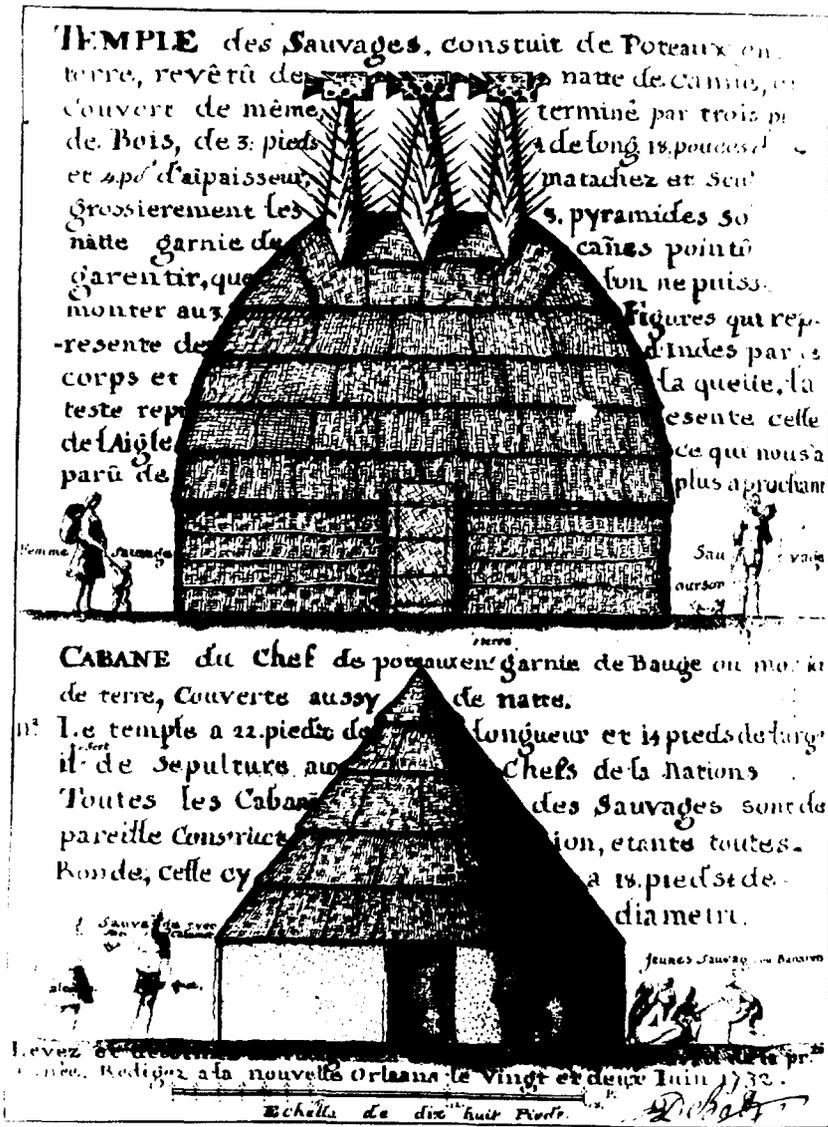


Fig. 1. Temple of the Savages and the House of the Chief, near New Orleans, dated 22 June 1732 (courtesy of D. I. Bushnell, Jr. Collection, Peabody Museum, Harvard)

Plate 6. Early Historic American Indian Chief's House and Temple.  
 Photo courtesy of D. I. Bushnell, Jr. Collection, Peabody Museum, Harvard.



Plate 7. Early Historic American Indians of the lower Mississippi River.  
Photo courtesy of D. I. Bushnell, Jr. Collection, Peabody Museum,  
Harvard

strategy, but took advantage of the variety of resources available in the basin. In a way, they were the cultural cousins of the stronger Natchez to the north. Like the Natchez, they had chiefs and a social elite and practiced an elaborate funerary cult. But they never equaled the fighting strength of the Natchez, partly because of their smaller population, but also because of inadequate social control between villages. The basin people were never knit together into a tightly controlled society, but remained independent villagers. When the early colonial settlers came into contact with the indigenous population, they found a society characterized by cultural ties to the Mississippi Valley, relative independence, and a mixed economic strategy based on the full range of available resources in the basin.

## Endnotes Chapter II

1. Richard Beavers, Teresia Lamb, and Gary B. DeMarcy, "Archaeological Site Inventory, Barataria Basin Marsh Unit, Core Area Jean Lafitte National Historical Park, Jefferson Parish, Louisiana" (Photocopy, Archaeological Research Program, University of New Orleans, 1982), 14.
2. Different authorities label the cultures differently, calling the Tchefuncte an early Marksville, or the Troyville a late Marksville, as in Sherwood M. Gagliano, Richard A. Weinstein, Eileen K. Burden, Katherine L. Brooks, and Wayne P. Glander, "Cultural Resources Survey of the Barataria, Segnette and Rigaud Waterways, Jefferson Parish, Louisiana" (Photocopy, Coastal Environments, Inc., 1979). The nomenclature used in this report follows Beavers, Lamb, and Demarcy, "Archaeological Site Inventory."
3. Gagliano, et al., "Cultural Resources Survey," 43; Richard Beavers, "The Archaeological Potential of the Jean Lafitte National Historical Park" (Photocopy, Archaeological Research Program, University of New Orleans, 1977).
4. A. Le Page du Pratz, The History of Louisiana, facsimile reproduction of the 1774 British edition, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1975), 287.
5. Ibid., 256.
6. Daniel H. Usner, "A Cycle of Lowland Forest Efficiency: The Late Archaic Woodland Economy of the Lower Mississippi Valley," Journal of Anthropological Research 39 (1983): 437.
7. Ibid., 436.
8. Beavers, "Archaeological Potential." These are the special use sites mentioned in his report.
9. Usner, "Lowland Forest Efficiency," 438.
10. Ibid. According to geologists, the des Familles channel was not active during the occupation of the Coquilles site, during Marksville times (100 B.C.A.D. 300). This fits traditional archeological wisdom and the Usner model of seasonal occupation concerning the prehistoric occupation of the delta, which says that because of the great inconvenience caused by the spring floods, the levees along the river channels were not occupied until the river had abandoned that channel. However, archeological excavations at the Coquilles site have revealed sterile deposits caused by flooding between the cultural deposits: Richard Beavers, Teresia Lamb, and Gary B. DeMarcy, "Data Recovery for Area of Adverse Impact by Proposed Public Access Facilities, the Barataria Basin Marsh Unit Core Area" (Photocopy, Archaeological

Research Program, University of New Orleans, 1982). Another interpretation of these deposits attributed the sterile deposits to cultural features such as floors: Marco Giardino, "Report on the Ceramic Materials from the Coquille Site (16JE57), Barataria Unit, Jean Lafitte National Historical Park" (Photocopy, Jean Lafitte National Historical Park, New Orleans, 1984).

11. Beavers, Lamb, and DeMarcy, "Data Recovery," 33.

12. Beavers, "Archaeological Potential."

13. The Coquilles site has been dated to the Marksville culture and maybe later, while the three mound sites at the conjunction of bayous Villars and Barataria may have been occupied as early as the Troyville culture, but were probably built to their present size during the Coles Creek and later cultures. Beavers, Lamb, and DeMarcy, "Archaeological Site Inventory," 98-100; Gagliano et al., "Cultural Resources Survey," 4-22.

14. J. Richard Shenkel, "An Early Marksville Burial Component in Southeastern Louisiana," Midcontinental Journal of Archaeology 9 (1984): 105-34.

15. The direction of cultural diffusion from or to the Marksville has been a matter of archeological debate throughout this century. For the best discussion see Phillip Phillips, Archaeological Survey in the Lower Yazoo Basin, Mississippi, 1949-1955, Papers of the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, vol. 60 (Cambridge, MA: Peabody Museum, 1970).

16. Alan Toth, Archaeology and Ceramics at the Marksville Site, University of Michigan Anthropological Papers 56 (Ann Arbor, 1974).

17. Beavers, personal communication, has argued that there may have been burial mounds at the Coquilles sites, under the current paved highway. This is an argument based on a lack of evidence, and should be considered as only a possibility.

18. Gagliano et al., "Cultural Resources Survey," 4-44.

19. Direct evidence for corn cultivation is limited to a corn cob found in the Fleming site located on the east bank of Bayou Barataria at its conjunction with Bayou Villars: Beavers et al., "Archaeological Site Inventory," 43.

20. Gagliano, et al., "Cultural Resources Survey," 4-45.

21. Phillips, Archaeological Survey, 954.

22. On admittedly tenuous grounds, Phillips has argued that the Bayou Petre phase sites found in the St. Bernard and Barataria areas of the eastern delta show some influence from the Mississippian coastal

areas. This would explain why the eastern delta is slightly different from the more homogeneous material culture found in the western delta and lower Mississippi Valley as far as north as Vicksburg: *ibid.*, 954. Gagliano believes the late prehistoric sites of the Barataria Basin show both Bayou Petre and Delta Natchezan traits: Gagliano et al., "Cultural Resources Survey," 4-42.

23. John R. Swanton, "Indian Tribes of the Lower Mississippi Valley and Adjacent Coast of the Gulf of Mexico," Bulletin of Bureau of American Ethnology 43 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1911).

24. Hiram Gregory, "Indian Sites of Louisiana" (Department of Anthropology, Nichitoches State University, n.d.).

25. Swanton, "Indian Tribes," 299.

26. *Ibid.*, 337-43.

27. John Sibley, "Historical Sketches of the Several Indian Tribes in Louisiana, South of the Arkansas River and Between the Mississippi and River Grande," American State Papers, vol. 7, Indian Affairs 1 (Washington: Gales and Seaton, 1805), 721-25.

28. Swanton, "Indian Tribes," 299.

29. Emmanuel J. Drechsel and T. Haunani Makuakane-Drechsel, "An Ethnohistory of 19th Century Louisiana Indians" (Photocopy, Department of Anthropology, University of Oklahoma, 1982), 29.

30. Henry F. Dobyns, Native American Historical Demography: A Critical Bibliography (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1976).

31. Swanton, "Indian Tribes of the Lower Mississippi Valley", 280.

32. *Ibid.*, 270-280.

33. *Ibid.*, 337-338.

34. Le Page du Pratz, The History of Louisiana, 20-21.

35. Fred R. Eggan, "The Ethnological Cultures and Their Archeological Backgrounds," Archeology of the Eastern United States, ed. by James B. Griffen, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952) 413.

36. George I. Quimby, "The Natchezan Culture Type," American Antiquity 8 (1942): 225-75.

## CHAPTER III THE COLONIAL PERIOD

### Introduction

When the French settled Louisiana in the early eighteenth century, they did not overlook the Barataria Basin. Large land grants, entrepreneurial exploitation of resources, and commerce were all results of the French efforts. Even though the population of the colony was very sparse, there was some settlement of the basin. Spanish administrators wanted to increase the population of the colony with small farmers and Spanish subjects; therefore, they sponsored immigration from the Canary Islands to town sites in Louisiana, among them, the Isleno settlement in Barataria. When this settlement failed, only the name of a bayou, des Familles, was left as a reminder of its former presence. By the time the United States bought Louisiana, conditions in the Barataria Basin were ripe for the development of Jean Laffite's smuggling enterprise. The privateers took advantage of the sparse population and absentee landlords, coupled with a known and developed system of waterways into New Orleans, to establish a large and illegal business.

### Early French Use of the Basin

Early French maps of the area consistently label the area bounded by Lake Salvador, Bayou Villars, Bayou Barataria, and the Mississippi River as L'Hermitage, and sometimes indicate a structure with cross. While the name might refer to the retreat of a missionary or cleric, local church records do not support this conjecture. The name might also refer to the isolated home of a settler, perhaps Claude Joseph Villous Dubreuil, one of the earliest known land owners in the area.<sup>1</sup>

Dubreuil immigrated to the New World in 1719 with his wife, two children, carpenters, coopers, joiners, a tailor, a shoemaker, some laborers, and two female domestics, prepared to start a progressive and illustrious career as an industrialist in the new colony. Dubreuil set an example in the colony by building levees and digging ditches for draining his land, as well as a canal for commerce. As the King's contractor for public works, he constructed many public buildings. He also successfully planted indigo, experimented with sugar cane planting, planted wax myrtle, and produced myrtle candlewax in large quantities.<sup>2</sup> While Dubreuil owned several large plantations on the Mississippi near New Orleans, he was also granted large concessions in Barataria. His use and development of these land grants was related to both his construction and planting interests.

In order to facilitate his construction and lumbering enterprises, between 1736 and 1741 Dubreuil constructed a canal on his Mississippi River plantation between presentday Harvey and Gretna.<sup>3</sup> The canal ran three leagues<sup>4</sup> from the Mississippi River to the Bayou Fatma branch of Bayou Barataria, the first direct water route from the Barataria Basin to New Orleans. Although the canal did not actually cut through the

Mississippi levee, boats were either unloaded at this point or dragged over the levee. Between 1732 and 1739 the construction of public works such as drainage ditches, canals, bridges, sawmills, and fortifications actively engaged Dubreuil's time.

The wood and shell found on his concessions in the Barataria region were valuable resources.<sup>9</sup> The waterresistant properties of cypress were known to colonists by 1709, but not until 1725 did they learn how to remove the logs from the nearly inaccessible swamps. They cut cypress in the fall when the water was low and there was little sap in the trees, and then floated to logs to bayous and rivers in the spring when the water was high.<sup>6</sup> By the time Dubreuil was engaged in largescale construction projects, he could take advantage of the resources on his Barataria concessions, including the cypress swamps. He also used the oak on Barataria Island, moving logs and ships from the island to the Mississippi River by way of his canal. The marine engineer for the French navy examined the island's trees as possible materials for naval combat vessals in 1941 and found them very promising.<sup>7</sup> In Dubreuil's 1754 inventory, a carpentry establishment, probably a shipyard, is mentioned on Barataria Island; as well as three slaves, who may have worked in the shipyard or taken care of cattle on the island.<sup>8</sup>

Dubreuil was also an important planter<sup>9</sup> of his time. On one of his river properties he planted thirty arpents<sup>9</sup> with wax myrtle, and his furnaces manufactured over six thousand pounds of wax.<sup>10</sup> Wax myrtle grew in abundance in the swamps of Barataria. Louisianans recognized that the wax lasted longer and melted at a higher temperature than tallowan advantage in the tropics. Parisians also praised its pleasant odor. Wax production consisted simply of boiling the wax myrtle berries in water and skimming off the wax.<sup>11</sup>

Dubreuil also ventured into indigo production. He prided himself on being the first in Louisiana to make the dye and believed that it was a better crop for the delta soils than tobacco (Plate 8).<sup>12</sup> Indeed, the deep taproot of the plant enabled it to grow more easily in the hard clays of the delta than many other cash crops.<sup>13</sup> Indigo dye production required three vats arranged so that they drained into one another. The harvested plant was placed in the top vat with water and allowed to rot. The water was transferred to the second vat and beaten, and the dye precipitated once the beating stopped. The top water was discarded and the resulting blue sludge was drained into the final vat for drying.<sup>14</sup>

Dubreuil also became one of the first Louisiana planters to experiment with sugar cane. He believed that certain techniques of cultivation would overcome the problem created by Louisiana's winter frosts.<sup>15</sup> While Dubreuil's ventures were documented only for his plantations along the Mississippi River, he may have farmed in Barataria as well.

Dubreuil's landholdings in Barataria included Barataria Island; the land directly opposite Bayou Barataria (later a part of the Mavis Grove Plantation); and the peninsula defined by Lake Salvador, Bayou Dauphine,



*Institut de France. Academie des Sciences. Descriptions des Arts et Metiers. 1770.*

Negroes cultivating indigo

Plate 8. Indigo Cultivation

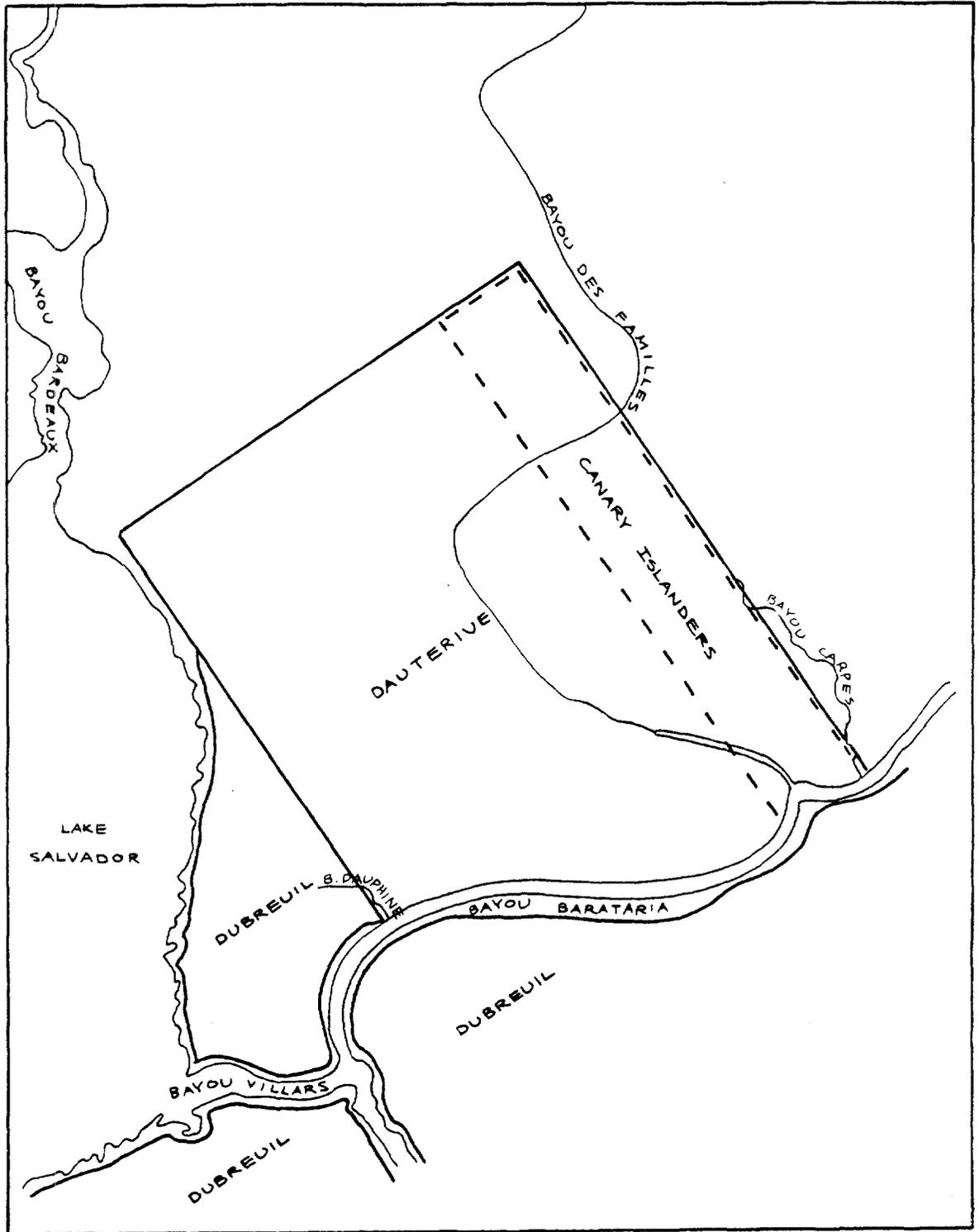
Bayou Villars, and Bayou Barataria, and known as Isle Dauphine at the time (Map 4). Thus, he owned the land on all three sides of the confluence of bayous Barataria and Villars. By the end of his life, he owned two cattle ranches, one carpentry establishment, and three cabins in this area.<sup>16</sup> The carpentry establishment was probably used for his logging and boat-building activities. The cabins could have housed for caretakers, laborers, or cowboys.

#### Later Colonial Use of the Barataria Region

Bernard Dauterive, another large landowner in Barataria, ranched for his living. Dauterive was granted approximately 90 arpents frontage on the north side of Bayou Barataria between bayous Carpes and Dauphine in or before 1758. The depth of the grant was 110 arpents. He quickly sold the eastern 40 arpents, but he<sup>17</sup> and his heirs continued to hold the western 50 until the next century. In the 1770s Bernard Dauterive fell into debt and his creditors took him to court. In reply to their suit, Dauterive listed his property as: 1. a habitation in Barataria with 43 arpents frontage, and unknown cattle and horses, 2. a habitation in Bayogoulas with stock and cattle, 3. a ranch in Atakapas of a league and a half frontage with approximately six thousand cattle, 4. one city lot in New Orleans.<sup>18</sup> The court ordered inventories of the Bayogoulas and Atakapas properties, but not the Barataria habitation.<sup>19</sup> This property may not have been as prosperous as the other two, and therefore not as valuable to his creditors. In separate lawsuit another creditor wanted the court to force a sale of Dauterive's Negro slaves in Barataria to cover a debt.<sup>20</sup> They were probably there as caretakers and cowboys.

Other evidence indicates that cattle ranching was an important enterprise in the Barataria Basin at this time. Francois Mayronne bought Grande Terre in 1795 and sold it in 1823. During his ownership of the island, he "acutally resided upon Grand Terre for a long time previous to selling it and he occupied it as a cattle range, and he had there about 1,000 head of cattle."<sup>21</sup> Mayronne was a man of some local importance. He owned another grant on the north end of Bayou des Familles, suitable for planting.<sup>22</sup> He was also a syndic, a local government official for the region.

The large landowners of Barataria diversified their activities by diversifying their holdings. Many concessions exceeded the 40 arpents frontage and 40 arpents depth usually granted a settler of substance. These exceptions may have been justified by the relatively low and narrow levees, which even then did not compare favorably to the banks of the Mississippi. Large expanses of poorly developed land were well suited for cattle ranching, but not much else. Cattle ranching required a small capital investment and not much of the landowner's time, so many of the large concession holders lived in New Orleans or elsewhere in the colony. Typically, Dubreuil, Dauterive, and Mayronne owned multiple parcels of land. Baratarian landowners commonly owned two or three concessions within the basin, scattered from the Mississippi to the gulf.<sup>23</sup> Concessions near the top of the basin had higher and wider



Map 4. Large landholdings of the Colonial Period.

levees and were most suitable for planting and lumbering. Concessions near the mouth of the basin had lower land, and were more suitable for ranching. Scattered holdings along one drainage also allowed for the movement of stock and people from one to another during floods.<sup>24</sup>

#### Canary Islanders Settlement

In 1778 the first settlers from the Canary Islands arrived in Louisiana, brought by the Spanish governor of Louisiana to strengthen the Spanish presence there and provide a barrier against British and American aggression.<sup>25</sup> They settled in various locations throughout Louisiana, including Barataria. In 1779, the Spanish government settled a group of Canary Islanders, under the command of Andres Jung, on the easternmost 20 arpents of the original Dauterive grant.<sup>26</sup> This grant began at Bayou Carpes on the north side of Bayou Barataria and continued west for 20 arpents to the other side of Bayou des Familles, where it joined Bayou Barataria. It was 110 arpents deep and at its north end recrossed Bayou des Familles in its first eastern bend. The grant was a good location, not only because it included the confluence of of bayous des Familles and Barataria (where two bayous meet, the natural levees are especially high and wide), but also because it fronted on Bayou des Familles at its north end.<sup>27</sup>

About 150 people lived there at first.<sup>28</sup> John McDonogh, who brought the grant after it was abandoned, commented on the naming of the settlement:

I have to observe that the Bayou des Familles is the Bayou Barataria this is a circumstance of public notoriety, known to everyone. The main Bayou now generally called Barataria is the Bayou Ouacha. If you will examine the old plans of the Spanish Government of [unreadable] Trudeau, you will find it so. All the titles for lands on that Bayou called it Barataria, which is its name but when the Spanish Government placed some 30 or 40 Canarian families thereon, the public called it the Bayou des Familles or the Bayou of families, the Bayou settled with families, that was the cause of that name, but its name in all titles and official acts is the Bayou Barataria.<sup>29</sup>

The settlement was not successful because of repeated floods caused by hurricanes and crevasses. The settlement required continued support, and suffered a gradual attrition to other settlements of Canarians.<sup>30</sup> By 1796 or thereabouts, the five families still living in the area were also forced to abandon the grant due to the Porta (or Porte) plantation Crevasse on the west bank of the Mississippi River. The Porta crevasse occupied the same location as the later Bell Crevasse, at or near the former confluence of Bayou des Familles and the Mississippi River. The Porta Crevasse opened in or before 1796, and was not closed for two years,<sup>31</sup> during which time all the crops and livestock died and the settlement was ruined. Five families received assistance from the government in the form of barrels of rice.<sup>32</sup> The government eventually

resettled them with another settlement at Terre aux Boeufs, in what later became St. Bernard Parish.<sup>33</sup>

The Canary Island settlement in Baratavia was an attempt by the Spanish Crown to establish loyal citizens in a strategic location. The settlement lasted about sixteen years, during which the Canarians farmed their grant and kept some livestock. They probably planted subsistence crops such as rice and corn, and perhaps some cash crops such as indigo. In order to supplement their subsistence base, they also learned how to hunt and fish from their neighbors.

### Settlement Patterns at the End of the Colonial Period

The Canarians had neighbors. To the southwest, another settlement was located on the northeast corner of Baratavia Island, at the confluence of bayous Villars and Baratavia.<sup>34</sup> Houses shown on a 1775 map probably indicated Dubreuil's earlier establishments.<sup>35</sup> The island was sold from the Dubreuil family and passed to the Boutte family sometime around 1780.<sup>36</sup> An 1803 map indicated that the Boutte family established themselves on the northeast corner of the island.<sup>37</sup> The Boutte family consisted of small farmers who also hunted and trapped. Zenon Boutte,<sup>38</sup> a founding father, was by local tradition one of Jean Laffite's men.

Still other people lived in the basin near the end of the eighteenth century. On the north shore of Lake Salvador stood a hunter's camp with numerous tents.<sup>39</sup> At this time cartographers time called Lake Salvador and Bayou Baratavia "Lac de los Ouachas" and "Bayou des Ouachas," so they must have been aware of the former presence of the Washa tribe in this area. Significantly, the camp was not identified as Indian, so the hunters were probably of French or Spanish descent. Duck hunters from the settlements along the Mississippi or in Baratavia probably occupied the camp in the fall. Grand Isle was settled as early as the 1780s. At least one of the land grants on the island went to Jacques Rigaud, a farmer, rancher, fisherman, and associate of Jean Laffite. He lived on the grant, and later it was subdivided among his numerous descendents.<sup>40</sup> Besides the landowners, there may also have been squatters on the island.<sup>41</sup>

Besides the Grand Isle and Baratavia Island settlers, residents of the basin probably lived on the land grants owned by absentees. Caretakers, cowpunchers, and squatters cared for landowner's interests and pursued a variety of subsistence activities. While these people left little evidence of such occupation, their presence can be inferred by map clues and the flourishing settlements of their descendents in the nineteenth century. These settlers developed a smallscale subsistence economy based on fishing, farming, hunting, trapping, and small marketing.

### Jean Laffite and the Baratarians

In order to pursue a career as a privateer and start another as a smuggler, Jean Laffite moved into Baratavia Bay in 1805.<sup>42</sup> Laffite and

his men sailed their ships under letters of marque, which were commissions from warring nations to attack the merchant vessels of their enemies.<sup>43</sup> The confiscated goods from these vessels were legally brought to a port of a friendly nation, but high customs duties and the eventual neutrality of American ports encouraged Laffite to smuggle his confiscated goods illegally into New Orleans. With the only port which was deep enough to shelter oceangoing vessels, Grande Terre, next to Grand Isle, represented an ideal location for these activities. Situated at the mouth of Barataria Basin, it had direct access to New Orleans through the lakes and bayous to the canals dug by the planters on the Mississippi River.<sup>44</sup> The port also provided access to the rich plantations above the city through the nearby mouth of Bayou Lafourche, which joined the Mississippi River at Donaldsonville. The Americans struggled to control the river itself, but recognized the strategic importance of Grand Terre during the War of 1812 and built Fort Livingston in 1834.

In 1805, however, Laffite stepped into a power vacuum. He did not take over a deserted island. Cattle lived there, and perhaps the island's owner, Francois Mayronne, who must have given at least tacit approval to Laffite's presence. Mayronne's property at the head of Bayou Barataria and near the Dubreuil canal on the Mississippi River may have also been used by Laffite as smuggling depots.<sup>45</sup> Other residents of Barataria, however, lent more active assistance. In his journal, Laffite mentioned three men who helped him design his commercial system of depots and bases throughout Barataria Basin: Louis Chighizola, Francois Rigaud, and Manuel Perrin.<sup>46</sup> Francois Rigaud was the son of Jacques Rigaud, who received a concession on Grand Isle in 1781. Jacques Rigaud was a farmer, owned six slaves, kept a few cattle, and fished. Chighizola purchased property on Grand Isle in 1818, after the dispersal of Laffite's operation in 1815.<sup>47</sup> In the early part of the nineteenth century, Manuel Perrin claimed an elevenarpent tract on Bayou Barataria, just south of Bayou des Oies, or present day Goose Bayou. He was a farmer, hunter, fisherman, and carpenter.<sup>48</sup> When Laffite chose his base, all three men were probably already living in the Barataria area, and had an intimate knowledge of the terrain. Besides their assistance in designing the smuggling operation, the three continued their association with the privateer-smuggler as his police officers.<sup>49</sup> Other residents of Grand Isle helped Laffite by supplying the colony with food for animals and men.<sup>50</sup>

From 1805 to 1813 Laffite built a commercial empire in Barataria Basin with storehouses for stock, relay storehouses, a shop,<sup>51</sup> and a storehouse for powder and flints between the river and the gulf. His success was so great that he dared to openly advertise an auction of contraband slaves in Barataria.<sup>52</sup> His company had as many as a couple of hundred men,<sup>53</sup> perhaps exceeding the total number of other inhabitants of the basin. Laffite's success was also his downfall. The size of his operation eventually forced Governor William C. C. Claiborne and the U.S. Navy to take a series of successful actions against the stronghold on Grande Terre, until it fell in 1814.

The Battle of New Orleans occurred at a providential time for Laffite. While he was being wooed by the British, he offered his services to the Americans. After hesitating, General Andrew Jackson accepted his supplies and men, who contributed significantly to the American success in the Battle of New Orleans. For their efforts, Laffite and his men received presidential pardons. An unknown number of his men settled down in the New Orleans and Barataria areas. Others left with him to continue their illegal activities in Galveston.

### Conclusion

Barataria failed to see another enterprise on the scale of Laffite's for another fifty years. His career elaborated on a pattern established by earlier entrepreneurs: a dual economy wherein large enterprises investing in land improvements were complemented by the labor of scattered and self-sufficient settlers. Laffite saw the value of both the geographic location of Barataria Basin and the people who lived there. The basin provided a variety of water routes from an unguarded gulf port to the city of New Orleans. The area was sparsely populated by adventurous people who owned little or no land and were largely self-sufficient, but were not averse to trade. Unlike Laffite, future large-scale entrepreneurs would invest in land; but like him, and perhaps following his example, they would continue to depend on access to the city and the small-scale economic cooperation of their neighbors.

## Endnotes Chapter III

1. The earliest appearance of the name L'Hermitage appears on a 1744 map, "Partie de la Coste de La Louisiane et de la Floride," N.B. Ingenieur du Roy et de la Marine, 1744, Historic New Orleans Collection. Other references include the "Course du Flueve Saint Louis depuis ses Embouchures jusqu'a la Rive d'Iberville et Costes Voisines," 1764, Historic New Orleans Collection. This map has a building with a cross on Bayou Barataria above its confluence with Bayou Villars. Ms. Betsy Swanson pointed out the occurrence of this term, and suggested a significance of a religious structure or settlement. Monsignor Henry C. Bezou agreed from his own knowledge, and checked church records for further reference to an early Barataria settlement, to no avail.
2. Henry P. Dart, "The Career of Dubreuil in French Louisiana," Louisiana Historical Quarterly 18 (1935): 267-77.
3. Betsy Swanson, "Did You Know," Transit Rider's Digest (Sept. 30, 1974); see also E. G. Gottschalk, Oct. 30, 1865, New Orleans Parish Notarial Archives, for a sale of land in Crownpoint area which included a rightofway on the Gardene or Dubreuil Canal; Salmon, to the Minister, June 30, 1740, Archives Coloniales, C13A25, folio 193; "Rapport de L'Ingenieur de la Marine," Sept. 22, 1741, Archives Coloniales, L13A26, folio 214.
4. One league equals approximately 2.5 miles.
5. Swanson, "Did You Know," Transit Rider's Digest (Sept. 30, 1974); Dart, "The Career of Dubreuil"
6. John Hebron Moore, "The Cypress Timber Industry of the Lower Mississippi Valley during the Colonial Period," Louisiana History 24 (1983).
7. "Rapport;" Vaudreuil and Le Normant to the Minister, "Reception de huit lettres," Jan. 4, 1745, Archives Coloniales, C13A29, folio 5. Although the canal was finished by 1740 Dubreuil continued to have difficulties transporting material to the river by way of his canal. Evidently it was not deep or wide enough. Betsy Swanson, Historic Jefferson Parish, From Shore to Shore (Gretna, LA: Pelican Publishing Co. 1975), 88.
8. American State Papers, Vol. 6, Public Lands, (Washington: Gales and Seaton, 1860), 356.
9. One lineal arpent equals 192 feet; one areal arpent equals 85 aires.
10. Betsy Swanson, "Did You Know," Transit Rider's Digest (Dec. 22, 1975).

11. Denis Diderot, "Wax, Wax of Louisiana," Encyclopedie ou Dictionnaire Raisonne Des Sciences, Des Arts, 2et Des Metiers, vol. 3, facscimile reprint of 1751-1780 edition) (Stuttgart: Friedrich Frommann Verlag, 1961), 472-73.
12. Dart, "Career of Dubreuil," 275.
13. Jack D. L. Holmes, "Indigo in Colonial Louisiana and the Floridas," Louisiana History 8 (1967): 329-39.
14. Diderot, "Indigo," Encyclopedia, vol. 8, 678-79.
15. Dart, "Career of Dubreuil," 278-79.
16. American State Papers, vol. 3, Public Lands (Washington: Gales and Seaton 183261), 356, selections from the 1754 inventory of Claude Joseph Villars Dubreuil upon the death of his wife, Dame Marie Payen. For the identification of Isle Bonne with Dauphine, see Cristobal de Armas, Sept. 12, 1825, New Orleans Notarial Archives. The island is surrounded by Lake Salvador, Bayou Villars, Bayou Barataria, and Bayou Dauphine.
17. Allou d'Hemecourt, Apr. 13, 1825, New Orleans Notarial Archives, plat book 107, folio 22.
18. Dauterive to the Court, Aug. 20, 1771, Spanish Judicial Records, file 218, Louisiana State Museum History Center.
19. Spanish Judicial Records, file 218, Louisiana State Museum History Center.
20. Spanish Judicial Records, files 164 and 183, May 14, 1770 May 23, 1771, and April 16, 1771 May 23, 1771, Louisiana State Museum History Center.
21. Captain J. G. Barnard to Colonel Joseph G. Totten, Jan. 29, 1844, General Land Office Private Land Claims Louisiana docket 3045, WNRC.
22. Morales to Gordoque, "Para remedia en parte", Oct. 31, 1796, Archivo General des Indias, Microfilm Collection, National Park Service Southwest Region, roll 1, document 23; Cadastral Survey Map T14S R23E, 1853, Bureau of Land Management, Eastern States Office.
23. Jean Lewis Gaston Villars (a descendent of Dubreuil), Jean Baptiste Degruys, and Francois Enouls Livaudais owned multiple land parcels measured in leagues instead of arpents: Cadastral Survey maps T28S R24E, T16S R24E, T15S R 24E, T17S R24E, and T28S R23E, 1872, Bureau of Land Management, Eastern States Office.
24. Betsy Swanson, personal communication.
25. Nicholas Spitzer, "Mississippi Delta Ethnographic Overview," (Photocopy, Jean Lafitte National Historical Park, 1979), 177.

26. Allou d'Hemecourt, Apr. 13, 1835; Gilbert C. Dinn, "The Canary Islands of Louisiana" (Photocopy, Jean Lafitte National Historical Park, 1985), 61.
27. It is unknown where the settlement was located within the grant, "Plan de Las Concesiones Desde La Ciudad de Nueva Orleans Hasta Bayu San Juan, la Metairy, Chapitoulas y Barataria," Archivo General de Indias Catalogo de Mapas y Planos de la Florida y la Luisiana (Madrid: Direccion General del Patrimonio Artistico, 1979) map 74, on microfilm in the Historic New Orleans Collection, locates the village on the second western bend of bayou des Familles. The catalogue estimates the date of the map as 1775-1778 because it was found between maps with those dates. However, the map itself labels the great "establishment of Barataria," suggesting the Canary Islanders were already there. If this were the case, the map would have to be dated 1778 or later. A slightly later map located an unknown settlement at the second eastern bend of the bayou, outside of the grant, and another settlement at the east side of the confluence of bayous des Familles and Barataria, the probable location of the village: Trudeau, "Plan del Local de las Tierras que Rodean la Ciudad de Nueva Orleans," 1803, Historic New Orleans Collection.
28. Dinn, "The Canary Islanders," 61.
29. John McDonogh to Wm. H. Cobb, July 30, 1830, McDonogh Collection, Special Collections Division, Tulane University Library.
30. Dinn, "The Canary Islanders," 61-64.
31. J. A. d'Hemecourt, "J. M. Bell Crevasse," Dec. 20, 1858, Historic New Orleans Collection. The legend on the Hemecourt map states the settlement was established in 1793 and the crevasse occurred in 1802, but we know from "Plano de las Concesiones" and the 1835 Allou d'Hemecourt plan, New Orleans Notarial Archives plat book 107, folio 22, that the settlement was established about 1780. We also know that the crevasse opened on or before 1796: Morales to Gardoque, "Para remedia en parte." The J. A. d'Hemecourt legend might be referring to a second Canary Islander settlement and a second Porte crevasse, but further evidence is necessary to support such an interpretation.
32. Morales to Gardoqui, "Para remedia en parte."
33. J. A. d'Hemecourt, "J. M. Bell Crevasse."
34. Trudeau, "Plan del Local."
35. Untitled 1775 map, Louisiana State University, School of Geoscience Map Library, in Sherwood M. Gagliano, Richard A. Weinstein, Eileen K. Burden, Katherine L. Brooks, and Wayne P. Glander, "Cultural Resources Survey of the Segnette, and Rigaud Waterways, Jefferson Parish, Louisiana" (Photocopy, Coastal Environments, Inc., 1979), Fig 441. 36. General Land Office, Private Land Claims, Louisiana, 82. In 1820 the

Boutte family claimed they had possessed and occupied the island upward of forty years.

37. Trudeau, "Plan del Local"

38. Times-Picayune (Sept. 4, 1963) 13.

39. "Plan de las Concesiones;" Trudeau, "Plan del Local."

40. Sally Kittredge Evans, Frederick Stielow, and Betsy Swanson, Grand Isle on the Gulf: An Early History (Metairie, LA: Jefferson Parish Historical Commission, 1979), 23-24, 31.

41. Ibid. 28.

42. Erwin Thompson, "A Brief History of Jean Laffite and the Baratarians and an Identification of Historic and Archeological Sites for the Planners," (Photocopy, National Park Service Denver Service Center, n.d.). Thompson provisionally accepts the Jean Lafitte journals as genuine, as does this author on the advice of Betsy Swanson.

43. Laffite and his men first sailed under French letters of marque and then under Carthaginian letters, in both cases mainly against the Spanish.

44. The Dubreuil canal was built by 1740. The Barataria canal, built by 1794, connected the Mississippi River at present day Westwego to Bayou Segnette, which enters Lake Cataouatche. Swanson, Historic Jefferson Parish, 89.

45. The fact that Mayronne had been living on the island quite some time before he sold it in 1823 does not mean that he was living there in 1805, but the possibility he had a residence there should not be ruled out. Mayronne owned a plantation on the Mississippi River: Trudeau, "Plan del Local."

46. Jean Laffite, The Journal of Jean Lafitte, The Privateer Patriot's Own Story (New York: Vantage Press, 1958) 37-38.

47. Evans, Stielow, and Swanson, Grand Isle, 24-33.

48. Betsy Swanson, "Did You Know," Transit Rider's Digest (Feb. 12, 1979).

49. Thompson, "Jean Laffite and the Baratarians," 11.

50. Evans, Stielow, and Swanson, Grand Isle, 31.

51. Dr. Marco Giardino and Mr. Michael Comardelle, personal communication. They have excavated a site near Lake Cataouatche with hundreds of flints in a possible late colonial component.

52. Lyle Saxon, Lafitte the Pirate (New Orleans: Robert L. Crager & Co., 1950), 93.

53. The Laffite Journal lists over 200 men, but the 1810 U.S. Census counts only 44 residents of Baratavia and 48 of Grand Isle: Bureau of the Census, "Third Census of the United States," NA, RG29. This is clearly low estimate, perhaps caused by local distrust of the American government.

## CHAPTER IV THE SUGAR PLANTATION ERA

### Introduction

Colonial efforts to find a suitable export crop in the delta region were finally realized at the close of the eighteenth century. Developments in the European sugar market, the cultivation of sugar cane, and the technology of sugar making coincided to make sugar production lucrative. Indigo plantation owners switched quickly to the new crop; their initial successes encouraged other landowners, who had not yet invested in indigo plantations. The costs were high, however, and uncertain land titles added to the difficulty. Consequently, the growth of sugar plantations was gradual, and continued well into the second half of the nineteenth century. The small plantations were established later than the large ones and were also the first to go. In the Barataria region, both large and small plantations had mostly died out by the twentieth century.

While the sugar industry was claiming and developing most of the natural levees in the Barataria Basin, the complementary smallscale economy and settlement pattern continued to develop between large land holdings, especially on the small levees. The poorer settlers of the Barataria region did not maintain a tradition of smallscale subsistence farming as much as people living in the Acadian bayous to the west, but instead developed a broadbased pattern of hunting, fishing, trapping, and gardening. While the economy and life style of these Baratarians is poorly reflected in the historical documentation, they were counted and named in the decennial national census.

### John McDonogh

The early development of many plantations along Bayou des Familles and Barataria was interrupted by the activities of John McDonogh, Jr. (often spelled McDonough).<sup>1</sup> Born in Baltimore in 1779 of Scotch immigrant parents, he came to New Orleans in 1800 as the agent of a Baltimore merchant. Learning both French and Spanish, McDonogh speculated in sugar and real estate and accumulated a modest fortune. He moved from New Orleans to a plantation on the west bank of the Mississippi in the second decade of the century and developed a curious and successful method of dealing with the moral and social issues posed by slavery. Significantly, McDonogh never declared himself as being morally opposed to slavery, saying instead that the manumission of his slaves was a simple act of justice to them in return for their having fulfilled a contract.<sup>2</sup> Yet he did associate himself with other important men of his day, including planters, who were grappling with the moral and social issues of slavery. For example, McDonogh was a close friend and strong supporter of Andrew Durnford, a free person-of-color (of mixed Negro and Caucasian ancestry) who established a sugar plantation in Plaquemines Parish and owned slaves. Like every planter

who morally opposed slavery but also did not believe the slaves were sufficiently educated to become responsible citizens, the two friends faced a dilemma.<sup>3</sup>

A business man, McDonough drafted his reply to this question in terms of money. Unable to prevent his slaves from working for their own interest on Sundays, and thus breaking the Sabbath, McDonough at last succeeded by allowing his slaves to work for themselves on half of Saturday. Prompted by his success in this matter, he gathered the leaders among his slaves and made the following proposal to them. If they saved up the money gained on the half Saturday already theirs, he would allow them to purchase the remaining half for 1/11 of their individual value as slaves. He calculated that would take seven years. Then they could save their earnings from the whole of Saturday to buy the whole of Friday. That would take only four years. This would continue until they had bought themselves and their children at reasonable market value (\$600 for each man, \$450 for each woman, and children in proportion). All the slaves were to work and keep their accounts as a group, and in the end, he would send them to Liberia. The proposal, which was accepted, was kept secret. It took fourteen and a half years to accomplish, and in 1842 McDonough sent his first boatload of about eighty people to Africa. The surprised public reacted in a threatened manner, and McDonough responded by publishing a long letter explaining his motives as "simple honesty alone." He wrote, "In the space of about sixteen years which these people served me, since making the agreement with them, they have gained for me, in addition to performing more and better labor than slaves ordinarily perform in the usual time of laboring, a sum of money . . . which will enable me to go to Virginia or Carolina and purchase double the number of those I sent away."<sup>4</sup>

McDonough also declared his opposition to allowing freed slaves to remain in America and supported the American Colonization Society, becoming a vice president of the society after 1830. He arranged for freed colonists to receive land and six months worth of provisions on their arrival in Africa; chose two to be educated in the north, one as a doctor, one as a teacher and missionary; and even though it was illegal, provided for education of his slaves on the plantation.

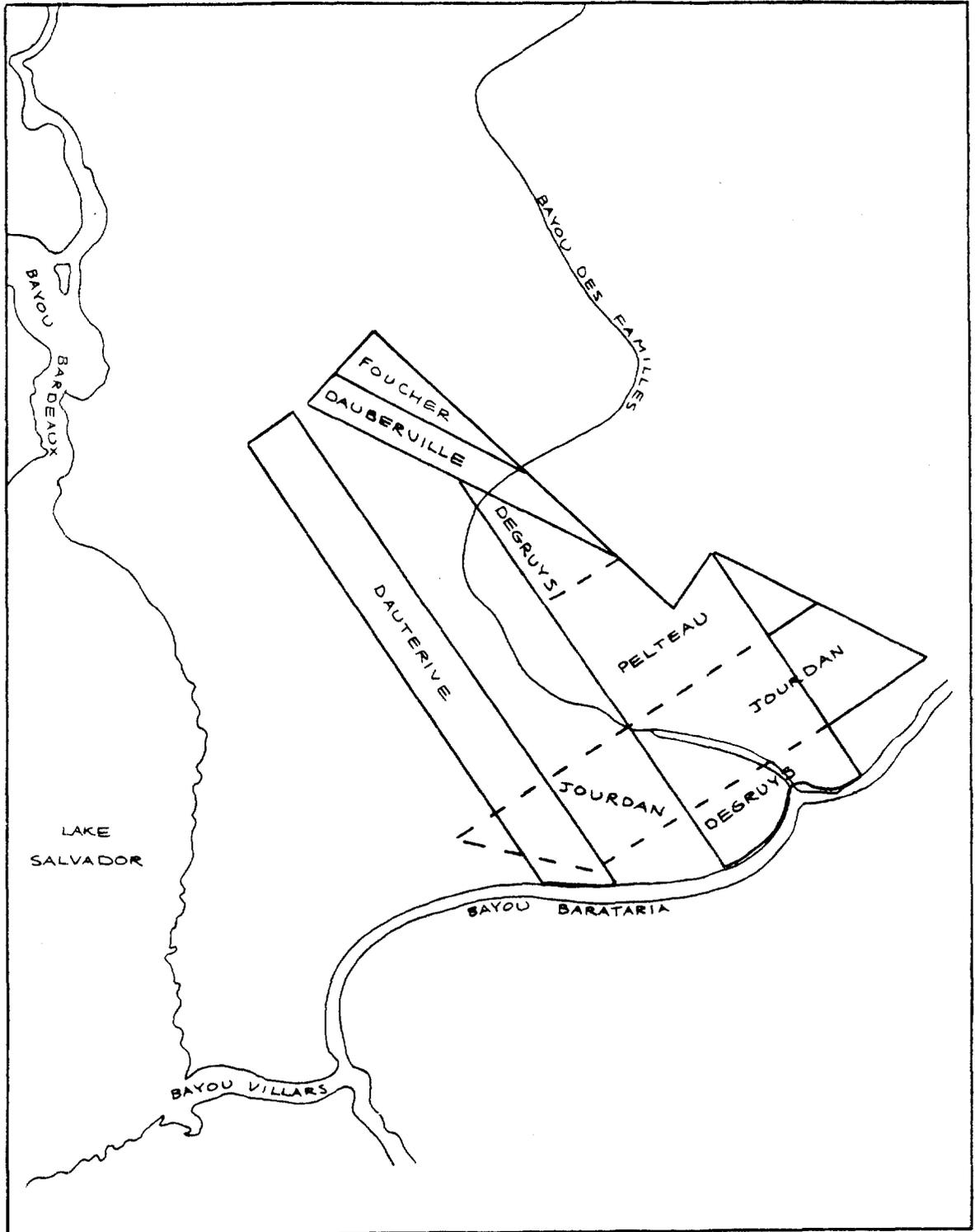
Throughout his careful preparations for the future of the freedmen, McDonough expressed a major concern of his life; the education of the poor. This was the overriding concern of his will, as well, which left small bequests to family members, freed the remainder of his slaves and provided for their transportation to Liberia, provided for the American Colonization Society and two orphanages, and left the remainder to the cities of Baltimore and New Orleans to fund free public schools. Kept secret until his death in 1850, the will created another uproar, not only because a man who had been despised in New Orleans as a recluse and miser now came to be respected as a public benefactor, but also because his wealth was overrated. Despite a clumsy system of administration set up by the will and law suits from legitimate and illegitimate claimants, the value of the estate to the several heirs came to about \$1,800,000. The legacies, however, were not completely settled until 1860.<sup>5</sup>

John McDonogh's wealth lay in real estate. He amassed extensive holdings around New Orleans in swamp lands, lands near the city, and lands with uncertain title. McDonogh knew that New Orleans was expanding, and that cheap land would some day be worth fortunes. Perhaps McDonogh's most notorious venture was the purchase with his partner, Shepard Brown, of half interest in a total of 120,000 square arpents of land in Spanish West Florida for about \$6,000 in 1804. The purchase was speculative because the title was based on a Spanish grant made in the same year. Spanish West Florida, now that portion of Louisiana north of Lake Pontchartrain and east of Baton Rouge, was claimed by the United States as part of the Louisiana Purchase in 1803. Spain contested the purchase, claiming that she had never given up title to the area when Louisiana was transferred to France. The nationalistic fervor of the Americans led them to attack and occupy the Spanish fort at Baton Rouge and annex the area to Louisiana in 1810. Faced with American occupation of the area, Spain deeded all of her Florida possessions to the United States in 1818.

A stipulation that Spanish grants in Florida made before 1818 were to be recognized by the United States was not honored when it was discovered that huge portions of the territory had been granted to three Spanish noblemen. John McDonogh negotiated all these events with determination and resolve. He sent envoys to European courts to collect copies of treaty documents. He commissioned a lobbyist for his cause in Washington, and pursued his interests through correspondence. In the end few of these titles were recognized by an act of Congress in 1832.

McDonogh also speculated fearlessly in Barataria. In 1860, when the cities of New Orleans and Baltimore auctioned their newly divided lands, it was shown that he had owned well over 29,652 acres in the Barataria region, including those lands on bayous des Familles and Barataria shown on Map 5.<sup>9</sup> Some of his acquisitions may have had little value, but others must have been valuable even during the first half of the nineteenth century--particularly lands near the confluence of bayous des Familles and Barataria. Directly or indirectly, McDonogh bought a portion of the Dauterive grant; three portions of the old Isleno grant belonging to Jean Baptiste DeGruys, Pelteau of unknown Christian name, and Jean Joseph Jourdan, (also known as Jourdain); and small tracts belonging to Pierre Foucher and Marie Payen. Both the Foucher and Payen tracts eventually became part of the Carter plantation, but it is not known whether they were improved when McDonogh bought them. Since both pieces were small and eventually became incorporated into larger holdings, it is probable they received few previous improvements. Nevertheless, these lands were located on bayous with prime natural levees next to two of the largest plantations in the regions, Estelle and Mavis Grove, and were potentially very valuable once drained and cleared.

The land obtained from Jourdan and DeGruys included the site of present day Crownpoint and had been improved when McDonogh bought it.



Map 5. John McDonogh's landholdings in the Park Area.

As he described the area to his surveyor,

There can be no difficulty in ascertaining the precise spot of ground. Mr. Jourdain lived thereon for many years, known to everyone (as well as Pelteau, his neighbor, on his tract) and the frames of their houses is yet standing thereon.

I understand boundary posts is also yet standing thereon. . . . Mr. Jourdan is besides yet living, and is now a Sugar Planter, owner of a Sugar Estate on the left bank of the Mississippi.<sup>10</sup>

McDonogh also bought the Pelteau tract.<sup>11</sup>

Whatever the extent of the improvements before McDonogh bought the lands, he did little to improve them himself. His papers contain very few references to his Baratavia holdings, but referring to his holdings near Baton Rouge and in Plaquemines, he expressed concern with squatters and caretakers. Correspondence concerning his Baratavia property was limited to communications from the police jury requiring him to improve the road along the levee through his property.<sup>12</sup> It is evident that the land was valuable to McDonogh for future resale, not for development. To secure his investment he bought up several overlapping and conflicting colonial claims in this area, realizing that

this tract lays contiguous to and forms part of 9 other tracts owned by me, but as the different tracts clash and run in and cross each other, there is not the quantity of land which appears to be, as I purchased several of them for the purpose of settling adverse claims and avoiding suits at law.<sup>13</sup>

John McDonogh's wise precautions enabled his legatees to sell the land with no difficulty as soon as the estate was settled.

The story of the DeGruys, Pelteau, Jourdan, Foucher, and Dauberville tracts did not end in 1860. The General Land Office did not survey this area (Township 15 South Range 23 East) until 1855,<sup>14</sup> and only then did it officially recognize the overlap between the several approved claims. Administrative procedure gave precedence to claims in order of confirmation by Congress, not according to any virtue or prior right which could be argued in terms of the land's use or settlement. Holders of approved claims who lost territory because a prior approved claim superseded theirs were issued scrip for land in the public domain elsewhere in the state. When the cities of New Orleans and Baltimore sold the McDonogh lands, they sold only those portions of the claims which did not overlap and retained their right to those portions of the claims that did. Interestingly, the McDonogh claims overlapped with each other, as McDonogh himself had observed. What he could not have anticipated was that in 1889 the lawyers of his legatees would pursue to the level of the secretary of the interior a decision that would grant them scrip for all those portions of the claims which overlapped, regaining what McDonogh had been willing to sacrifice to quiet the title.<sup>15</sup>

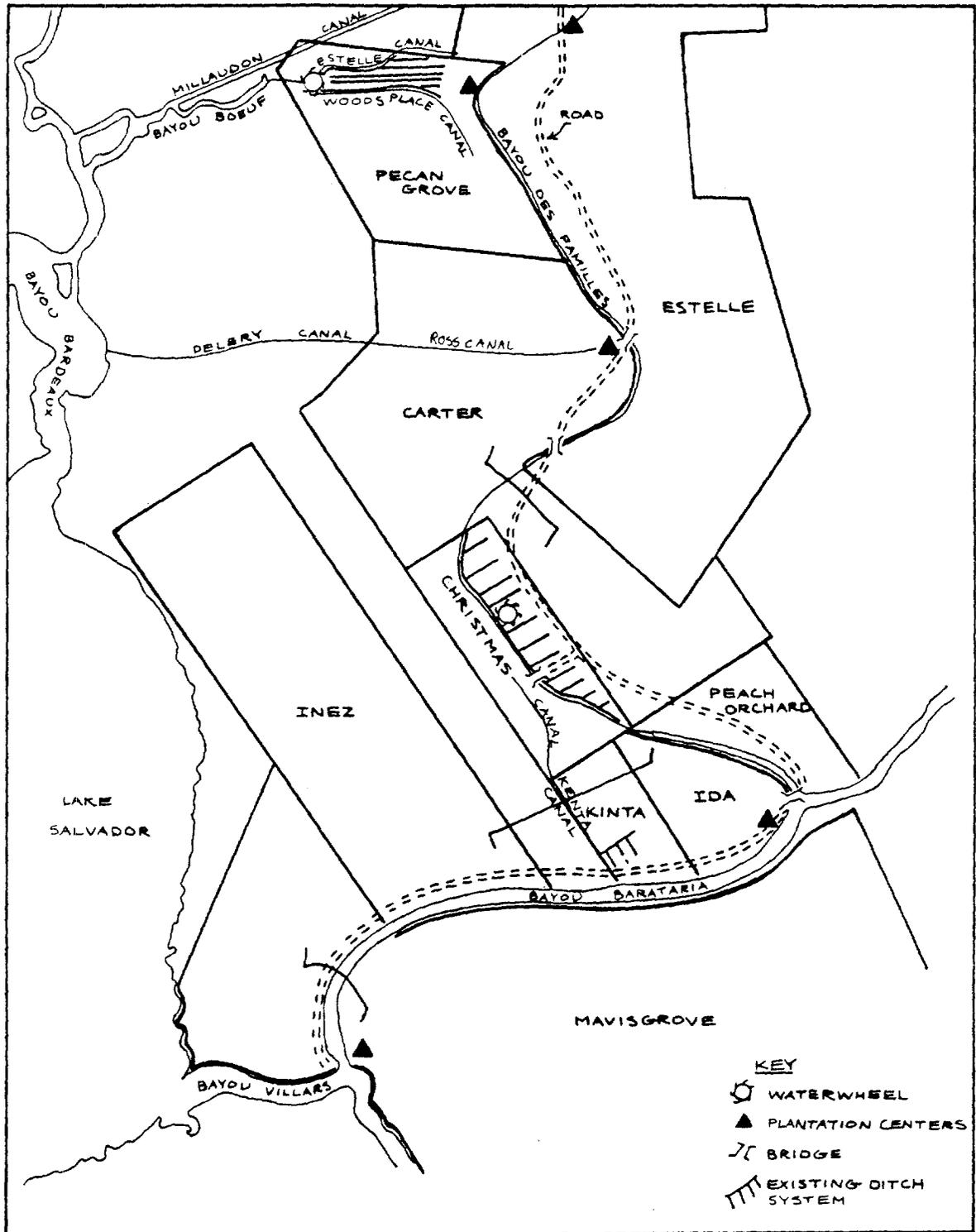
For a man who inspired such loud controversy both during and after his lifetime, John McDonogh was extremely reserved and religious. His complicated and secretive arrangements for the manumission of his slaves and the disposition of his estate only added to the public confusion over his motives and character. Popular exaggeration of his wealth and debunkers of his image left a muddled legacy, but there can be little doubt that he was a very important man in his time, concerned with moral issues, and both a private and public benefactor. While land speculation was common in Barataria during the early American period, the large scale of his dealings was unusual, and had lasting effects on the region. His purchases prevented valuable real estate from being developed for many years, but the plantations that followed were short lived, and the more enduring economy of the self-sufficient farmer, trapper, fisherman, and hunter may have benefited from this relatively long period of unhindered use of his undeveloped land.

#### Sugar Plantations of the Bayou des Familles and Middle Bayou Barataria

After the sale of John McDonogh's estate in 1860, the sugar plantations blossomed, monopolizing much of the natural levees. Estelle, the northernmost plantation on Bayou des Familles, was owned by Laurent Millaudon from before 1835 until 1870 (Map 6).<sup>16</sup> Millaudon ran this and the adjacent property fronting on the Mississippi, Front Place, and together they constituted the largest sugar estate in Louisiana (Plate 9). Both plantations had brick sugar houses, with vacuum pans to reduce the cane juice to sugar. Millaudon was known among his contemporaries for buying the newest inventions and using experimental technology, and his plantations were recognized as model estates.<sup>17</sup> In 1860, when he was thirtyfive, on the two plantations he owned 440 slaves living in 82 cabins; 3,000 acres of improved land and 8,000 acres of unimproved land, together valued at \$500,000; farming implements valued at \$10,000; and 4 horses, 150 asses and mules, 20 cows, 80 oxen, 12 pigs, and 20 cattle, valued at \$18,000. The plantations produced 10,000 bushels of corn, 300 bushels of Irish potatoes, 250 bushels of sweet potatoes, 1,000 hogsheads of sugar (weighing 1,000 pounds each), and 93,000 gallons of molasses per year.<sup>18</sup>

The Estelle plantation buildings were found near the end of the present-day Ames Avenue, near Bayou des Familles.<sup>19</sup> The Millaudon canal, which runs along Ames Avenue today, extended from Bayou Boeuf to Bayou des Familles, turned approximately ninety degrees, and continue to the Mississippi River. The north-south portion of it may have been built by a previous owner as a drainage ditch; the east-west portion appears on the maps between 1803 and 1842, and probably dates to Millaudon's ownership of Estelle and Front Place.<sup>20</sup> While both portions of the canal are probably drainage ditches built perpendicular to the two drainages of the Mississippi River and Bayou des Familles, the fact that they connect suggests that they may have been used to move timber from the backswamp to a sawmill on the river.

A. B. Merrill bought the Estelle and Front Place Plantations from the Millaudon estate. Merrill hired 140 Chinese laborers under a three



Map 6. Plantations of the Park Area

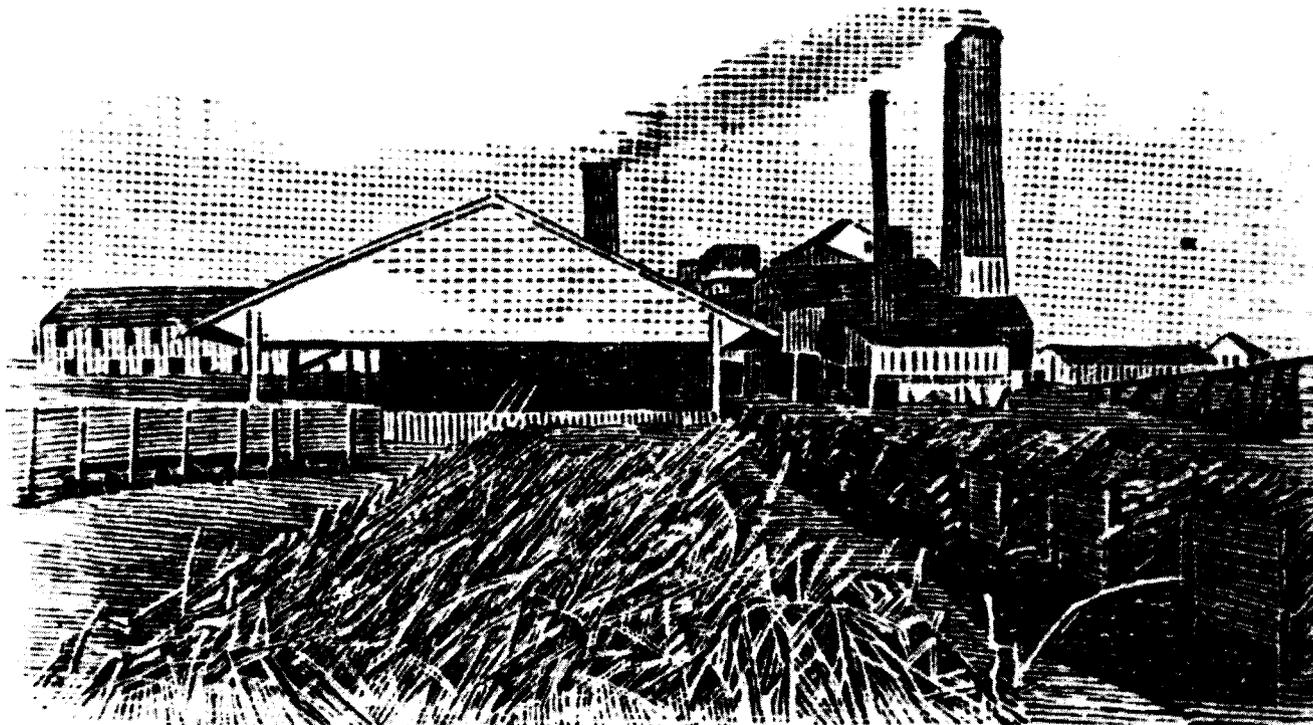


Plate 9. Estelle Sugar Mill  
Moses King, King's Handbook of the United States (Buffalo: Moses King  
Corporation, 1891)

year contract which provided housing, rations, and \$14 a month, but partly because of the language barrier, and partly because some of the laborers left the plantation, the experiment failed. Merrill sold the plantations to the Ames brothers in 1873, who continued to run the estate as a plantation, but also began to subdivide portions of it for small truck gardeners.<sup>21</sup> By the 1890s Charles Brown, a storekeeper in Harvey, ran the Estelle plantation. Brown bought out many of the failing small plantations further down Bayou des Familles, continued to plant, and brought the cane to Estelle for milling.<sup>22</sup>

South of Front Place stood the the Pecan Grove Plantation. It was located on a narrow ridge of high levee which extends eastwest, as well as on the north-south trending levee of Bayou des Familles. The Osborne brothers (first names unknown) owned it in 1844, and Osborne and Hubbard (first names unknown) in 1856. In 1864 or 1865 it was sold for partition.<sup>23</sup> Later events in the Crown Point area shed light on the Osborne and Hubbard ownership of Pecan Grove. Winifred Hubbard, a free-person-of-color and mother of Daniel Clark Osborne's children, bought the Crownpoint area, (part of the McDonough estate) in 1860 from the city of New Orleans.<sup>24</sup> Even though Louisiana was a community property state, it was not customary to list wives as co-owners of plantations, as with the Pecan Grove Plantation, suggesting that Daniel Clark Osborn was white and not married to Winfred Hubbard, and so had to provide for her by means of a formal partnership.

In 1860 the Pecan Grove Plantation had 57 slaves living in 11 cabins, 600 acres of improved land, and 1,500 acres of unimproved land for a cash value of \$20,000 for the slaves and land; and 6 horses, 50 asses and mules, and 20 cattle for a total livestock value of \$6,000. The plantation produced each year 7,500 bushels of corn, 200 bushels of sweet potatoes, 600 hogsheads of sugar, and 32,000 gallons of molasses.<sup>25</sup> Moreover, by 1864 a sawmill was producing from 4,000 to 6,000 board feet of lumber daily.<sup>26</sup> After the plantation was sold in about 1865, it changed hands every one or two years. The wooden sugar house, which had open kettle evaporators, burned down by 1885. The plantation grew rice,<sup>27</sup> for several years after that, but by 1888 it was no longer productive.

The Pecan Grove plantation structures were located on Bayou des Familles near the northern edge of the estate. Two main canals, Estelle and Woods Place Canals, drained the eastwest ridge. Although the Estelle Canal drained the Pecan Grove Plantation, it may have extended further northeast toward the Estelle Plantation center. The name "Woods Place" refers to one of the shortterm owners of the postwar period,<sup>28</sup> but canals necessary for draining the valuable ridge were probably in operation during plantation's prosperity, before the Civil War.

Today, located at the confluence of the two canals at the edge of the backswamp, is a site consisting of three parallel, lowstanding walls, three more parallel foundations, a mound appearing to be the remnants of a brick chimney stack, and an island of approximately 100 feet by 40 feet. The walls are parallel to Woods Place Canal, and two of them are standing in it. The location and layout of this site

suggest a water wheel and steam engine, probably for drainage, in which case it could have been easily adapted to flooding the fields for rice cultivation; but there is also a possibility that the sawmill stood here.

South of the Pecan Grove Plantation was the Carter or Ross Plantation. While the part of the estate on the west side of Bayou des Familles was established as a plantation as early as 1835,<sup>29</sup> little is known about it until 1845, when it produced 448 hogsheads of sugar. J. W. Ross owned the plantation in 1850, and kept it until about 1856, when it was sold to Jacob M. Payne and Harrison, of unknown Christian name, upon Ross's death.<sup>30</sup> Payne bought the land on the east side of Bayou des Familles from the McDonogh estate. John H. Carter bought the enlarged estate in 1867 for \$165,000, and purchasing another section<sup>31</sup> from Marie Julie Gabrielle Lemoine added it to the southwest side. The plantation contained a wooden sugar house with open kettles. It did not do well under Carter: the number of hogsheads produced in the early 1870s was only about one-third to one-tenth the number produced in the early 1860s. In 1874 or 1875 it passed to the Citizen's Bank and never returned to production<sup>32</sup>--an extremely rapid decline for one of the larger and more expensive plantations in the area. The plantation structures were located on the west bank of Bayou des Familles, in the bend of the bayou.<sup>33</sup> The Ross Canal, also known as the Delery Canal, extends from Bayou Segnette to the levee near Bayou des Familles. It probably dated from the first establishment of the plantation.

Further south on Bayou des Familles was the Christmas Plantation, purchased in portions by Rufus King Cutler and Pierre Ernest Beauvais in 1865 and 1866. King soon sold his half interest to Beauvais for \$19,250, and judging from the wording of the sale, by that time it was already a small plantation.<sup>34</sup> The plantation did not appear to go into production until 1869, when it had a wooden sugar house with open kettles and produced 55 hogsheads of sugar. The Christmas Plantation continued in sugar production, averaging 124 hogsheads of sugar a year, until 1884. A<sup>35</sup> year later, the sugar house burned, and the owner began to raise rice.

The Christmas Plantation was created from a larger parcel owned and subdivided by Gabrielle Lemoine, widow of Pierre Rochefort. Gabrielle Lemoine owned 20 arpents fronting on Bayou Barataria, 110 arpents deep. This was a prime location because Bayou des Familles crossed in the middle of the tract. Gabrielle Lemoine bought the tract from Valery Vicknair in 1865 for \$15,000.<sup>36</sup> For that price, there could not have been any improvements on the tract; nor did she make any of her own, choosing to subdivide the tract into thirty-one parcels. These were eventually sold in the next few years to four concerns: the northern third of the tract sold to Carter, the middle third to Cutler and Beauvais, and the southern third was split<sup>37</sup> unequally between Henry Chapron and Catoire (first name unknown).

In 1865 Henry Chapron bought 15 arpents with a depth of 35 arpents facing Bayou Barataria from Gabrielle Lemoine.<sup>38</sup> He named it Kinta

Plantation, and by 1871, had a wooden sugar mill with open kettles and had produced 50 hogsheads of sugar. The plantation continued to produce sugar until 1884, when it switched to rice production.<sup>39</sup> Kinta Canal (more often spelled "Kenta" today), while named after the plantation, may date from the first agricultural use of the area. It is likely that the southernmost 35 arpents of the canal were originally dug for drainage purposes during the colonial or plantation periods.

The Peach Orchard and Ida plantations were located at the confluence of bayous des Familles and Barataria. They were originally established as one estate under Winifred Hubbard, who bought 888 acres for \$3,755.21 in 1860 from the city of New Orleans. The sale price did not include improvements. By 1868 the property was divided between the Hubbard's heirs. Paul Osborne received land east of Bayou des Familles minus a small lot, and Geraldine Osborne and Charlotte D. Bernard born Osborne, sisters, received the portion west of Bayou des Familles and a one-arpent lot on the far eastern end of Paul's share.<sup>40</sup> Paul Osborne established Peach Orchard on his share, a small sugar plantation with a wooden sugar house and open kettles that produced 9 hogsheads in 1872. The plantation continued to produce sugar on a very minor scale until 1881 under various owners, and under the name of Ackbar.<sup>41</sup>

On the west side of Bayou des Familles, the sisters added an adjacent lot of 5 arpents, purchased from Catoire, who had bought it from Lemoine.<sup>42</sup> They produced sugar cane for two seasons (1870-1872), but never built a sugar mill.<sup>43</sup> In March 1872 they sold the land to Henry Chapron, Jr., and J. B. A. Drouet, who later added another partner, Joseph Fernandez.<sup>44</sup> This was known as the Ida Plantation. It did not have a wooden sugar mill with open kettles until 1875, but produced sugar nevertheless. Perhaps some arrangement was made between father, Henry Chapron Sr. and son, Henry Chapron Jr. for the use of the Kinta sugar mill. Ida Plantation prospered, producing 238, 357, 370, and 350 hogsheads of sugar between 1877 and 1881.<sup>45</sup> In 1882, the partners greatly expanded their holdings by acquiring a part of the old Dauterive concession, 30 arpents frontage and 110 arpents depth on Bayou Barataria, just downstream from Ida and Kinta. They called the new acquisition Inez Plantation. By 1884 Ida Plantation was no longer producing sugar,<sup>46</sup> and by 1886, it was sold at public auction to dissolve the partnership.

Little is known about a 10-arpent stretch downstream from the Ida and Kinta plantations which once belonged to John McDonogh.<sup>47</sup> Curiously, this was the only stretch of bayou frontage not included in a plantation. Perhaps a small farmer owned the land, and like his neighbors on Barataria Island, followed a variety of economic pursuits.

Further downstream was the Inez Estate. While the name appeared in the 1886 auction of the Fernandez, Drouet, and Chapron partnership, plantation lists of the nineteenth century never referred to it. Like Isle Bonne, the next tract downstream, the Inez estate probably was never developed as a sugar plantation.

Pierre (or Albert) Bonne owned Isle Bonne, the tip of land formed by Lake Salvador, Bayou Villars, Bayou Barataria, and Bayou Dauphine in the colonial period. He died in 1795, leaving the land to six natural children, free persons of color. They, in turn, sold the land to Michel and Louis Commagere in 1825 for 1,000 piastres (pesos),<sup>48</sup> suggesting the land was unimproved. At the same time, the Commagere brothers bought Mavis Grove plantation from the heirs of Thomas Powers. In 1812 Thomas Powers claimed the land south and east of Bayou Barataria on the basis of a chain of ownership stemming from the original French concession to Claude Joseph Villars Dubreuil. Josephine Powers, the sister or more likely the daughter of Thomas Powers, was married to Michel Commagere. The Commagere brothers developed Mavis Grove as a sugar plantation, but difficulties led them to borrow money from the Powers heirs in 1827. By 1827 the brothers went bankrupt and their wives bought the plantation, including a principal house, hospital, Negro cabins, between 60 and 80 animals, 52 slaves, utensils and other dependencies, for \$57,000.<sup>49</sup> Andrew Hodge, Jr., bought the plantation at a creditor's<sup>50</sup> auction in 1841, and upon his death the estate was worth \$226,914.61,<sup>50</sup> with many additional improvements. The plantation buildings were on the east side of bayou Barataria; Isle Bonne was probably only developed as fields.

In 1858 all of the Barataria plantations were inundated by a crevasse on Bell's Plantation, at the former junction of the des Familles and Mississippi courses. Bell's Crevasse, as it became known, occurred at the same location as the earlier La Porte (or Porta) crevasse, which flooded out the Canarians on Bayou des Familles. The earlier crevasse had been leveed subsequently, but left a large pond. When Bell tried to fill the pond with a controlled break in the river levee, he caused a major crevasse instead.<sup>51</sup> The foreman at Mavis Grove heard about the crevasse on April 13, after he had observed that the water in the bayou was rising. From then until May 29, plantation hands worked day and night, strengthening the levees, manning the draining wheel, and eventually, as the back levees broke, building interior levees. When the last line of defense failed to contain the water, women, children, and livestock were taken to Grande Terre for the summer, while the men cut trees in the flooded swamps.<sup>52</sup> Bell's Crevasse and other crevasses in 1849-50 and 1891<sup>53</sup> caused total losses of the sugar crop.

Mavis Grove Plantation continued the production of sugar until 1883-84, when it drastically cut sugar production and started rice production. By 1892 the Plantation was the destination of a steamer<sup>54</sup> outing offered by A. Harvey, Jr., and was still planted in rice.

### The Economy and Technology of Sugar Plantations

The cultivation of sugar cane in Louisiana began as early as 1742 and continued on a small and relatively unsuccessful scale. Molasses and tafia (a fermented cane sugar drink) produced from these early efforts were sold mostly in Louisiana. Obstacles to the development of profitable sugar industry in Louisiana included a marginal climate, the

success of indigo plantations, domination of the market and skilled workers by the already well established sugar plantations of Saint Domingue (later known as Haiti), and a lack of sugar mill equipment.<sup>55</sup>

By the end of the eighteenth century, however, these difficulties were being overcome. In 1791 a slave rebellion on the French sugar islands devastated production, reduced world supplies, and raised prices. The rebellion also led to the immigration of planters and skilled sugar makers to Louisiana. Louisiana indigo suffered increasing losses to infestation and blights, culminating in 1794 with a complete failure of the crop for two or three successive years.<sup>56</sup> Etienne de Bore, an indigo planter faced with just such failure, decided to try producing sugar as early as 1793. Convinced that he could make the venture profitable if it were done on a large enough scale, de Bore planted a large amount of cane, hired an experienced sugar maker from St. Dominique, built a sugar mill, and irrigated his fields to ensure maturation before the killing frosts. In 1795 his venture worked, encouraging other planters to follow suit.<sup>57</sup> By 1797 the early maturing variety of cane, called Creole cane,<sup>58</sup> was being replaced by Otaheiti cane, which was more resistant to cold.

In Barataria, large landowners responded slowly to the promising developments in the sugar industry. The first documented sugar estates started in the 1820s, and many others did not start until the 1830s.<sup>59</sup> The delay can be attributed to the expensive investments necessary to develop a sugar plantation and the lack of significant earlier investments in the development of indigo plantations.

A sugar plantation required many improvements before sugar production could begin. First, because sugar cane requires fertile soil with good drainage, the planter drained the land.<sup>60</sup> Even though plantations were built on the highest and widest natural levees and barrier islands, they were subject to periodic inundation. A good road was built through the middle of the plantation with ditches on both sides. Additional parallel main ditches would be placed at intervals of about 1300 feet, and secondary roads would divide the fields perpendicular to the main ditches. The orientation of main ditches and roads was perpendicular to the bayou, enhancing the natural drainage of the land from the levee to the backswamp. The old drainage systems of the Christmas and Kinta plantations can still be seen today. Besides the main ditches which were perpendicular to bayous des Familles and Barataria, secondary ditches were placed between and parallel to the main ditches. The secondary ditches ran into feeder ditches which in turn drained into the main ditch. At the Christmas Plantation, the feeder ditches which were placed at one side of and parallel to Bayou des Familles. Drainage was toward the bayou. On Kinta Plantation, the secondary ditches drained parallel to Kinta Canal into a feeder ditch placed well back of the bayou and perpendicular to the bayou. The ditches drained toward the backswamp.

While ditches served primarily to drain rain quickly from the fields, levees kept back high tides and river crevasses, and they completely surrounded the fields. Keeping in mind that in order to

build a levee, a ditch was dug for construction material, main ditches paralleled the levees. The front levee on Mavis Grove Plantation was high enough to withstand a flood of 53 inches above the average high tide mark of Bayou Barataria, and must therefore have been between 4 and 5 feet high.<sup>61</sup>

Ditches and levees were not enough to keep the fields drained. Waterwheels drained the main ditches when the water outside the levees was higher than inside, and to hasten the removal of rainwater that fell faster than it drained naturally. Water wheels were as large as 26 feet in diameter, with buckets five feet wide.<sup>62</sup> They were placed on low brick walls next to or on the main ditches, and near either the front or back levees, depending on the drainage patterns of the area. For example, the Pecan Grove wheel was on the back levee, while the Christmas and Mavis Grove wheels were on the front levee on Bayous des Familles and Barataria, in either case, on the side closest to Lake Salvador, the catchment basin.<sup>63</sup> Like sugar mills, the wheels were probably turned by mule teams until the 1850s, when they were powered by steam engines. The water engine for the wheel at Mavis Grove was worth \$1200.<sup>64</sup>

After draining their fields, the planters cleared, plowed and planted them (Plate 10). Clearing may have been started during the colonial period, but removing stumps and breaking the levee soils proved a difficult task even in the nineteenth century, requiring teams of oxen or mules. The teams plowed parallel to the ditches and as deeply as possible, creating ridges that facilitated runoff. Between the 1820s and 1840s, the customary distance between rows changed from 2½4 feet apart to 67 feet. While narrow rows produced a heavier crop of cane, planters learned that it did not contain as much sugar, did not ripen as quickly, and required hoeing; while the wider rows could be cultivated with a plow. Planting consisted of laying canes of 2.5 to 4 feet length in one or two rows in each furrow, 3 to 4 inches deep, and 3 to 4 inches apart. Cane was usually planted in January and February and harvested from October through December. The same canes could be harvested for two or three years with decreasing yields. The least valuable cane was used for seed cane. Seed cane was kept over the winter in mats covered by dirt and planted in the spring,<sup>65</sup> although it was sometimes planted immediately after the fall harvest.

While planters could send their cane to a mill to produce sugar, most plantations were hard put to grind even their own cane in the short period between maturation and frost. At the beginning of the century, sugar mills were equipped with three vertical rollers driven by teams of animals, but by the 1820s, horizontal rollers driven by steam engines became available. This type of mill cost \$4,500 in 1831. The same building usually housed the mill and the evaporating kettles. Most mills were made of wood, but some of the larger ones were made of brick. Once the cane was squeezed between the rollers, the juice strained into two large vats, shallow rectangular boxes of cypress plans, which after 1830, were lined with copper or lead. From these the juice passed to the boiling room, where a series of usually four castiron evaporative

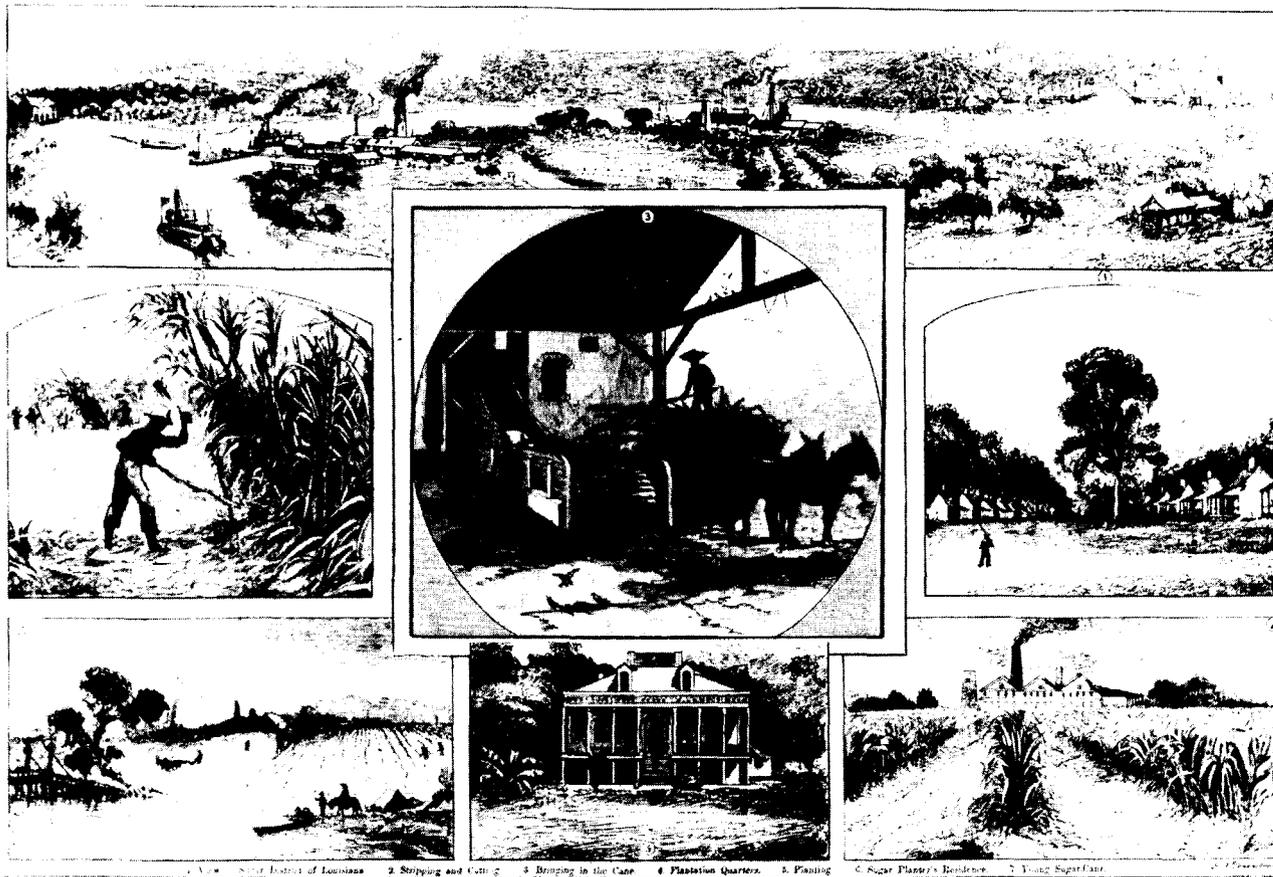


Plate 10. Sugar Plantations and Fields, Harper's Weekly (June 21, 1883)

kettles were set over a wood furnace and flue. In the industry's beginnings all kettles were open pans. Refinements were adopted after 1843, when Norbert Rilleux patented his improvement on the vacuum pan, developed in 1813 by an Englishman, but not widely used in Louisiana. Rilleux's apparatus, as it became known, used the steam generated from boiling in a vacuum for boiling the syrup in another pan. In 1843 the Rilleux apparatus and all its associated refining equipment cost \$51,000. As it passed from one kettle to the next, the syrup was further clarified and reduced until from the last and smallest kettle, it was "struck" that is, it was poured into cypress tanks, 6 to 7 feet long, 4 to 5 feet wide, and 12 to 14 inches deep to cool and crystalize. At least six and generally fourteen to sixteen such "coolers" were used in a mill, each containing four deposits from the smallest and last kettle. After granulation was complete, the sugar was transferred to hogsheads, which stood in a draining room over molasses cisterns made of cypress planks or bricks. Molasses drained through auger holes in the bottom of the hogshead for twenty to thirty days, when the hogshead would be filled again to make up the loss. Only then were they ready for shipment.<sup>66</sup>

In the barataria region, most sugar mill rollers were powered by steam by 1851. Andrew Hodge, Jr., owner of the Mavis Grove Plantation, was the first to acquire vacuum pans (probably Rilleux's apparatus) in 1855 or 1856, and by 1869, the Millaudon plantation, Estelle, also had them.<sup>67</sup> These two sugar mills were the only ones in the Barataria region that invested in Rilleux's apparatus. They were also the only ones built of brick. The Estelle Plantation sugar house had a shingle roof, and the Mavis Grove Plantation sugar house had a slate roof. All the other plantations had wooden sugar houses, steam rollers, and open kettles for evaporation of the syrup.

Before the Civil War, planters used slaves and some hired laborers. In 1840, 470 slaves lived in the Barataria region compared to 429 whites and 34 free persons-of-color. Eight-seven percent of the slave population (409 people) belonged to the seven plantation owners, and of those 345 were engaged in agriculture.<sup>68</sup> We can assume that the 64 non-agricultural plantation slaves worked in the planter's house or were skilled tradesmen. The price of field hands rose from about \$600 in the 1820s to \$1,200 to \$1,500 in the 1850s. Those with a trade could be sold for as high as \$2,000 to \$3,000.<sup>69</sup>

Because of the high price of slaves, planters were sometimes unwilling to risk them in difficult and unhealthy tasks such as ditching and clearing, and would sometimes hire white laborers. A common rate would be \$21 per acre for a ditch 12 feet wide and 4 feet deep. Also, in order to protect their investment in particularly costly machinery such as steam engines, planters would hire white engineers and carpenters. White overseers were also common, and would earn as much as \$1,000 per year.<sup>70</sup> In 1868 the Mavis Grove Plantation was run by an overseer who regularly hired white carpenters and masons, and at times even hired slaves from neighboring plantations.<sup>71</sup> The 1850 census of the Barataria region listed 53 laborers out of 179 adult free males. Where

there was no direct evidence that these men worked on the plantations, the census indicated that most of them had families, did not own land, and had come from France, Germany, Switzerland, Ireland, and England (fifty-seven percent), the eastern seaboard (seven percent), and Louisiana (thirty-six percent). They probably worked at least part-time on the plantations. As far as professionals and skilled workmen employed by the plantations, the census listed two planters, six overseers, sixteen carpenters, one engineer, one physician, three coopers, two bricklayers, three apprentices, two blacksmiths, one wheelright and two teachers who may or may not have been working on the plantations.<sup>72</sup> These figures indicate that fifty-one percent of the free adult males living in the Baratavia region were employed in some capacity by the plantations.

Besides labor, the planter needed buildings, tools, and livestock. In 1856, Mavis Grove Plantation inventoried houses for 156 slaves, an overseer's house, a house for the owner (whether or not he actually lived on the plantation), shops and tools for carpentry and ironworking, a sawmill with a steam engine, a grist mill, stables and outhouses, six doublesided plows, twenty singlesided plows, three harrows, eight wagons, eight horse carts, two ox carts, miscellaneous wheels and axles, one fire engine, one old barouche (one fourwheeled carriage), one light buggy wagon, one steam powered boat, seventy mules, four horses, two colts, ten oxen, six milk cows, sixteen cattle, sixty-five sheep, and fifteen goats. All together, the Andrew Hodge estate, consisting almost entirely of the Mavis Grove Plantation, was valued at \$226,914.61 in 1856.<sup>76</sup>

Plantation work followed a seasonal round dictated by the planting and harvesting of sugar cane. After the cane was planted in the late fall or early spring, the workers planted corn, then cultivated the cane about every ten days until the end of June or early July to keep down grass and weeds. From then until harvest in October, they cut and hauled wood from the swamps to the sugar house, built, repaired, and painted plantation structures; and harvested the corn and hay.<sup>74</sup> The steam engines required large quantities of wood for fuel, and lumber milled on the plantation was used for construction, or sold in New Orleans.<sup>75</sup>

Corn, food for slaves and mules, was often the most important secondary crop on the plantation. While the slaves may have been allowed to tend their own gardens, sugar plantations did not, as a rule, try to be selfsufficient.<sup>76</sup> Harvest and sugar making took place from October to December--the bust time of year. Slaves usually worked six days a week for their owners--except during these months, when they worked every day. On the Mavis Grove Plantation, slaves occasionally worked on Sundays in the slow seasons, "for their own account." This meant that the men were paid for their time, probably as credit against their purchases of small luxury items. During the busy season, if harvesting and sugar making were not done by Christmas, the slaves worked right through and celebrated their holy days when they were done. This was a time for relaxing and making merry.

## Demography and Settlement Patterns

There were 1,176 people living in the Barataria Region in 1850. In 1850 the manuscript census forms of the seventh United States census distinguished the Barataria region from the river settlements. Of 1,176 Baratarians, 504 were slaves, 15 were free people of color, and 657 were whites. Of the slaves, 428 (seventy-nine percent) were owned by plantation owners and lived on the plantation centers. In addition, about fifty-one percent of the adult free males worked full or part-time on the plantations. Some of these people--the overseers, planters, engineer, and physician--were closely tied to a plantation. If their families are added to the numbers of slaves living on plantations, approximately sixty-five percent of the total population of Barataria lived on the plantations.<sup>78</sup>

Table 2 lists the occupations of free adult males found in the 1850 census. Of the forty-nine percent of the men who were not working for the plantations, most were either hunters (twenty-five percent), farmers (eight percent), or men who worked on the water (nine percent). Also, some of the laborers, carpenters, and skilled tradesmen may not have worked full-time on the plantations, but at times, worked for themselves or for neighbors. Indeed, given what is known of the economic activities of the residents of Barataria in the twentieth century, everyone not actually living on a plantation was probably engaged in the full range of local subsistence activities. While some men might have identified themselves as hunters or farmers, all of them probably did some of both. Significantly, the basic occupations of the twentieth century were also pursued during the nineteenth.

Most of the people living outside of the plantations owned little land. Levee frontage which was not part of a plantation<sup>79</sup> was quickly subdivided within the family into lots of a few arpents. Besides Grand Isle, bayou frontage was available on the top half of Barataria Island; between Mavis Grove Plantation and the Drouet Plantation to the south, at Goose Bayou, and between Kinta and Inez plantations. The first area was to become the center of the town of Barataria, the second the center of the town of Lafitte, and the third was never subdivided.

Jean Manuel Perrin was typical of the small landowners of the Barataria region, who took advantage of whatever means of support was available to them. He owned a small 11-arpent tract of land on Bayou Barataria south of Mavis Grove Plantation, which he claimed by right of a Spanish grant. Perrin lived on this tract with his wife, Marie Euphrosene Pelleteau, and seven children until his death in 1837. The tract itself was valued at \$11,000. An inventory of his property at that time showed three beds, bedding, and a wardrobe, for a total value of \$19. The kitchen utensils, which were probably used over an open hearth, were worth \$6. The family kept four cows and calves, two heifers, two bulls, and one horse valued at \$20 to \$30 each. Perrin owned two slaves, together valued at \$1300. He had carpenter's tools worth \$2,543, agricultural tools worth \$6,<sup>80</sup> two pirogues and a canoe worth \$38, and two guns worth \$10 each. Evidently, he did a little

TABLE 2

Occupations of Free Adult Male Baratarians  
1850

Occupation	# of Individuals
Laborer	53
Hunter	45
Carpenter	16
Farmer	15
Fisherman	14
Overseer	6
Cooper	3
Apprentice	3
Planter	2
Bricklayer	2
Teacher	2
Blacksmith	2
Seaman	2
Pilot	1
Wheelwright	1
Engineer	1
Physician	1
Grocer	1
Other	9
Total Adult Males	179

fishing, hunting, and farming, as well as carpentry. His property was undoubtedly divided among his children when he died, starting a long process of subdivision which is still going on today.

### The Decline of the Sugar Plantations

Pierre Ernest Beauvais stopped sugar production at Christmas Plantation in 1884.<sup>81</sup> He was not able to successfully convert to rice production and in 1893 became indebted to Charles J. Brown, a Harvey storekeeper. Beauvais charged all his household and plantation goods to his account with Brown, the cost of shipping them on Harvey's steamers, cash advances for his own use, and cash wages for his laborers. In return for cash and goods, Brown got promises, as in Beauvais's letter of April 9, 1892:

Mr. Charles J. Brown

Dear Sir

Will you be kind enough to send me by return of Amelia Harvey the sum of two hundred dollars (\$200). This have been a big turn with me. I have planted 230 Arpents of rice and by Saturday will have it all leveed except the dams. I cant go up until next week I have 35 sacks of rice left-if any one down the bayou need it sell \$4 per sack. I have lost so much time with the teams, that I will stop at what I have planted it will make about 3000 sacks if everything work well.

Beauvais's expectations were not fulfilled, as he informed Brown in a letter of October 18, 1892:

I am just through threshing and I am sorry to tell you I have but 749 sacks about 800 bushels. I expected when I took the sacks I would have 1200 but the stalks deceived me their was no rice in them all shucks....

I commenced to holl [haul, hull?] it this morning and cant go up this morning therefore you will send me by tomorrow's boat

25 lbs white beans  
50 lbs meat  
and \$158.50  
and \$ 25.00  
\$183.50

The threshing has cost bed and board. It will cost to hall it to the bayou. Please send this \$100 in tens, \$50 in fives, and balance in smaller denominations and change. The rice have red rice in it, considerable wigle tails, but otherwise properly saved no (illegible) no must and dont want none charge against it.

Your P. E. Beauvais

Be sure to count that money right for there  
isnt a cent over what is needed to pay off.

P. E. B.

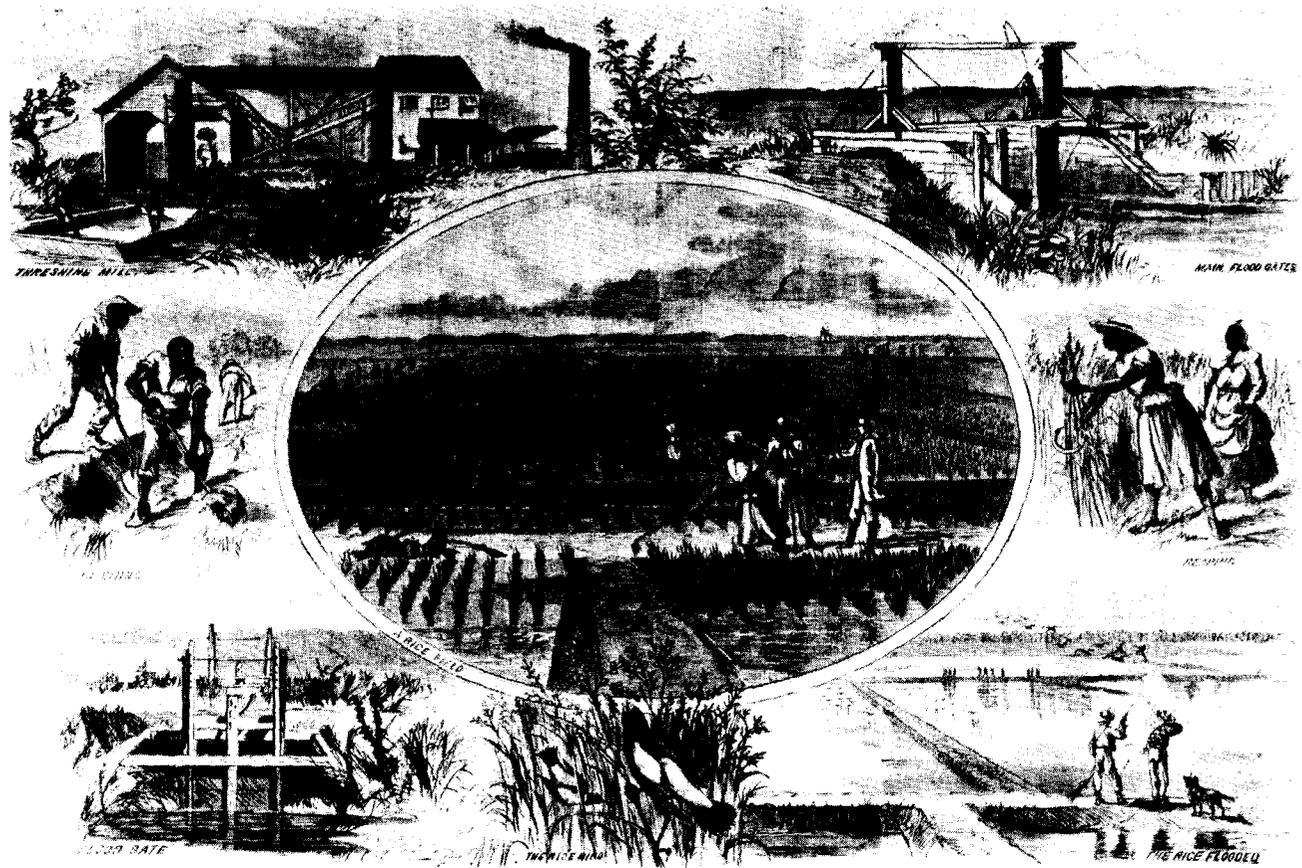
I am going to send back the 251 sacks left.

Brown took Beauvais to court in 1893 to make good his debt, and in 1895 he was ordered to pay. Instead, Beauvais mortgaged his plantation to Brown,<sup>82</sup> who eventually operated it out of the old Estelle plantation.<sup>83</sup>

Pierre Beauvais was not the only planter in trouble. Nearly all the planters of Barataria switched to rice after 1884 (Plate 11)<sup>84</sup> evidently suffering difficulties in the early 1880s which led them to experiment with a new crop. They were not very successful, and by the end of the century, most of them were dead or bankrupt.<sup>85</sup>

Why the Barataria plantations failed at this time is unknown. Louisiana sugar production continued to grow until 1904, when it began to decline because of poor weather and disease stemming from poor cultivation practices.<sup>86</sup> By that time, however, the sugar industry in Barataria had already been dead for twenty years. Labor difficulties originating from the social chaos of the postCivil War era were certainly a problem, but sharecropping replaced slavery, and by the 1870s sugar production surpassed the prewar records.<sup>87</sup> Crevasses may have pushed uncertain accounts well into the red. In 1891 the Ames Crevasse created major flooding in the area, and the plantations on the west side of Bayou des Familles were probably hard hit. But this cannot be the whole story: for unknown reasons, many of the Barataria plantations had already switched to rice in 1884.

What is clear is that a way of life was ending. As the plantations died, their dependent populations dispersed, some to the small communities of Barataria and Lafitte, others to the city. The small-scale farmer became more prominent, if only because his commercially oriented neighbors were no longer overshadowing him. A variety of activities-hunting, farming, and fishing continued to serve the local residents well. Also, parttime wage labor was becoming increasingly available in logging and shrimping, growing rural industries at the end of the century.



RICE CULTURE ON THE OGECHIEF, NEAR SAVANNAH, GEORGIA.—Engraved by A. R. WALL.—[See Page 5.]

Plate 11. Rice Fields  
Harper's Weekly (January 5, 1861)

ENDNOTES CHAPTER IV

1. For the two most complete biographies of John McDonogh, see Arthur H. Nuhrah, "John McDonogh: Man of Many Facets" Louisiana Historical Quarterly 33 (1950), 5-144; and William Allan, Life and Work of John McDonogh (1886; reprint, Metairie, LA: Jefferson Parish Historical Commission, 1983).
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8. *Ibid.*, 44-52.
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11. Allou d'Hemecourt, Apr. 13, 1835, New Orleans Notarial Archives book 66, folio 18. This gives the location of Pelteau concession, which once was given to the Canary Islanders.
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37. E. G. Gottschalk, Nov. 11, 1865, Mar. 7, 1867, and Nov. 20, 1865, New Orleans Notarial Acts.
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55. J. Carlyle Sitterson, Sugar Country: The Cane Sugar Industry in the South (Louisville: University of Kentucky Press, 1953), 78.
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60. Sitterson, Sugar Country, 113-114.
61. "Mavis Grove Plantation," May 29, 1858.
62. Sitterson, Sugar Country, 129.
63. The Pecan Grove and Christmas Plantation waterwheels were located with field checks. The Mavis Grove waterwheel has not been located, but the plantation journal mentioned it was on Bayou Baratavia.
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67. Champomier, Statement of the Sugar Crops (1851-56); Bouchereau, Statement of the Sugar and Rice Crops (1869). See also subsequent statements for 1869-1892.
68. The seven plantation owners in 1840 were P. C. Osborne, C. Delery (previously Boisclair and Villars), the Commagere brothers, J. Davis, Forstall (previously Moussiere), and H. L. Bennett. The Drouet brothers had not yet established their plantation. Bureau of the Census, "Sixth Census of the United States," 1840, RG29, NA. Champomier, Statement of the Sugar Crops (1844).
69. Sitterson, Sugar Country, 61.
70. Ibid., 55-67.
71. "Mavis Grove Plantation."
72. Bureau of the Census "Seventh Census of the United States," 1850, RG29, NA.
73. J. B. G. Arnoult, Aug. 2, 1886, Jefferson Parish Notarial Archives, book 26, folio 31.
74. Sitterson, Sugar Country, 112-227. See also "Mavis Grove Plantation," 1856-1859, for a wealth of data on the number of hands at each sort of daily task.
75. See the Mavis Grove Plantation inventory, J. B. G. Arnoult, Aug. 2, 1886, Jefferson Parish Notarial Archives, book 26, folio 31, for several entries concerning saw mills and steam engines for driving them; and the New Orleans Times, Dec. 15, 1864, for a description of the Pecan Grove Plantation, which featured a sawmill "sawing from four to six thousand feet of lumber daily."
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83. Odom, interview.
84. Bouchereau, Statement of the Sugar and Rice Crops (1884).
85. Marx Levy and Brother vs. Henry Chapron, July 19, 1886, Jefferson Parish Court Records, 26th Judicial District Court, docket 607.
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## CHAPTER V THE MAKING OF MODERN BARATARIA

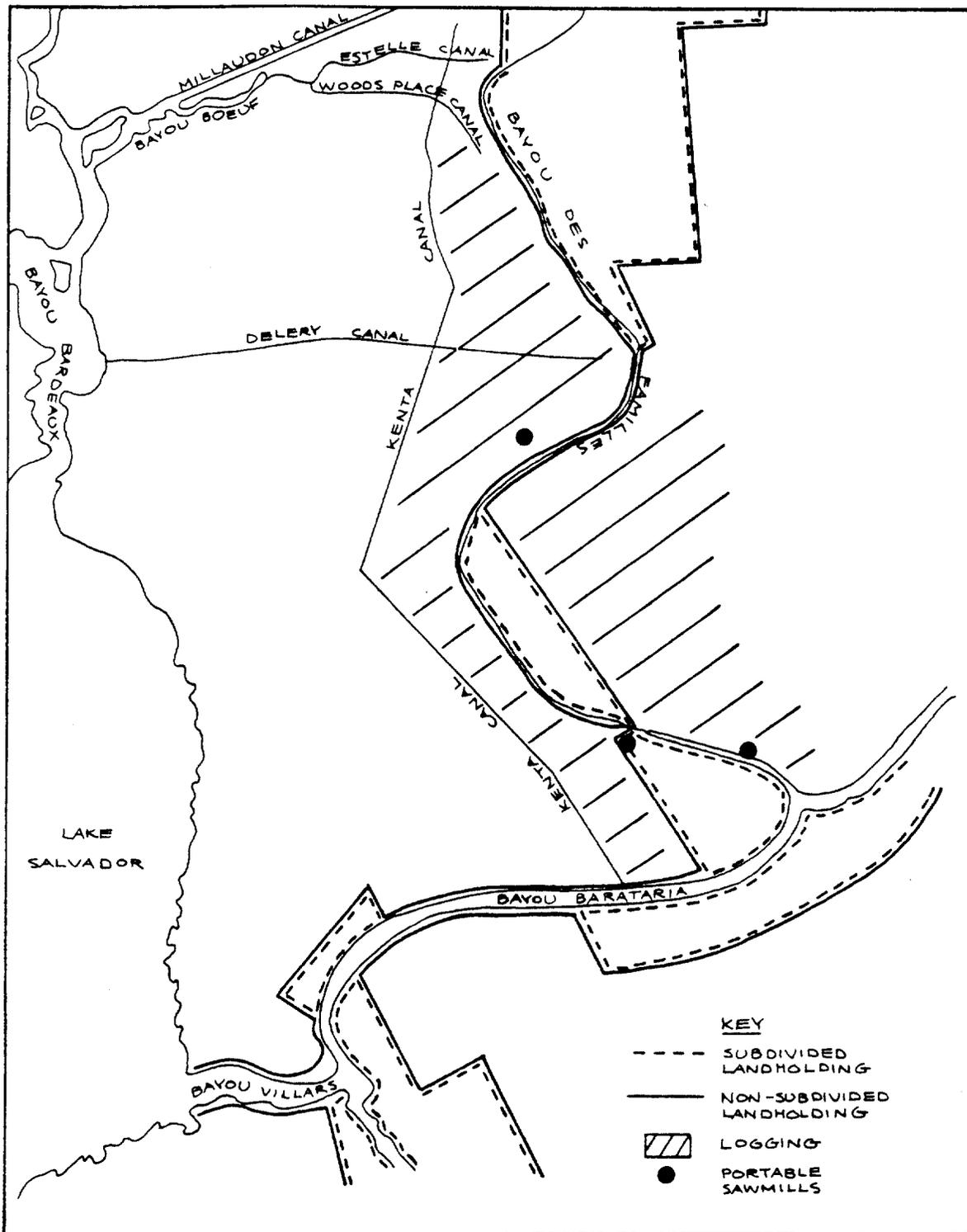
### Introduction

With the decline in large agricultural enterprises toward the end of the nineteenth century, landuse patterns in the Barataria Basin changed dramatically (Map 7). Old plantations as well as vast acres of swamp and marsh were bought by partnerships or corporations known as land companies. The companies subdivided and sold house lots along the natural levees in the communities of Crown Point, Barataria and Lafitte. While sections along Bayou Barataria had been subdivided in the nineteenth century, notably on Barataria Island (also known as Boutte's Island), additional land was opened up for small landowners at Crown Point, in 1915,<sup>1</sup> across Bayou Barataria, at the same time on Rosethorne Road,<sup>2</sup> at Estelle shortly after 1918,<sup>3</sup> on the Christmas Plantation in the teens,<sup>4</sup> and at Isle Bonne in the 1920s.<sup>5</sup>

Not all the subdivided levee land sold, and much of it was left uncultivated and in large lots. The land companies leased the vacant levee land to farmers who ran cattle on pastures that had once been sugar cane fields.<sup>6</sup> Some of the levee land was bought and used for country homes or rural retreats, such as the Kinta Plantation and several of the lots on the old Christmas Plantation. The land companies often held on to the land for its resources, but were unwilling to develop them. Therefore, multiple leases were common. The levee was leased for pasture, the swamp for timber, the marsh for oil development as well as trapping and duck shooting, and lots on canal spoil banks for fishing camps.

A case in point is the Louisiana Land and Exploration Company (the LL&E), currently the largest private landowners in the park core area and protection zone. Over 1,250 square miles the company owns in the Mississippi delta, 95% of which is marsh. All of the property is open to the public at no charge for fishing. The company owns and maintains about 360 weirs to benefit the fish, furbearing animals, and waterfowl on their lands. Trapping leases range from 300 to 1,280 acres, and fees are based on a percentage of the fur harvest for the year. Waterfowl leases range from 40 to 460 acres; fees from \$100 to \$200 per year. The company leases about 900 campsites: about seventy percent for recreational fishermen, fifteen percent for hunters, and the remainder for trappers or commercial fishermen. Rent for a camp ranges from \$25 to \$50 per year.<sup>8</sup>

In the twentieth century, land ownership followed the early pattern of large and small holdings. For the most part, large landholders were absentee corporations unwilling to invest much in improvements. The small landholder was the local fisherman-trapper-hunter, practising a varied economic strategy based on local subsistence and a cash market in New Orleans.



Map 7. Subdivisions, large land holdings, and logging areas of the Twentieth Century.

## Lumbering

Cutting the hardwood oak forests and cypress swamps was an important enterprise during the colonial era in terms of both lumber and cleared land. Cypress logging had supplied the plantations with timber and fuel, but in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Louisiana cypress logging industry experienced an unprecedented commercial boom. The suddenness and magnitude of the boom were caused by a combination of factors, which occurred simultaneously: the availability of timber leases; growing public demand for cypress outside of Louisiana; the building of railroads, providing cheap transportation; and the availability of labor that came with the decline of the plantations.

Cypress grow very straight and tall, up to 120 feet high and 40 feet in circumference above the conical base. The wood is soft and easy to work, but resistant to rot and very durable under water. For this reason it has always been popular in the south for boats, jetties, buildings, and coffins. The tree grows slowly and is long-lived; individual specimens may be as much as 1,300 years old.<sup>9</sup> Cypress also grow in very dense, almost pure stands, of which the upper swamps of the Barataria Basin are a prime example.

Ownership of the cypress lands in Louisiana was not settled until the second half of the nineteenth century. Landowners of bayou or river frontage typically owned a 40 arpent depth back from the river. Behind the 40 arpent line, as it became known, the land was owned by the federal government and surveyed according to the regular one-mile by one-mile section system to prepare for its eventual disposition by Congress. The process of surveying these lands was not complete until the early 1850s, but in 1849, Congress gave all swamp and overflowed lands to the state for eventual resale, with the provision that the proceeds be used for draining and leveeing them. Congress intended to make the flooded land suitable for homesteading by small farmers, but instead, state and local levee boards sold large tracts to private concerns, who bought them for their timber.<sup>10</sup> The outbreak of the Civil War halted any largescale development of these tracts until 1866, when Congress repeated its homesteading provision. Homestead law allowed allotments of 160 acres--too small to be profitable in agriculturally marginal (swamp) land, and certainly too small for large-scale lumbering enterprises. Conceding to southern interests, The Timber Act of 1876 paved the way for large-scale sales of timber lands at very cheap prices, thwarting both the prewar and postwar efforts of Congress to open up the cypress swamps to small-scale homesteaders.

The railroads were crucial to the development of the lumber industry. While waterways provided the primary route from the stump to the mill, railroads transported the cut lumber across the country. The first railroad on the west bank--the "New Orleans, Opelousas, and Great Western Railroad"--started in Algiers in 1852, and by 1856 stretched 66 miles. The Civil War interrupted further work on the line.<sup>11</sup> It was

not until the 1870s the rail lines of New Orleans became integrated into the national railway network.<sup>12</sup>

The lumbering industry was operated out of camps built in the deep swamps. These camps consisted of a communal dining hall, a commissary, and quarters for the laborers, and overseers. The accommodations were in boats or shacks on pilings,<sup>13</sup> depending partly on the size of the operation and partly on the technology used to remove the cut logs. The camps drew laborers to the area, probably share croppers from up north looking for more lucrative employment.<sup>14</sup>

Before the invention of the pullboat, the industry relied on the natural rise of the water in the swamp from the spring flood to float the cut logs to the bayous and waterways, so the work was limited by the number of logs which could be floated in any particular season. In 1889 the invention of the pullboat removed this limitation. The pullboat consisted of a steam engine mounted on a boat stationed at the head of a deadend canal. The engine operated a winch with a chain with two working ends. A log was prepared by felling, trimming the branches, wrapping a metal cone on the front end to facilitate dragging, and placing plugs at the sides. A chain was attached to the plugs and pulled to the winch while the other end was pulled out to be attached to another log.<sup>15</sup> Logs were dropped in the deadend canal and gathered together in rafts to be pulled to the mill. Camps in boats would be established at the end of the deadend canal, and as the area around the pullboat was logged (at first a halfmile diameter, later 3,000 feet) another deadend canal was dug, and pullboat and camp moved. This system was refined in 1892 with the introduction of the railway and aerial skidder.<sup>16</sup> Attached to tree tops, an aerial cable lifted the logs to the end of a railway line. The logs were placed in cars and moved to a canal or river. With cables and railway lines, camp could be more permanently established at the junction of the railway and main waterway.

Camp laborers were divided according to their tasks. "Deadeners" who killed the trees the previous season; riggers, who attached the logs to the cables or chains; waders who dropped the logs in the cars, the engineer, the engineer's helpers, the clerk-cook, and the foreman were all of European descent. The "fallers" cut the deaderied trees, and were all blacks.<sup>17</sup> A large camp might consist of eighty blacks and six whites.

In 1889 Joseph Rathborne founded the Louisiana Cypress Lumber Company, a sawmill on the Harvey Canal, which remained open until 1929.<sup>18</sup> The company pioneered the use of the pullboat, and dominated the market for logs coming up Bayou Baratavia from the upper Baratavia Basin swamps. Log rafts bound for the mill would at times completely fill the canal for half a mile.<sup>19</sup> The firm also introduced the bandsaw in 1889, surpassing the production of the earlier steam circular saw. By 1897 a trade journal for the southern lumber industry called the Louisiana Cypress Lumber Company the largest cypress mill in the world.<sup>20</sup>

Pullboat logging left distinctive radiating scars from logs being pulled across the swamp landscape. Such scars can be found in the swamps on the west side of Bayou des Familles within the core area and protection zone. Short, dead-end canals reaching from Kenta Canal into the swamp can be found at regular intervals. Kenta Canal itself parallels the swamp's boundary, connecting the dead-ends to Bayou Barataria. At the end of the dead-ends, traces of radiating lines left from pullboat draglines can also be seen. Numerous stumps of large cypress trees also provide evidence of logging.

The lumber industry declined after World War II, when demand fell off. The decline worsened when the resource became exhausted, and few large trees were left to be cut. Small, portable mills built of surplus army equipment replaced the large sawmills.<sup>21</sup> These mills were placed on bayous or near roads: the mills were moved to the trees rather than the other way around. Portable sawmills stayed in one place for several years. There were three in the park's vicinity: one just north of the core area boundary, one just south, and one behind Crownpoint on Bayou des Familles. These mills cut trees that had been passed over during the cypress logging boom.

### Stilt Villages

The waters of the basin were also subject to large-scale harvesting. By the end of the nineteenth century, shrimping became a big business controlled by a few individuals. For example, about 1914 a seining company owned several luggers which seined for shrimp in the lower basin. In seining, men half-immersed in water dragged nets along the shallow banks of the bay (Plate 12). The boats and their crews camped at the little settlements ringing Barataria Bay and as far north as Clark Cheniere in Little Lake. Labor was often obtained through a system of indenture. Newly arrived immigrants to New Orleans were offered a chance to earn quick cash through part ownership of a boat. Once signed on, they fed and clothed themselves from the company stores, and the company's boat captain sold their portion of the catch. Their earnings never equaled their debts, and after<sup>22</sup> the sale of a catch, liquor effectively kept them in debt servitude.

The shrimp fishermen living in the stilt villages on the east side of Barataria Bay probably led a more secure life. The villages were built during the nineteenth century and inhabited through the first decades of the twentieth.<sup>23</sup> What little is known about life in the stilt villages suggests they were run much like logging camps. Manila village consisted of a wooden platform about an acre large, surrounded by the houses of the fishermen. There was a company store, which had a post office. The shrimp catch was sundried on the platform. After drying, the inhabitants of the camp would "dance the shrimp" (Plate 13)--or walk on them to remove the hulls. The cleaned and dried shrimp were sold in China. The village, the seining operation, the store, and the marketing operation were all owned by the Quong Sun concern, which owned and operated at least one other stilt village as well. The laborers were Philipinos, Chinese, other Asians, and American Indians;



Plate 12. Shrimp Seiners in Little Lake.  
Charles Tenney Jackson, The Fountain of Youth (New York: Outing  
Publishing Co., 1914)



Plate 13. Dancing the Shrimp.  
Frank E. Schoonover, Harper's Monthly Magazine  
(December, 1911)

but the camp cook, store clerk, and general handymen were residents of the area or recent European immigrants. Because work was seasonal, the village was almost deserted in the offseason. Unmarried men lived in bunkhouses, but some lived in separate houses with their families<sup>24</sup> and may have been more permanently based.

### Agriculture

Once the valuable timber was cut from the swamps, the land companies were faced with the question of what to do with their property. When conservationists learned that cypress grows only about half an inch in diameter each year and that it would take between seventy-five to one hundred years to harvest a second cut of timber from a replanted area, thoughts turned to reclamation of swamp lands for cultivation. The plan required the building of levees and the installation of pumps to enclose the land and drain it. Typically, areas of up to four sections (2,560 acres) of land were enclosed. Funding for the projects was obtained easily because the state bonded such projects for extended periods.<sup>25</sup> Local farmers did not trust these farmlands, however, and the developers sold most of their new land to farmers from the Midwest:

They were from Kalamazoo, and they were trying to reclaim 3,000 acres of wet land. . . They were waiting for the cattle which they were going to run on their holdings to kill the "piene grass" for a year or two, until they began cultivation. Several other Northerners had settled about, and the company was working to drain all the small lakes to make available the land beyond "the forty arpent line". . . However, Yankee capital was doing wonders on the black, rich swamp soil. The gentlemen took us in a launch the next day to show us how their pumping plant worked to drain the lowlands. It would remove the rainfall at the rate of two million gallons an hour from the main ditch. Into this field laterals led the water, and we were told that the pump would drain off a fourinch rain in 24 hours and leave the prairie dry enough to plow the next day. . . The newcomers had great hopes of peppermint as a crop.

Potatoes, corn, onions, tomatoes - all were flourishing fabulously.<sup>26</sup> Unfortunately, the drained fields were not practical. Loss of water volume in the soil caused the ground to sink significantly lower than the surrounding swamps and marshes, and soil fertility declined dramatically after the first few years. The plots were abandoned. Storms and hurricanes caused breaks in the levee systems, which eventually enclosed vast, shallow lakes. In 1984, large, rectangular lakes are a conspicuous feature of the delta. There are at least five such flooded areas in the basin. One, referred to as "The Pen" is located just southeast of the town of Lafitte, and local residents can still remember tall corn growing there.<sup>27</sup>

Small-scale agriculture continued on the levees. Cattle and dairy cows were pastured on land rented from the landholding companies. Small farmers continued to grow a variety of vegetable crops for subsistence or marketing in New Orleans, and often planted a few acres in a cash

crop such as sugar. Almost all of the farmers were locals of European descent, although a few black people also took up farming on their own land or as tenants. Through time, the number and size of farms continued to decline. While cattle and market gardening have remained important, dairy farming has declined. Agricultural census data established these trends for all of Jefferson Parish. Because the east bank of the parish was becoming rapidly industrialized in the twentieth century, the parish-wide agricultural data can be taken as representative of the west bank, including Barataria.

In 1930 there were 243 farms in Jefferson Parish, 227 operated by whites and 16 by blacks. Only 140 of the farmers were full or part owners, the rest were tenant farmers. The average farm cultivated only 62.2 acres, and over half of them cultivated under 20 acres.<sup>28</sup> Of the total, 103 were dairy farms, 90 were truck farms, and the rest were unclassified (841). On the average, truck farmers owned more land than dairy farmers: 78 acres and 30 acres, respectively (841). The Farms of the eight farmers owning the largest average acreage specialized in crops other than cotton (841), but less than 1/3 (841) of the land was planted. Of that, most was planted in corn, none of it in rice, and very little in sugar cane (1244). The few larger agricultural holdings were barely productive, as half of them made under \$1,500 per year (875).

Only 68 farms existed in Jefferson Parish in 1978, with an average acreage of 117 acres, mainly pasture and woods. Garden crops and cattle were the most lucrative products of the Jefferson Parish farms (310). Fifty-one of the farm operators were full or part owners, while only 17 were tenants, and most of the farms were run by families. However, farming was not the principal occupation for most operators, who spent over 150 work days per year away from the farm. Clearly, farming had for the most part become a minor, although persistent, occupation for the Baratarians. While many of these farmers owned their own fields (311), most of them did not even live there, probably having chosen to live in the suburbs of New Orleans. Farming was done for cash, not just subsistence, but contributed only a minor portion of the family's income. However, it did represent a continuing commitment to economic diversity, whereby a family could maintain its options, utilizing them at different times and to a greater or lesser degree.

#### Hunting, Gathering, Fishing, and Trapping

Throughout the twentieth century, residents of the basin continued to hunt, gather wild resources, fish, and trap. The most important resources were muskrats, nutria, catfish and other kinds of fish, shrimp, crabs, oysters, Spanish moss, ducks, deer, and alligator.

The large market for Louisiana furs did not exist before 1900. At that time, a growing demand for fur coats in the United States led to the exhaustion of traditional animal populations, as well as demand for cheaper furs.<sup>29</sup> This coincided with an explosion of the muskrat population caused indirectly by overhunting of alligators. Alligator

skins were a prized commodity in the nineteenth century. As the alligator population decreased, drastic hunting measures, such as burning marsh vegetation were taken. Burning favored a sub-climax plant, the threecornered sedge, the favorite food of muskrats, and consequently, the muskrat population boomed.

The value of muskrat pelts varied from 5 to 10 cents a pelt in the early days to 5 to 8 dollars a pelt in the late 1970s.<sup>30</sup> The annual catch also varied greatly, ranging within a five year period from half a million to close to seven million pelts statewide.<sup>31</sup> Consequently, income from muskrat trapping varied greatly. The third decade of the century is remembered as the halcyon age of muskrat trapping, and relative prosperity prevailed in the rural areas of the delta.<sup>32</sup>

The growing value of muskrat pelts caused increased concern for property rights in the marsh. Except for the shortlived agricultural reclamation projects, the marsh had not previously been considered of much value. Local residents were used to hunting in the marsh as they saw fit, without regard to the large landowners, but in the 20s and 30s the situation changed. Trappers took out trapping leases from the landowners, excluding one another from areas defined in writing. They also dug shallow ditches called trenasses to allow their pirogues to pass through the marsh grasses, and seasonal camps. Trappers bought and sold trapping and camping leases freely among themselves.

Trapping practices changed soon after the introduction of the nutria in 1938 and its spread throughout the state in the early 1940s. Native to the marshes of South America, nutria are larger than muskrats, and their pelt has about the same value. With few natural predators, the growing nutria population crowded the muskrat population. However, the two animals prefer slightly different habitats (muskrats prefer brackish marsh and nutria prefer fresh marsh), so that with the stabilization of the nutria population, competition may be minimized.<sup>33</sup> Today, about five times more nutria are caught than muskrats.

Commercial fishermen from the upper Mississippi River system introduced many of the fishing techniques used in the Mississippi delta in the late nineteenth century.<sup>34</sup> A great variety of techniques were used in the beginning of the twentieth century, including hooks on line, hoop nets, gill nets, seines, and traps.<sup>35</sup> Catfish were and still are an important market fish and many other types were caught with traps and hooks and lines for the fisherman's own table. The introduction of plastic twine and plastic netting greatly increased the life of nets and cut down on the labor invested in them. Nevertheless, small nets were becoming less popular in the 1980s.

The shrimp industry changed dramatically from the twentieth century. The earlier industry operated from stilt villages and depended on fleets of boats with well-organized crews. Fisherman located the shrimp near the marshes and shores by casting small nets from the back of a sailboat. When they found a school, they let out a seine over 1,500 feet long and a crew of about six men stood in the mud and water

to draw it in. The catch was lifted into the ship with a dip net.<sup>36</sup> Local Baratarians shrimped on a smaller scale, with a small seine deployed from a handrowed skiff.<sup>37</sup> A decline in the foreign dried shrimp market and an increasing demand for fresh shrimp in the United States led to the local development of new technology, which became accessible to most of the residents of Barataria. Power boats and canning factories were two manifestations of this change.

A variety of boats were used for shrimping. Luggers evolved from a sailing vessel and were probably introduced by the Dalmation oystermen of Plaquemines Parish. Lafitte skiffs, designed as shrimpers, were developed in Lafitte. Both of these power boats had shallow drafts and were designed for trawling in the inland bays and waterways, but Lafitte skiffs were far more versatile. Both were used with otter trawls deployed over the back, or butterfly nets used over the sides. Introduced from the east coast between 1915 and 1918, the otter trawl was designed to scour the bottom, and used with power motors, allowed daytime shrimp fishing in waters of 30 to 80 feet deep.<sup>38</sup> In use by 1936, butterfly nets were used at night to catch shrimp near the surface of the water.<sup>39</sup> Trawlers worked the inshore bay and lakes. They did not necessarily return to port after a day's work, sometimes unloading their catch on ice boats whose owners<sup>40</sup> acted as middlemen between the fishermen and markets in New Orleans.

To meet the growing domestic demand, shrimp canning factories were established. The Southern Shell Fish Cannery was established in 1915 in Harvey, and was followed by others in Westwego.<sup>41</sup> The industry also expanded to offshore fishing. Large, deepdraft vessels introduced from Florida in 1938 trawled the larger shrimp of the coastal waters, and were capable of making trips of several weeks duration.<sup>42</sup> Despite increasing investment in offshore shrimping and the possibility of greater profits, inshore shrimp, easily available to local residents, remained an important part of the catch. Many people built their own power skiffs and worked the inshore waters with a member of the family. The work schedule, day or night, one day at a time, was still flexible enough to allow other occupations.

The blue crab fishery also experienced important changes. At the beginning of the twentieth century, fishermen caught crabs on baited hooks hung from long lines in the fresh water lakes and collected them in pirogues or small handrowed skiffs. Baited crab traps, deployed from a power vessel, were introduced in the first half of the twentieth century. A commercial fisherman might have several hundred such traps; a subsistence or recreational fisherman perhaps ten or twenty.

Crabs shed their shells periodically, and those that had done so recently brought a high price in New Orleans. Soft shell crab, as they are known, were only caught by chance at the beginning of the twentieth century, but by separating crabs that were in the process of shedding in submerged boxes until the process was complete, the soft-shell catch could be improved. This practice continued throughout the century. In 1931, Barataria residents discovered a technique for catching just

soft-shell crabs. Branches of wax myrtle, known locally as seria, were placed leaf-side down in the shallow waters of Lake Salvador. Molting crabs would seek the shelter of the leaves and cling to the branch when it was lifted out of the water, enabling fishermen to shake them into pirogues or hand-rowed skiffs. Since the technique required little more than an investment of time, it was quickly adopted by people of all ages and sexes. The daily catch was brought to middleman buyers, one of whom operated the Fleming Canal Store. In 1938 it was estimated that over 300 families, or close to two-thirds of the people in Crownpoint, Barataria, and Lafitte earned the major portion of their cash income from soft-shell crabbing.<sup>43</sup>

Oysters were being harvested in Barataria Bay as early as 1834 and taken to New Orleans for sale. Before oyster cultivation was introduced on the west side of the Mississippi River by Dalmatian immigrants in the 1860s, oysters grew in scattered locations making their collection more difficult and less profitable. It is not known when oyster cultivation was introduced to Barataria Basin, but by 1940, fisherman had fully developed the lower portions of the basin. They established camps in the lower brackish water lakes and bays, leased suitable underwater beds from the parish, and at times even guarded their leases from poachers. An oyster fisherman also needed a powered lugger which would haul three or more flatboats or skiffs. From planting until marketing, oysters were handled between nine and eighteen times. The fisherman moved his oysters from bed to bed on the skiffs over a two year period in order to promote fast growth from seed oysters to mature adults and give them a properly salty final taste. The fisherman commonly hired help to move his oysters, or relied on extra hands from his family.<sup>44</sup>

Indians, colonial settlers, and later residents used Spanish moss for stuffing and building material. The commercial collection and marketing of moss developed toward the end of the nineteenth century and reached its peak in the 1930s when it began to be processed with modern cotton ginning methods.<sup>45</sup> During the Depression, the collection of moss was another important source of cash, requiring nothing more than a hand-rowed skiff, sometimes with scaffolding added, and a long pole. Once the moss was picked, it was stacked in piles to rot the tough outer fiber, sun-cured or dried industrially, and ginned to remove the outer fiber and other foreign matter. There were four moss gins in Jefferson Parish in 1939 and one at Barataria in 1943,<sup>46</sup> the latter on the north side of Bayou Barataria between Waggoner Bridge and the Isle Bonne subdivision. To an extremely limited degree, pillows and chairs continued to be stuffed with moss into the 1980s, but a market no longer exists, and today it is hardly used even in the home.

Ducks, deer, alligators, and many types of small game have been hunted throughout the twentieth century for home consumption. Ducks and alligator hides have had commercial value, but declining populations and the steadily increasing stringency of game laws have limited their cash importance since the 1940s. Hunting does not require any investment other than a gun and ammunition, and can be done individually or in small groups.

Camps built and used by family groups have been an important aspect of life in the basin during the twentieth century. In contrast to the largescale logging camps and shrimping villages, family camps were small, and organized around an extended family. Consisting of both houseboats and houses built on stilts, camps were built to pool labor during the heavy season of any particular resource and to allow families to live together near hard-to-reach resources. Camps were typically accessible only by boat, and even today many do not have electricity. Families moved to their camp every year in season, depending on the availability of the resource. The following 1941 description of camp life would apply to the Barataria Basin, as well as the rest of the delta:

During the trapping season, the whole family leaves home to spend the time at a camp far away in the marshes. These camps are either ramshackle huts or houseboats. If it is a hut, it is located on the bank of a bayou or lake to make it of easy access to fur buyers and the family's own boat which is used to procure supplies. The typical hut contains only two rooms, one of which combines all the features of a kitchen, dining room, living room and bedroom. The other room is used as a bedroom. The whole family is crowded into these two rooms, which are small at best, while hung from the ceiling are row on row of skins stretched on frames to dry. A woodstove is used for both cooking and heating. Both beds and bunks are used for sleeping, with the children crowded three or four to a bed. A houseboat is merely a hut on a small barge. A slip for the boat is dug into the bank and it is tied to stakes driven into the ground.

The family moves into their dwellings a week or two before the trapping season opens to get things in readiness. All take a hand in looking over the traps and the pelt stretchers, repairing them if necessary. When the season starts, each member of the family has an appointed task. The husband and the boys set out traps and then run the lines. Even the very small boys run a trap line of their own near the camp. When the day's catch is brought home, the women and girls skin the animals, run the skins through a clothes wringer to remove any bits of flesh and moisture that remains, and place the pelts on stretchers. While the men are away from the camp, the womenfolk keep the camp clean and prepare the meals. This routine is followed every day of the trapping season, being interrupted only by a trip back to the settlement to celebrate Christmas and a rare day off to buy supplies at the nearest store. To learn trapping lore, the younger boys go along with their father to see what signs to look for, where to

set the traps, how to set the traps, etc. When the boy is old enough to take care of himself, he is allowed to run a trap line by himself. In the camp, the girls help the mother with the household tasks and are taught the proper way of skinning an animal, a most important lesson because a damaged skin will bring only a fraction of what it would otherwise be worth. When the boys become old enough they may be given a share of the season's catch, and in time -- usually between the ages of eighteen and twenty-one -- they become full partners with the father. This partnership often times endures for life. The girls, however, are not so treated. They receive their food and clothing, and a little spending money on occasion: nothing more. To repeat, it is a man's world.

Although camps were placed in relatively inaccessible areas, they were not totally isolated. During certain seasons, such as winter in the trapping area, or summer in the fishing areas, several families would be found in the same vicinity, taking advantage of prime conditions. Camps were often placed for ease of communication, on the same route, if not the same spots. For example, fifty years ago, houseboats were commonly moored along the bayous emptying into Lake Salvador and camps built on slightly elevated shell beaches or mounds around the lake. Floating stores supplied these camps with groceries and bought their produce.

In the 1980s, camp life has changed considerably from what it was forty years ago. Power boats have made the leases more easily accessible, so that frequent short visits are feasible. In many families, the older generation continued to trap or fish while young people worked for wages in the city. The work pattern seemed to indicate that wage work was replacing the old trapping and fishing pursuits, but this was not entirely the case. Many older Baratarians also lived and worked in suburban and industrial corridors of the west bank of the Mississippi River in the 1940s, 50s, and 60s and retired to family homes in Barataria to fish and make frequent use of their camps. Even their children who lived in suburbia switched easily from commercial fishing to wage work and back again, depending on the fish market and the availability of jobs. The family camps became recreational centers and provided a point of continuity--a place where the skills were passed from one generation to the next. Today, these skills continue to provide primary sources of income or auxiliary sources of family food.

#### Projects of the United States Army Corps of Engineers

Under the direction of the Mississippi River Commission, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers took over responsibility for improvements on the Mississippi River in the early 1880s. At first Congress directed the corps improve channel navigation, but conceded to public pressure and made flood control the major objective. Political pressure for

immediate protection accounted for the choice of levees as the primary flood protection measure. Levee work proceeded so quickly that the Ames Crevasse of 1891 was the last major episode to affect the Barataria area, but the work was not without its consequences. In 1903 the U.S. Weather Bureau estimated that the levees erected since 1882 had raised the floodwaters in Memphis between seven and eight feet. A record water height in 1926 eventually led the corps to build spillways--massive water diversion channels--as part of their flood control plans.<sup>49</sup>

Two existing spillways, the Morganza and Bonnet Carre, empty into the Atchafalaya and Pontchartrain basins, respectively. The corps is currently planning another spillway into the Barataria Basin which could alleviate high floodwaters and rectify the blockage of floodwaters into the basin that occurred when the levee system was completed. At that time, Bayou Lafourche was cut off from the river, the periodic crevasses at Bayou des Familles were stopped, and the flow of fresh water into the basin was reduced.

Along with the leveeing and channelization of the Mississippi River, Congress directed the corps to plan a system of commercial waterways connecting the coast to the river. Started in 1908, work on the Intracoastal Waterway has continued ever since as it is continually widened and deepened. In addition, waterways were dug from Bayou Segnette to Jones Point and from Jones Point and to Grand Isle<sup>50</sup> to service newly discovered oilfields and to promote trade between Houston and New Orleans. Also, in 1954 Congress authorized the corps to plan for the protection of coastal population from hurricanes. Work on hurricane levees began in 1967 after Hurricane Betsy demonstrated how destructive of the high waters of the storm surge could be.<sup>51</sup> These levees were scheduled to be completed in 1991; however, environmental concerns over their placement have delayed completion in the vicinity of the park. Concerned citizens did not want the levees to be placed in such a way that they would drain significant acreages of wetland.

### Commerce and Industry

Oil was discovered in coastal Louisiana in 1901 to the west of Barataria Basin. The oil boom encouraged waterway development from New Orleans westward through the basin, so that by 1935, when Texaco discovered the Lafitte Oil Field, the area was ready for it. The field lies in a submerged salt dome, and the extreme depth of the dome (9,000 feet) required new drilling techniques. In 1935 the Texas Pipeline Company laid a six-foot pipeline from the field to the Marrero terminus on the Mississippi River for loading oil onto ships; and in 1936 an eight-foot pipeline to be used by the Freeport Sulphur Co., was laid from the field to refineries at Grand Ecaille. Workers commuted from the villages of Lafitte, Barataria, and Crown Point, or lived in houseboats or oil field camps. The Lafitte Oil Field was followed by the Barataria Field in 1939 and the Lake Salvador and Delta Farms fields in 1940.<sup>52</sup> Today, the basin is peppered with dozens of oil fields.

Industrial development started along the Mississippi River in the late nineteenth century with the development of the cypress sawmills. The deep harbor, the development of intracoastal waterways, the river itself, and a progressive attitude on the part of the parish administration made the riverbanks ideal for development. In 1938 a survey of industries along the river in Jefferson Parish counted three plants built before 1901, four between 1901 and 1910, four between 1911 and 1920, eight between 1921 and 1930, and seven between 1931 and 1938.<sup>53</sup> In 1984 the west bank of the river was a solid line of plants, beginning at the old Harvey Canal and continuing up river to Avondale. The impact of this development on the Barataria Basin has been profound. Wage work at the plants has attracted much of the younger population from the basin, often accompanied by a move to suburban areas near the river.

The Army Corps of Engineers kept records of the commerce passing through its waterways, for example, tonnage through the Harvey Locks between 1923 and 1931. Although the locks serviced the entire length of the Intracoastal Waterway, and not all of the produce reported came from the basin, the following figures can be taken as representative of the basin. In 1924, 151,558 tons passed through the locks, consisting mostly of shrimp, oysters, vegetables, sugar, crossties, logs, fuel oil, ice, and miscellaneous goods; and in 1931, 267,621 tons, consisting of crude oil, refined oil, seafoods, forest products, rice, and sugar. These figures include both outbound and inbound freight: most of the fuel oil, refined oil, and ice must have been outbound for coastal consumption. Significantly, rice, sugar, and forest products continued to be exported in amounts that warranted recording, but in 1931 they represented only four percent of the total tonnage, whereas seafoods came close to ten percent.<sup>54</sup>

The corps also reported commerce along the Barataria Bay Waterway between 1920 and 1949. In 1920, 168,238 tons passed through the waterway. The largest category of freight was wood, consisting mostly of logs; followed by miscellaneous goods; vegetable foods, consisting of corn, onions, potatoes, rice, and cane syrup; nonmetallic minerals such as coal, gasoline, and fuel oil; animal products, fish, oysters, and shrimp; chemical fertilizers; moss; and machinery.<sup>55</sup> Tonnage increased to 545,249 total tons in 1949, although only 305,735 tons either originated from or landed on the waterway. Of local products, crude oil bound for New Orleans was the largest commodity; followed by clam shells; unspecified commodities; building materials and machinery both in bound and outbound; and finally, fish, shellfish, and lumber products bound for New Orleans.<sup>56</sup> The preponderance of crude oil, machinery, and building materials in the 1949 tonnage gives some indication of the industrialization that had occurred in the basin since 1920.

#### Baratarians and the Modern World

Economic activities of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries have had a profound effect on the people of Barataria. Oil production replaced the plantations and logging camps. Industrialization of the

Mississippi River provided yet another source of income for the area's growing population. The technology of fishing changed with the adoption of new techniques such as oyster cultivation. The lucrative market for muskrat and nutria pelts came and went. Camps passed from seasonal occupation to occasional recreational use. In large numbers, Baratarians moved to the suburban areas of the west bank of the Mississippi River, and in many respects, their lives held little resemblance to those of their ancestors in the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries.

Even the landscape changed. Fast growing trees took over the cleared and cultivated levees. The plantation centers, once the home of most of the basin's population, were abandoned; some of them were lost even to local memory. The once prosperous area around the park on Bayou Barataria was so deserted that people from Bayou Lafourche came to resettle the land in the 1930s and the 1940s. Large-scale extractive industries left their marks. The cypress swamps were drastically thinned and scarred with canals and pull-marks. The marshes were dotted with oil wells and crisscrossed with pipeline canals. Such use of the basin's most fragile system, the marsh, took a significant toll. Major engineering projects in the form of waterways built by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers not only changed the old bayous to industrial canals, but also brought the modern world to Barataria's front door.

Although life in the basin has changed significantly in the last one hundred years, the relationship between Baratarians and their social and natural environment has endured since prehistory. Baratarians still practised a mixed economy in the 1980s. Wage work and suburban life became more important, but families continued to catch fish, shrimp, and oysters on the weekends or rely on their extended families to do it for them. People switched back and forth from wage work to fulltime commercial fishing according to the fishing conditions, prices, availability of work, and their general attitude toward life. They continued to call upon the resources of large and closely knit extended families for labor, boats, and camps. The major change in the mixed economy has been a shift from seasonal to longterm activities, as people move from wage work to commercial harvesting to subsistence pursuits over a span of years, rather than months.

## Endnotes Chapter V

1. "Map of Crown Point," Jefferson Parish Courthouse, plat cabinet F-60.
2. J. W. Stephens, "Lots for Sale on South Side of Bayou Barataria West of Bayou Chalard," Jefferson Parish Courthouse, plat cabinet F-63.
3. Betsy Swanson, Historic Jefferson Parish From Shore to Shore (Gretna: Pelican Publishing Co., 1975), 97.
4. Sale by Jefferson Land Co. to William Gomez, Feb. 2, 1912, Jefferson Parish, COB 33, folio 708.
5. Frank Verdun, interview Barbara Holmes and Bill Jackson, June 13, 1984.
6. Frank Ehret, interview with Barbara Holmes and Bill Jackson, June 14, 1984.
7. Ibid.
8. Don L. Gary and Donald W. Davis, Recreational Dwellings in the Louisiana Coastal Marsh (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Center for Wetland Resources, 1979), 28.
9. Rachel Edna Norgress "History of the Cypress Lumber Industry in Louisiana," Louisiana Historical Quarterly 30 (1947): 979-86.
10. Ibid., 986-94.
11. Swanson, Historic Jefferson Parish, 98-99.
12. Pierce F. Lewis, New Orleans, The Making of an Urban Landscape (Cambridge, MA: Ballinger Publishing Co., 1976), 49.
13. Charles Tenney Jackson The Fountain of Youth (New York: Outing Publishing Co., 1914), 243.
14. Norgress, "Cypress Lumber Industry," 1000.
15. Percy Prestenbach, Sr., interview with Barbara Holmes and Bill Jackson, June 15, 1984.
16. Norgress, "Cypress Lumber Industry," 1002.
17. Jackson, Fountain, 274.
18. Swanson, Historic Jefferson Parish, 137.

19. Jackson, Fountain, 23.
20. Norgress, "Cypress Lumber Industry," 1002-8.
21. Prestenbach, interview.
22. Jackson, Fountain, 102.
23. Ethnohistorical tradition says that one or more of the stilt villages had been established during the colonial period by impressed Philippino fishermen: Nicholas Spitzer, "Mississippi Delta Ethnographic Overview" (Jean Lafitte National Historical Park, 1979), 365. Documentary evidence dates the founding of the first village in 1840, and in 1873 for Manila Village, another early settlement: Swanson, Historic Jefferson Parish, 137-38. While far from complete, archeological survey work dates the occupation of Manila Village and one other unnamed stilt village to the late nineteenth century and early twentieth: Sherwood M. Gagliano, Richard A. Weinstein, Eileen T. Burden, Katherine L. Brooks, and Wayne P. Glander, "Cultural Resources Survey of the Barataria, Segnett, and Rigand Waterways, Jefferson Parish, Louisiana," (Photocopy, Coastal Environments, Inc., 1979). Further documentary and archeological evidence is necessary to date these villages, but the current archeological data suggest the major occupation of the villages occurred toward the end of the nineteenth century.
24. The description of Manila Village life is based on Swanson, Historic Jefferson Parish, 137-38; Jackson, Fountain 307-9 and Frank E. Schoonover, "In the Haunts of Jean Lafitte," Harpers Monthly 124, 80-91.
25. Norgress, "Cypress Lumber Industry," 1049-55.
26. Jackson, Fountain 141-43.
27. Prestenbach, interview.
28. The following agricultural description is taken from 15th Census of the United States, Agriculture, [1930], vol. 2, Louisiana (Washington: D.C. Government Printing Office, 1931) and the 1978 Census of Agriculture [1978], vol. 1, part 18, Louisiana (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1981). Page numbers are cited in the text. While data in these censuses is reported for the whole of Jefferson Parish, the non--Barataria Basin portion of the parish was becoming urbanized and industrialized by this century; thus, the data applies mostly to the study area.
29. George H. Lowery, Jr., The Mammals of Louisiana and Its Adjacent Waters (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1974), 25-26.
30. Danny Horton, personal communication.

31. Lowery, Mammals, 28.
32. Joseph Valsin Guillote, "Masters of the Marsh: An Introduction to the Ethnography of the Isles of Lower St. Bernard Parish, Louisiana" (Photocopy, Department of Anthropology, University of New Orleans, 1982), 48.
33. L. M. Bahr and J. J. Hebrard, Barataria Basin: Biological Characterization (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Center for Wetland Resources, 1976), 124-25.
34. Malcolm R. Comeaux, Atchafalaya Swamp Life: Settlement and Folk Occupations (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1972), 152.
35. Spitzer, "Ethnographic Overview," 75-76.
36. Schoonover, "In the Haunts," 84; Jackson, Fountain, 102-6.
37. Spitzer, "Ethnographic Overview," 49.
38. Jefferson Parish Yearly Review (1936): 33.
39. Spitzer "Ethnographic Overview," 49-50.
40. Jefferson Parish Yearly Review (1938): 119.
41. Ibid. (1928): 29.
42. Spitzer, "Ethnographic Overview," 51.
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CHAPTER VI  
SUMMARY:  
SELF-SUFFICIENCY AND THE DUAL ECONOMY

The Mississippi River first built the Barataria Basin as its major channel, and then as a basin between later channels of the constantly changing river. The original channel flowed along the course of the present Bayou des Familles and Bayou Barataria between 3,300 and 1,800 B.C. The later river channels along the Lafourche and Mississippi courses eventually hemmed in and created the basin, from 1,800 B.C. until the end of the nineteenth century.

The delta environment of the basin was and is very productive in terms of the total biomass and the diversity of flora and fauna. The basin environment changes according to two gradients: elevation and water salinity. Elevation of the basin soils decreases from the crests of the levees to the bottoms of the basin lakes as well as from the upstream levees to those found near the mouth of the old channel. Accompanying the change in elevation is a change from hardwood forest to swamp forest, marsh, and lakes. Water is fresh at the top of the basin near the junction of the old and current river courses, and salinity increases toward the mouth of the basin at the Gulf of Mexico. Varied habitats occur between the hardwood forest and the saline waters of Barataria Bay. Many of the animals adapted to the delta environment have taken advantage of this diversity, including man.

The basin was inhabited as soon as it was formed. The earliest inhabitants may have only used the area sporadically, and left little evidence of their presence. Their occupation may also have been obscured by their descendants, who built large-scale villages by the Marksville period, 100 B.C. to A.D. 300. The Marksville inhabitants cultivated corn and probably beans and squash to a moderate extent, but never abandoned hunting and gathering as their most important means of obtaining food. Through several centuries of occupation in the basin, the aboriginal inhabitants developed a strategy of economic diversity which persisted into modern times. Along with this strategy came a fluid settlement pattern: the inhabitants of the basin moved their homes according to the season and the harvest. While the settlement pattern and economic strategy did not preclude social elaboration, they did make the basin inhabitants a bit more independent of their social superiors than tribes located elsewhere in the Mississippi Valley. The historic descendants of these aboriginal inhabitants of the basin were known as the Washa, Chawasha, and Chitimacha. These tribes consisted of small, autonomous bands that practiced the full range of economic activities developed by their ancestors in the basin.

During the first half of the eighteenth century, the colonial administration of France attempted to develop the natural resources of the basin by encouraging large entrepreneurial activities. The valuable

higher land bordering the waterways was given to wealthy individuals in large parcels; typically, these individuals held several grants in various parts of the basin and even in other parts of the colony. Entrepreneurial use of the basin was also characterized by diversity: grants were valuable for different types of resources, and the resources of one, such as oak forests, could be used to complement the resources of another such as cypress swamps. However, the entrepreneurial development of the basin was fundamentally different from the aboriginal occupation of the area. Indians were active participants in a wide-ranging trade network but used the basin primarily as a subsistence base, while colonial entrepreneurs often lived elsewhere, depending on outside goods supplied through the colony's mercantile economy.

The Spanish colonial administration of the second half of the eighteenth century continued development of large-scale enterprises, but also encouraged farmers to live on the land and develop small grants from their own labor, rather than by large capital investment. The one effort planned along these lines -- the Canarian settlement -- failed. Poorer inhabitants did establish themselves in the basin during the eighteenth century, principally at Grand Isle, Barataria Island, and at the junction of Goose Bayou and Bayou Barataria, which later became the communities of Grand Isle, Barataria, and Lafitte. These first small-scale settlers practiced a mixed subsistence economy of hunting, fishing, and gardening patterned after that of the Indians. These inhabitants originally may have come to the area as the laborers and craftsmen of the large-scale entrepreneurs. Once arrived, they probably worked and traded with their wealthier neighbors, as well as trading fish and other basin resources in the markets of New Orleans. More importantly, they continued to follow the seasonal round of subsistence activities first elaborated by the indigenous inhabitants of the basin. Together with the large-scale entrepreneurs, with whom they lived in economic cooperation, the small-scale inhabitants of the basin comprised a dual economy of the basin which was to persist to the modern age.

The early American administration was characterized by an interesting episode in the region's history. In the first decades of the nineteenth century, Jean Laffite established a large-scale smuggling operation in the basin which rivaled any of the earlier colonial ventures for cash profits and number of men involved. He chose an area which, because of its easy access to the port of New Orleans had probably been a smuggling route throughout the colonial period, making use of local knowledge of the basin's geography and relying on local support for supplies and secrecy. While Jean Laffite differed greatly from the entrepreneurs who preceded him, his relationship with the other inhabitants of the basin exemplified the pattern of a dual economy established during the colonial period.

With significant advances in the cultivation of sugar cane in Louisiana, the future of the large-scale enterprises in the basin was set for the nineteenth century. Some sugar plantations were established on land already improved by indigo planters in the colonial period, and

a lack of such improvements inhibited the development of the sugar plantations. This was the case in much of the Barataria Basin, where many plantations were not established until several decades after sugar had become profitable. John McDonogh's ownership of large parcels of valuable levee land also slowed agricultural development. Once his estate was settled, plantations multiplied, monopolizing the high ground. Sugar planters cooperated with the small-scale inhabitants of the area, who provided expertise, occasional labor, and probably food. In turn, inhabitants relied on the plantations for cash to supplement their incomes from marketing in New Orleans.

For unknown reasons, sugar cultivation died an early death in the basin. For a little over a decade it was replaced by rice cultivation, but during the first half of the twentieth century much of the old levee land was unused or leased for cattle pasture. Entrepreneurs turned toward the swamps and waters, as cypress logging and shrimping became big business during the latter decades of the nineteenth century. Like the plantations, the shrimp and logging camps imported much of their labor but also provided wage work for the locals, who joined the labor crews as their subsistence pursuits allowed. Thus, even though the major entrepreneurial activities changed, the dual economic pattern persisted.

Tradition and change have continued to coexist in the basin through the twentieth century. Largescale draining and farming of the marsh failed. The cypress logging industry collapsed as the market changed and the large trees were logged out. The market for muskrat and nutria grew and declined. New boat technology revolutionized transport. The oil industry came to stay as long as the reserves last, and the industrialization of the Mississippi corridor created new sources of wage work.

As the large enterprises changed, so have the activities and lifestyle of the local inhabitants. They no longer live in seasonal camps as their ancestors and the Indians had done before them, but use the camps as recreational centers. Instead of practicing a seasonal round of subsistence activities, relying on a wide variety of resources, most of the people have come to specialize in one or two for their major cash income. Many no longer live in the basin, having chosen to live instead in the bordering suburbs of the metropolis.

Nevertheless, the dual economic pattern persists with the maintenance of the small-scale, broad-based, local economy. With it, many of the qualities of basin life remain. While family camps may no longer be inhabited for months at a stretch every year, they are occupied for weekends and holidays throughout the year. They are a place where family values and local skills are taught to the new generation, and where the closely knit economic cooperation between the generations of the extended family are reaffirmed. Basin inhabitants may no longer hunt and fish from season to season, but they do follow the old ways throughout their lives. A fisherman of many years may decide to get a job on the river in order to raise his

family, but will return to the area where he grew up when his children are grown. Another may change from fishing to wage work several times during his life, commuting now to his boat, now to his job. The details of life in the basin continue to change, but the patterns of that life survive from a time when the aboriginal Indians first settled the area.

## Appendix A Suggested Research

This study could do little more than sketch the outlines of events and settlement patterns in the study area, with some emphasis on the park area. Much more work must be done to detail the patterns described in this report and solve certain problems. Following are suggestions for future research which would fill in the gaps in our knowledge.

1. Colonial Resource Exploitation versus Agricultural Development. The early colonial economy of Louisiana and the Barataria Basin depended on extraction of resources by activities such as timbering, ranching, and the production of wax from wax myrtle berries. Further research must fill in the details of these and other activities and integrate them with industrial pursuits such as boat building and the development of indigo plantations, presenting the history of Barataria Basin as one economic unit. The details of how individual landowners owned non-contiguous holdings the length of the drainage, and how the economy of one plot added to the economy of another, would demonstrate how the economy of the basin worked.

2. Histories of Communities. While emphasis could be placed on the history of individual communities near the park, a study of developmental patterns for basin communities as a whole would be even more valuable. Throughout history, settlements in the basin have included small homes, seasonal camps, plantations, and villages; the relative importance of these settlement types have changed through time. Also, since there are fewer named communities in the basin now than there were a hundred years ago, it is important to discover how demographic, economic, and environmental patterns can account for this. Data on land ownership, subsistence, markets, demography, ethnic identity, technology, climate, and geomorphology are all important considerations in looking at patterns of community growth and change.

3. Jean Laffite and the Baratarians. If Jean Laffite commanded upwards of a thousand men, then he maintained a community that equaled the population of the rest of Barataria Basin. Such a mercantile community could not have existed without the full knowledge and support of its neighbors, who stood to benefit from it--if not as direct participants, then at least as providers of food, shelter, and other kinds of support. Who were Laffite's men and what was their relationship to other local residents? Where did they go after he left for Galveston? Local custom says that some of Laffite's men settled in Barataria. What was their long-term contribution to the basin in terms of population, economic pursuits, skills, attitudes, ethnic identities, and cultural heritage? The brothers Laffite and their social and economic connections to New Orleans might also be considered as part of the complex society centered on Grande Terre.

4. The Rise and Fall of the Barataria Plantations. While the basis for the plantation economy was established in the late colonial period, its development, elaboration, and demise are phenomena of the nineteenth century. Plantation records are available for the Navis Grove Plantation, just south of the core area on Bayou Barataria; similar records from other plantations may exist as well. Any additional information on the Christmas and Kinta Plantations would be very useful. A close, detailed look at individual plantation economies would show us something about the relative status and wealth of their owners, specific management strategies, planting considerations, agricultural technology, markets, and the life and treatment of slaves and sharecroppers. It is important to determine whether the Barataria plantations tried to be self-sufficient (for example, in feeding the slaves), or whether they tended to operate on a cash basis. Information on locations and appearances of plantation structures would be valuable for management purposes. Land-use histories may also tell us about the cultural characteristics of the people that bought, ran, and labored in the plantations.

5. The Cypress Lumbering Episode. The rapid growth of the Louisiana lumber industry in the late nineteenth century and its decline in the second decade of the twentieth created a characteristic shift of settlement and land use in the upland areas of the state. Although not as evident, this change also occurred in the delta. The extensive and intensive cutting of the cypress stands in Barataria had a dramatic impact on the landscape, not only in terms of trees cut, but also as a result of the construction of canals and sawmills. The lumbering episode was economically important to leaseholders and workers alike. How many men were employed in the Barataria Basin? How many were recruited locally? What did they do after the timber stands disappeared? How did the industry respond to changes in the market and technology? What happened to the land after it was logged? The logging industry of the colonial and nineteenth centuries should also be considered, as the predecessors of the later twentieth century episode.

6. The Development of the Swamper Economy. The seasonal round of hunting, trapping, fishing, collection, and garden farming by small independent landholders developed in the voids left by the plantation economy. How can the development of this independent and remote lifestyle be documented? Where did the people come from? What was their technology, where were their markets, where did they live, and how did events and changes affecting the plantation economy also affect their lives? Oral history can help answer some of these questions, but the lifestyle is older than the oldest living informants. Also, more work should be done on the full range of activities undertaken by the Baratarians, including tourism and recreation, which were important even in the nineteenth century.

7. History of the Technology/Archeology of Boats in the Barataria Basin. Because this study has concentrated on settlement and land use patterns in the Barataria Basin, it has slighted an important aspect of local culture history: boats. The history of boat technology would

parallel and illustrate the sequence of events and cultures in the region and represent a major aspect of local economy. Underwater archeology could complement historical study because much of the boat design and technology of the region is vernacular. While many of the existing historic boats may not actually be submerged, underwater archeologists are trained in recording and evaluating aquatic material culture.

8. History of the Black Residents of Barataria. Black people were a vital part of the plantation economy and formed a significant portion of the nineteenth century population. Where are the descendents of those people today? Do they live in de facto rural segregation? Do they participate in the swamp economy in an egalitarian, subordinate, or complementary fashion? Do they own land, boats, or businesses? Do the black residents of Barataria participate in the Barataria community, and how do they identify with the history of the region?

9. The Myth of Jean Lafitte and the Baratarians. Jean Lafitte shaped his own public image, and history has been further manipulated by novelists, movie makers, and historians. A history of the myth of Jean Lafitte would not be concerned so much with the "truth" as how and why people have created and used the pirate image. For example, why did the "gentleman pirate" capture the imagination of the nineteenth century novelists, and how did this eventually influence local Baratarian pride in and identification with him?

10. Coordinated Topographic Mapping, Soils Coring, and Site Evaluation of the Coquilles Site. This project could coordinate the various unrelated and nonsystematic testing projects with a systematic coring program to produce a comprehensive picture of the site. To date, over six testing programs have been conducted on the site, but no single site map has been produced. Until this is done, we cannot evaluate the results of the tests in relation to each other or to the site as a whole. Because testing has been limited in scope and directed toward areas of impact, instead of a general interpretation of site history, it is not known if a later Troyville component besides the earlier Marksville is present on the site, if there were or are burial mounds, whether contiguous sites should be interpreted as separate sites or parts of one larger site, and whether or not the site was occupied when the Des Familles watercourse was an active distributary of the Mississippi River. All of these are fundamental questions which need to be answered before the site can be put into a regional context.

11. Coordinated Mapping and Coring of Sites on Coquilles Watercourse. Corollary to work on the Coquilles site, this project would interpret the geologic history of the watercourse and try to date the shell mounds. A map would be valuable for management and interpretive purposes, as well.

12. Systematic Historical, Botanical and Archeological Survey of Sites and Cultural Landscape Features in the Park. While a systematic archeological survey of the park has been completed, it did not identify

historic sites. The Historic Resource Study has documented several known sites, unknown locations, and numerous landscape constructions (canals, ditches, and furrows), which can be described as cultural landscapes. A systematic survey would search for unknown sites and accurately and completely record the known sites and landscape features. It would be advantageous to supplement this work with a historic botanical study, documenting vegetation changes caused by historic activities. In this way we could interpret not just sites but the landscape in general in a cultural context.

## Appendix B Inventory

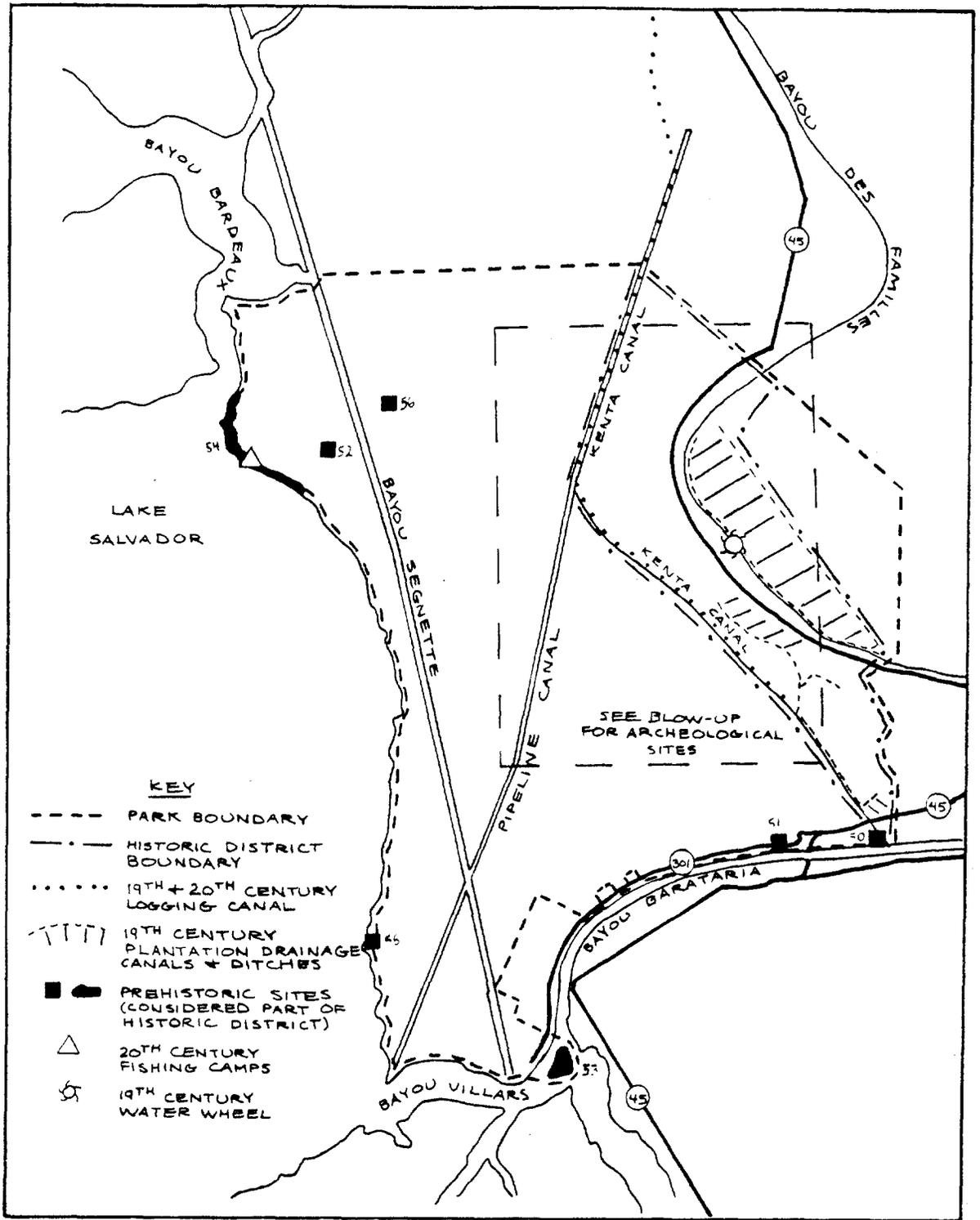
The inventory has been divided into five types of sites: prehistoric shell piles, plantations, the Intracoastal Waterway, roads and bridges, and camps. These site types span the history of human use of the core area of the Barataria Unit; they also span the range of his activities. Map 8 locates all the sites listed in the inventory according to these site types.

### Prehistoric Shell Piles

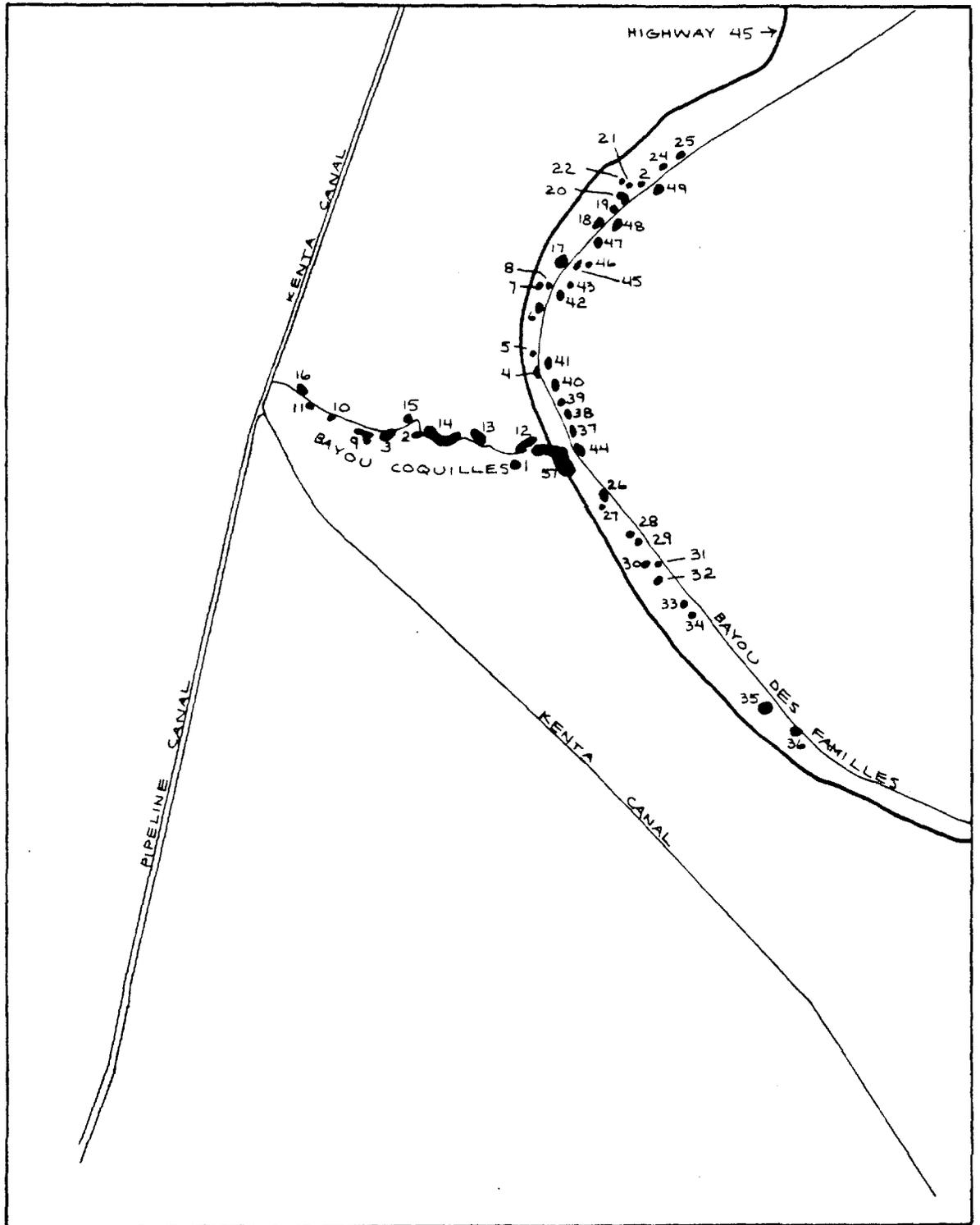
Table 4 summarizes the results of an archeological site survey and testing conducted by the University of New Orleans in 1981. While some data on historic components were included in their description, only the prehistoric sites were systematically recorded. Since the survey report describes each site, only a summary description is presented here. Sites are listed in the table and plotted on the inventory plan according to the survey number given in the report.

There are three basic prehistoric site types located in the park: shell middens, shell mounds, and shell beaches. Shell middens are accumulations of discarded shells, often containing levels of earth from the dumping of other organic material or mixed levels of shell and earth. Shell mounds were constructed as burial mounds or as substructures to raise houses or temples above flood levels or above neighboring buildings. Shell mounds generally have a more even appearance than middens: steeper sides, more angular form, and less complex internal stratigraphy. Shell beaches are natural deposits of shell along the edges of bodies of water, the location of prehistoric activities or the product of shell which has been eroded from another prehistoric site and redeposited. Shell beaches are long, narrow, and not very high. Artifacts found with them are wave-washed, with obliterated details.

There are three basic site functions found within the core area: special function, habitation, and social center. Special function sites were the center of specialized and short-term prehistoric activity such as the gathering of shellfish or the hunting of particular game. Special function sites are identified by their small size, thin and homogeneous cultural level, and low density of artifacts. Because few artifacts are found in these sites, they are extremely difficult to date. Habitation sites were prehistoric residences. Most habitation sites in the park area were occupied throughout the year and will show evidence of a wide range of activities, including food preparation, food storage, a variety of tool use, and the building of relatively permanent shelters. Larger sites, sites with earth as well as shell middens, and sites with moderate to large numbers of artifacts are presumed to be habitation sites. Very large sites with a complex of mounds are



Map 8. Sites in the Barataria Historic District



Map 9. Detail of Map 8: Archeological Sites along the Bayou Des Familles and Bayou Coquilles

Table 4 - Prehistoric Sites

Site #	Site Type	Size	Cultural Period	Function
1	shell & earth midden	60mX90mX15m	Marksville?	Habitation or special function
1	2 shell ridges	35mX15mX?	?	special function
2	shell midden	40mX10mX27cm	?	special function
3	shell & earth midden	177mX90mX35cm	Coles Creek?	habitation or special function
4	2 shell ridges	35.5mX38mX?	?	special function
5	Shell & earth midden	10mX5m	?	probably not a site
6	earth & shell midden	10mX8mX?	?	special function
7	earth & shell midden	20mX35mX20cm	Marksville historic	habitation
8	shell midden	20mX18mX?	?	habitation or special function
9	2 shell middens	30mX85mX28cm	Coles Creek	special function
10	shell midden	3mX7mX?	?	special function
11	shell midden	5mX10mX?	?	special function
12	shell midden modern trash dump	15mX20mX36cm	Troyville historic	habitation
13	shell midden	20mX55mX14cm	Troyville	habitation
14	shell midden	20mX68mX45cm	Troyville	special activity
15	shell & earth midden	8mX6mX37cm	?	habitation
16	shell midden	10mX20mX38cm	Troyville	habitation
17	shell midden	12mX10mX18cm	?	possibly not a site
18	shell surface scatter	7mX7mX0m	?	possibly not a site
19	shell midden	2mX40mX28cm	?	special function
20	earth & shell midden	25mX30mX35cm	Marksville	habitation
21	shell midden	?	?	special function
22	shell midden	12mX15mX24xcm	?	special function
23	shell midden	25mX15mX24cm	?	special function
24	shell midden	6mX3mX26cm	?	special function
25	shell midden	20mX15mX19cm	?	special function
26	shell midden	50X40mX28cm	Marksville	habitation
27	shell midden	8m diameter	?	special function
28	shell midden	11mX10mX5cm	?	special function
29	shell midden	10mX8mX23cm	?	possibly special function or not a site
30	shell midden	7mX5mX23cm	?	special function
31	shell midden	8mX10mX16cm	?	special function
32	shell midden	15mX11mX23cm	?	special function

33	shell midden	7mX20X28cm	?	special function
34	shell midden	15mX10mX27cm	?	special function
35	shell midden modern trash dump	25mX49mX19cm	historic	special function
37	surface shell	6mX5mX0m	?	possibly a special function or not a site
38	shell midden	50mX10mX23cm	?	special function
39	shell midden	33mX15mX23cm	?	special function
40	shell midden shell mound	35mX45mX45cm	Plaquemines?	habitation
41	shell midden	11mX10mX23cm	?	special function
42	shell midden shell mound	25mX34mX25cm	?	special function
43	shell midden	15mX17mX20cm	?	special function
44	earth mound	40mX20mX?	modern	dredging spoil
45	shell midden	20mX40mX37cm	?	habitation
46	shell midden	15mX12mX23cm	?	special function
47	shell midden	20mX25mX15cm	Plaquemines	habitation
48	shell midden shell mound	25mX30mX27cm	Plaquemines	habitation
49	shell midden shell mound	20mX9mX12cm	Plaquemines	habitation & burial
50	shell beach	10mX200mX?	Plaquemines	habitation
51	shell beach	10mX20mX?	?	special function
52	shell midden modern camps	65mX25mX53cm	20th century	habitation
53	shell midden	600mX200mX1m	Tchefuncte Plaquemines	habitation social center
54	shell beach or shell midden, modern camps	1.6KmX30mX?	Plaquemines, 20th Century	habitation
55	shell midden	10mX50mX?	Plaquemines	habitation
56	shell midden	?	?	?
57	shell midden shell mound	750mX100m	Tchefuncte- Plaquemines	habitation social center

recognized as social centers, the hub of social authority. Such centers show evidence for social complexity with the display of wealth by a certain class and evidence for ceremonial elaboration, represented by religious objects and structures.

Two sites are social centers, #53, the Isle Bonne site, and #57, the Coquille site. The Isle Bonne site is located at the northwest corner of the confluence of bayous Villars and Barataria and consists of an extensive shell midden and two shell mounds. There were once three or four mounds at this site, two of which may have been removed by the dredging of the Intracoastal Waterway (which cut through Jones Point and made Isle Bonne an island), the appropriation of shell for road building, or by erosion.<sup>2</sup> Test excavations have been done on the existing mounds, but have not been documented. Surface collections indicate that the site was occupied as early as the Tchefuncte period, 500 B.C., to as late as the Plaquemines, A.D. 1700. The mounds probably date from the later occupation of the site. The Isle Bonne site is associated with two other large sites with shell-and-earth middens and shell mounds, from the same period. The Fleming (located on the Fleming Plantation, previously known as the Berthoud or Davis Grove Plantation) and Bayou Villars sites are located across Bayou Barataria and Bayou Villars, respectively. The occurrence of three large mound sites in close proximity is unusual, suggesting a high degree of centralized control. A number of small habitation sites located on both sides of Bayou Barataria north and south of the three main sites suggest that the central complex exerted some control up and down Bayou Barataria.<sup>3</sup> Further research the Isle Bonne site may shed light on its relationship to the other two large sites across the bayous, as well as their relationship to the smaller contemporary sites on Bayou Barataria.

The three-site complex at the confluence of bayous Villars and Barataria, provided excellent access to a variety of environmental zones and to other parts of the basin. A number of equally large villages existed on the shores of Lake Cataoutche which was rich with crabs, fish, and birds. Bayou Barataria provided direct access to the brackish and salt marshes of the lower basin. The junction of two levee ridges provided an unusually large and high area for building houses. The advantages of this area were also recognized in colonial times, when Claude Joseph Villous Dubreuil cornered the real estate in the area, and during the nineteenth century, when one of the largest plantations of Barataria was established there.

At the conjunction of bayous des Familles and Coquille, the Coquille site consists of a large earth-and-shell midden, one shell-and-earth mound, and the remains of possibly three additional shell mounds, remnants of which exist under old oak trees. These mounds and the earth-and-shell midden were mined in this century for road construction, but there are still extensive undisturbed deposits in the midden and remaining mound. Excavations in the Coquille site, while incompletely documented, indicate occupation from the Tchefuncte through the Plaquemines cultures.<sup>4</sup> A systematic survey of the levee ridges of bayous des Familles and Coquille found small habitation sites

at 200m intervals up and down Bayou des Familles and smaller special-activity and habitation sites to the west, on Bayou Coquilles. The number and density of these sites, probably contemporaneous with the Coquille site, are unique. It is quite possible that such a settlement existed near the Isle Bonne and related mound sites and that its remains have been destroyed by dredging on the Intracoastal and Barataria waterways. Further investigation of site occupations and economies would throw light on the relation of central and peripheral sites.

Excavations at the Coquille site revealed a continuous, on-site development of local pottery styles from the Tchefuncte through the Plaquemines cultures. Later styles developed from earlier ones, rather than being imported from outside. This is especially significant because the Mississippi Delta has always been studied as a separate yet dependent area within the lower Mississippi Valley, and investigators have implied that changes came from without, instead of following their own internal logic and development.

The Coquilles site has also revealed one of the richest concentrations of discarded animal bones in the Delta, and the potential for paleo-environmental and paleo-economic studies is great. Ridge-like shell middens on the Coquilles levees have been interpreted as special function sites, specifically, areas of shellfish collection and some hunting. Poorly dated, they may be special activity areas for the inhabitants of the Coquille site or collecting stations for inhabitants of the Isle Bonne site. The number, size, geographic proximity, broad time span, and relatively undamaged condition of all the sites in the park area make them valuable resources; however the relationship of the sites in terms of age, seasonal use, subsistence function, and social control is yet to be understood.

### Plantations

The known plantations in the park area produced sugar and rice in the nineteenth century, and some may have developed as indigo plantations in the colonial period. The two main plantations of the park area are the Christmas and Kinta plantations. The Christmas Plantation started in 1866 as a partnership between Rufus King Cutler of New Orleans and Pierre Ernest Beauvais of Terrebonne. In 1866 Mr. Beauvais, then a resident of Jefferson Parish, bought Cutler's half of the following property for \$19,250:

Pieces and portions of ground together with . . .  
all the improvements thereon and all the machinery,  
instruments, mills, wagons, carts, cattle, boats,  
edged tools, fowls and of all material things and  
farming apparatus belonging to said land known as  
the Christmas Plantation.

In 1869 the plantation had a portable wooden sugar mill, and by 1870 it had one with open kettles, like those of neighboring plantations.

Production figures for the plantation were as follows:

Year	Hogsheads	Year	Hogsheads	Year	Hogsheads
1869	55	1875	92	1881	140
1870	50	1876	21	1882	350
1871	9	1877	80	1883	175
1872	110	1878	190	1884	no yield
1873	65	1879	150	1885	no yield--
1874	65	1880	240		sugar mill burned.

No Christmas Plantation buildings were still standing in 1984. However, the back levee and ditch, drainage ditches, sugar cane furrows, and brick foundations of a waterwheel have survived to 1984. The eastern back levee and system of drainage ditches as well as the plantation's main access road (perpendicular to the bayou), can be seen in Plate 14, a 1945 photograph. This road was later improved to give access to oil wells east of the plantation. The main plantation structures--sugar mill, owner's house, and worker's cabins--were probably near this road, next to the bayou. In 1945, at least three houses were located in this area between Highway 45 and Bayou des Familles. One of them, the overseer's house, which burned in 1983, postdated the plantation. It was built around the turn of the century and was occupied by a caretaker hired by the landholding company.

Kinta Plantation was established in 1865 by Henry Chapron, Sr.<sup>10</sup> There may have been existing improvements on this lot, for Alexander Guerbois had lived on the western 10 arpents for some time in 1835.<sup>11</sup> It is not known what he was doing there, but the small size of the tract suggests he was a small farmer, fisherman, and hunter. In 1870 Chapron built a wooden sugar mill with kettles, and the plantation's production was as follows:

Year	Hogsheads	Year	Hogsheads	Year	Hogsheads	Year	Hogsheads
1870	50	1874	65	1879	115	1883	30
1871	90	1875	132	1880	60	1884	no yield
1872	100	1877	110	1881	40	1885	no yield
1873	54	1878	15	1882	100	1886	2,090 bushels of rice. <sup>12</sup>

The sugar mill and worker's cabins at Kinta Plantation were probably located near Bayou Baratavia, and could have been lost when the bayou banks were dredged to widen the Intracoastal Waterway. Aerial photographs show the buried remains of extensive structures in the southeast corner of Kinta Canal and Highway 45, and of other structures in the southeast corner of the plantation near the bayou (Plate 15). In addition, the traces of two roads--one to Crownpoint and one running northeast to the west side of Bayou des Familles--converge at the intersection of Highway 45 and Kinta Canal.<sup>13</sup>



Plate 14. Christmas Plantation in 1945  
U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey, 20LA 1250 2990 C2790, 5/17/1945



Plate 15. Kenta Plantation in 1945  
U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey, 201A 1250 2990 C2790, 5/17/1945

Kenta Canal lies on the boundary between the Guerbois and Dauterive properties, which were divided in 1768.<sup>14</sup> During the colonial period, main drainage canals were dug perpendicular to the waterway that drained the land to the backswamp. Canals were sometimes dug through to the waterway to convey water to sawmills and rice fields, but we have no evidence for such a system in the colonial period in the Barataria region, and the bayou would have been an undependable water supply. Therefore, Kenta Canal was probably dug for drainage purposes, perhaps as early as the 1770s. When the plantation was being farmed, the canal would not have broken through the levee to Bayou Barataria, and it would only have extended to the swamp. The canal extension, which ran parallel to the back edge of the cypress swamp along the west side of Bayou des Familles, was probably dug during the logging boom of the 1880s. Kenta Canal is also known as the Priest's Canal. This may be because Kenta Plantation was acquired by the Catholic Archdiocese around 1925.<sup>15</sup>

The Carter, Inez, and Mavis Grove plantations also came within the park area. Inez, never a plantation in its own right, was owned by the Drouet brothers, in 1835, and in 1886 by the partnership that ran the Ida plantation. Production figures for Inez Plantation were never listed in the yearly publication on plantation production.<sup>17</sup> Improvements were probably limited to levees and ditches.

The main portion of the Carter Plantation was located north of the park boundary. In 1867, John Henry Carter payed \$5,000 for the portion of the plantation which now lies within the park,<sup>18</sup> suggesting the land did not have improvements. The main structures were located further north in the eastward bend of the bayou,<sup>19</sup> and improvements to the southern tract were probably limited to levees and ditches.

Mavis Grove Plantation was located on the south and east sides of Bayou Barataria and on the peninsula of land northwest of the confluence of bayous Barataria and Villars. The Commagere brothers, who founded the plantation, bought the tract of land on the northwest side of bayous Barataria<sup>20</sup> and Villars in 1825 from the heirs of Albert Bonne for 1,000 piastres,<sup>20</sup> suggesting there were no improvements on the land. This early landowner may have given his name to Isle Bonne, which today refers to the island created by the Intracoastal Waterway as well as the peninsula formed by bayous Barataria and Villars and Lake Salvador. In the colonial period, "Isle Bonne" may have been an island, formed by Bayou Dauphine, which stretched almost from Lake Salvador to Bayou Barataria. The main structures of the plantation were located on the opposite side of Bayou Barataria,<sup>21</sup> there were probably no improvements to the parcel now found within the park other than ditches and levees.

#### Intracoastal Waterway

Surveying for the various routes of the Intracoastal Waterway in Barataria Basin took place between 1905 and 1910, and work began in 1908.<sup>22</sup> The Harvey Canal and lock and Harvey Canal #2 (crossing from Lake Salvador to Larose on Bayou Lafourche) were purchased in 1924.

Work on this early version of the waterway, known as the Intracoastal Waterway, Mississippi River to Bayou Teche, included the improvement of existing locks and canals in the Barataria area, digging a new canal between Houma and Morgan City, dredging the Harvey Canal and rebuilding and widening its locks. Company Canal #1, between Lake Salvador and the Mississippi River, and Company Canal #2, between Lake Salvador and Bayou Lafourche, were bought and dredged. Channel depth was specified at 5 feet below mean low gulf level, channel width at 40 feet, and the length of the waterway at 104.5 miles.<sup>23</sup> A connecting channel from the gulf through Barataria Bay to the Intracoastal Waterway at the junction of Bayous Villars and Barataria,<sup>24</sup> 5 feet deep, 50 feet wide, and 37 miles long, was completed by 1926.

In 1931 work began on the Louisiana and Texas<sup>25</sup> Intracoastal Waterway, which was to be 9 feet deep and 100 feet wide. The locks were rebuilt and the channels dredged to the new dimensions. By 1936, work had been completed from the Mississippi River to the Sabine River.<sup>26</sup> Substantial widening of the portion of Bayou Barataria contiguous to the park was probably done at the same time. The waterway had been widened again by 1944, this time to a depth of 12 feet and a width of 125 feet. In 1949, construction began on an alternate route to the river at Algiers.<sup>27</sup> A new 6 feet by 80 feet channel, the Bayou Segnette Waterway, connected the Company Canal from the Mississippi River to the confluence of bayous Villars and Barataria by a route just inland of Lake Salvador and was completed by 1957.<sup>28</sup> Between 1960 and 1963, the Barataria Bay Waterway was dredged to 12 feet deep and 125 feet wide, and in 1962 the corps was authorized to make the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway 16 feet deep and 124 feet wide. Work began soon after.<sup>29</sup>

### Roads and Bridges

The colonial road to Barataria started at the Mississippi River, went down the east bank of Bayou des Familles, and ended at the junction of Bayou des Familles and Barataria opposite what is now Crownpoint, following the ridge of the natural levee. In the area later known as the Christmas Plantation, it must have followed a slightly flattened curve to the east of the bayou, because the highest point of the des Familles levee lies several hundred yards to the east in that area. The road did not cross the bayou, although it did cross over a slough (break in the levee) opposite what was to become of the Carter Plantation. The appearance of this road is unknown. It may have been a good road with a shell base because it was clearly and consistently marked on property surveys and maps at the turn of the nineteenth century.<sup>30</sup> After Bernarde Dauterive sold the eastern 40 arpents of his grant in 1768, the east side of Bayou des Familles was subdivided into 10 arpents tracts. The owners of these properties probably built the road.<sup>31</sup> The Camino Real, as it was known, was the major land access route from New Orleans to the communities of Barataria, Crown Point, and Lafitte.

During the first half of the nineteenth century, the parish and the inhabitants of Barataria worked to improve and lengthen the road. In 1935 the parish police jury voted to extend the road down the north bank of Bayou Barataria to Isle Bonne under the supervision of surveyor Allou d'Hemecourt.<sup>32</sup> Landowners along the old portions of the road were told to make their part of it <sup>25</sup> feet wide within a 40 foot corridor cleared of trees and branches.<sup>33</sup> The Isle Bonne extension required the construction of two bridges, one over Bayou des Familles and one over Bayou Dauphine. The route of the northern portion changed sometime before 1858, crossing to the west bank of Bayou des Familles just below the Ross (later Carter) Plantation buildings. The old road continued to be used, but as Laurent Millaudon did not have his plantation structures on the east side of the bayou and the Ross and Pecan Grove plantations were established on the west side, the road was moved to more easily service them. The route change required a third bridge; all three were washed out by the Bell Crevasse and rebuilt in 1859 for \$420.43.<sup>34</sup>

To allow river traffic to pass, the bridges were built to be moved. For example, in 1859 William B. Berthoud, part owner of Mavis Grove Plantation, asked for permission to build an attended, moveable bridge over Bayou Barataria, probably where Waggoner Bridge was built later. In 1867 Pierre Ernest Beauvais was granted permission to build a float bridge over Bayou des Familles on the condition that it be removed and rebuilt upon any objection of a neighbor.<sup>46</sup> This bridge crossed Bayou des Familles where the main plantation road met the bayou. In the first half of the twentieth century, ferries crossed to Barataria Island at Jones Point, and wooden swing bridges crossed Bayou Barataria at Waggoner Bridge and further <sup>37</sup> downstream at the site of the current swing bridge to Barataria Island.

### Camps

Four camp areas have been located within the park: Cheniere Grandes Coquilles, Kenta Canal, Bayou Segnette, and the Christmas Plantation Road. The camps on the Christmas Plantation Road and Kenta Canal are no longer occupied, so not much is known about them. Mr. Sapie in this century trapped from his camp located at the junction of the oil well access road near Bayou Coquilles and Kenta Canal, on the southeast corner.<sup>38</sup> A set of pilings located in this area may have been a foundation for his camp. Three camps along the Christmas Plantation road were built as hunting camps within the last several decades. In addition, three houses stood on the west side of Bayou des Familles near this road in the first half of the twentieth century,<sup>39</sup> including the residence of the landholding company's caretaker, who farmed <sup>40</sup> on both sides of the bayou. These houses were occupied year-round.

Camps along the Bayou Segnette Waterway are no more than twenty years old. The structures are built on pilings on spoil banks of the waterway, and those within the park do not have electricity. Owners of the camp leases are from New Orleans or its suburbs and often have no family ties with the local communities. Most of the camps are used for

weekend and holiday vacations, but a few are occupied year-round by fishermen and trappers.<sup>41</sup>

Of the four camps on Chenier Grandes Coquille, at least three are occupied. Although the oldest of these camps may be only thirty years old, there have been camps on the shell beach for at least fifty years. Fifty years ago there were also camps on the shell mound directly east of the beach and several burials of beach residents. Because of its favorable location, Chenier Grandes Coquilles has probably been used as a camp since the nineteenth century. The old outlet of Bayou Coquilles was located there; it is on the lake; and the shell beach provides a relatively high elevation, with old live oaks growing on it. Most of the shell has been recently taken for construction, but an old resident of one of the camps described the undisturbed beach as a low shell mound. It is possible that the beach is remnant of a prehistoric mound. The camps on Chenier Grandes Coquilles are used as holiday and weekend vacation camps; the residents<sup>42</sup> come from the suburban areas and may have no other ties with Baratavia.

Camps are typically built on stilts, with an inevitable pier fronting on the waterway. The houses are built from salvaged material, wood frame, with roofs commonly made of corrugated metal, or wood and tarpaper. A screened porch covers the length of the front. Interiors are laid out in three or four rooms with no hallway. Electricity is rare; indoor plumbing, rarer. Residents have deliberately invested little in camp houses because they are always in danger of being swept away by hurricanes.

Endnotes Appendix D

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3. Ibid.
4. Richard Beavers, "The Archaeological Potential of The Jean Lafitte National Historic Park" (Photocopy, Archeological Research Program, University of New Orleans, 1977).
5. Jefferson Parish COB I-J, July 27, 1866, 444; I-J, Oct. 5, 1866, 545.
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9. Percy Prestenbach, Sr., interview with Barbara Holmes and Bill Jackson, June 15, 1984.
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11. Allou d'Hemecourt, Apr. 13, 1835, New Orleans Notarial Archives, plat book 107, folio 22.
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16. Allou d'Hemecourt, Apr. 13, 1835.
17. Bouchereau, Statement of the Sugar and Rice Crops (1869-1892).

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20. Cristobal de Armas, Sept. 12, 1825, New Orleans Notarial Archives.
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22. Albert E. Cowdrey, Land's End: A History of the New Orleans District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and Its Lifelong Battle with the lower Mississippi and other Rivers wending their way to the sea (New Orleans: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 1977).
23. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Report of the Chief (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1924), 879.
24. Ibid. (1946), 667.
25. Ibid. (1932), 895.
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27. Ibid. (1944), 631; Ibid. (1947), 937.
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30. Barthelemy Lafon and Carlos Trudeau, "Plano Figurativo de las tierras de Don Pedro Lartigue," Nov. 1802, New Orleans Notarial Archives, plat book 106, folio 28, 29; Carlos Trudeau, "Plan del Local de las Tierras que Rodean la Ciudad de Nueva Orleans," 1803, Historic New Orleans Collection.
31. Allou d'Hemecourt, Apr. 13, 1835.
32. Jefferson Parish Police Jury Minutes, June 8, 1835.
33. J. B. Dauterive to John McDonogh, Sept. 10, 1838 and Jan. 29, 1841, McDonogh Papers, Special Collections Division, Tulane University Library.
34. Jefferson Parish Police Jury Minutes, 1858; D'Hemecourt, Feb. 11, 1867, General Land Office, Private Land Claims, Serial 020094, RG49 WNRC.
35. Jefferson Parish Policy Jury Minutes, May 16, 1859.
36. Ibid, Apr. 2, 1867.

37. Mr. and Mrs. Ursin J. Creppelle, interview with Barbara Holmes and Bill Jackson, Aug. 6, 1984; Maria Mercedes Coulon, interview with Barbara Holmes and Bill Jackson, Aug. 6, 1984.

38. Lizette and Edgar Mamalou, interview with Barbara Holmes and Bill Jackson, June 15, 1984.

39. U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey, May 17, 1945, 20LA1250 2990 C2790.

40. Prestenbach, interview.

41. Unnamed Bayou Segnette camp owners, interviews with Barbara Holmes, June 16, 1984.

42. Mr. and Mrs. Matherne, interview with Barbara Holmes, June 16, 1984.

Appendix C - National Register of  
Historical Places Nomination Form

While the following National Register of Historic Places nomination form is complete, it is not meant for immediate submission. Formal nomination of the district should wait until crucial historical resources on private holdings within the park--specifically, Chenier Grandes Coquilles--have been acquired.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Barataria Unit, Jean Lafitte National Historic Park

AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET &amp; NUMBER

Highway 45 and 301

-- NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Barataria

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Louisiana

 VICINITY OF

CODE

22

COUNTY

Jefferson

CODE

051

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER

**4 AGENCY**

REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS (if applicable)

Southwest Region, National Park Service

STREET &amp; NUMBER

P. O. Box 728

CITY, TOWN

Santa Fe,

STATE

New Mexico

VICINITY OF

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Jefferson Parish Courthouse

STREET &amp; NUMBER

2nd &amp; Derbigny - P. O. Box 10

CITY, TOWN

Gretna

STATE

Louisiana

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**TITLE Archaeological Site Inventory, Barataria Basin Marsh Unit Core Area,  
Jean Lafitte National Historical Park, Jefferson Parish, Louisiana

DATE

1982 &amp; 1984

 FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

University of New Orleans

CITY, TOWN

New Orleans

STATE

Louisiana

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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- 2) Historic Resource Study of the Baratania Unit of Jean Lafitte  
National Historical Park

1984

Federal

Southwest Region, National Park Service, Division of History  
Santa Fe, New Mexico

- 3) An eligibility determination was requested for the Bayou des Coquilles site (16 JE 37) within the district being nominated in this form March 10, 1981, and the site was found eligible under Criterion D on March 25, 1981.

## 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

---

### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Barataria District encompasses five types of historic resources found within a distinctive environment. Together they constitute a historic cultural landscape representing past and present human activity.

The district consists of a contiguous portion of the natural levees of Bayou des Familles, noncontiguous portions of the natural levees of bayous Barataria and Coquille, and noncontiguous portions of the shore of Lake Salvador. Together, bayous des Familles and Barataria once formed a major channel of the Mississippi River (3,300-1,800 B.C.); Bayou Coquille was a minor distributory of the river. Seasonal flooding during the channel's active period built the natural levees. Once the river changed course, levee building to the west enclosed an interlevee basin composed of freshwater lakes such as Lake Salvador. Flora and fauna varied according to soil elevation within the two to three miles between the levee and lake. Hardwood bottomland forests dominated by live oak trees covered the drier levees. Cypress forests swamp grew on the lower and flooded backslopes of the levees. Marshes composed of sedges and grasses formed behind the cypress swamps, and ponds and lakes developed where the marsh vegetation could not form a covering mat. On the shores of the lakes, waves built natural beaches of clam shells. Once the river abandoned the des Familles and Barataria channels, they began to sink. Compaction of the loosely laid levee soils led to general subsidence. The western half of Bayou Coquille, for example, which once emptied into Lake Salvador, sank below the level of the marsh. Fragility and change accompanied a diverse environment and abundant resources: major factors in human use of the area.

People have altered the natural landscape with five types of historic resources: 1. prehistoric shell piles, 2. nineteenth century sugar plantation field and drainage systems, 3. a nineteenth and twentieth century logging canal, 4. nineteenth and twentieth century hunting and fishing campsites and 5. historic roads (Sketch Map).

#### Prehistoric Shell Piles

The following table summarizes the results of an archeological site survey and testing conducted by the University of New Orleans in 1981.<sup>1</sup> While some data on historic components were included in their description, only the prehistoric sites were systematically recorded. Since the survey report describes each site, only a summary description is presented here. Sites are listed in the table and plotted in the inventory plan according to the survey number given in the report. There are three basic prehistoric site types located in the park: shell middens, shell mounds, and shell beaches. Shell middens are accumulations of dumped shells, often containing levels of earth from the dumping of other organic material mixed levels of shell and earth.

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Shell mounds were constructed as burial mounds or substructures to raise houses above flood levels or above neighboring buildings. Shell mounds generally have a more even appearance than middens: steeper sides, more angular form, and less complex internal stratigraphy. Shell beaches are natural deposits of shell along the edges of bodies of water, the location of prehistoric activities or the product of shell which has eroded from a rather prehistoric site and redeposited. Shell beaches are long, narrow, and not very high. Artifacts found with them are wavewashed, with obliterated details.

There are three basic site functions within the core area: special activity, habitation, and social center. Special function sites were the center of specialized and short-term prehistoric activity such as the gathering of shellfish or the hunting of particular game. Special function sites are identified by their small size, thin and homogeneous cultural level, and low density of artifacts. Because few artifacts are found in these sites, they are extremely difficult to date. Habitation sites were prehistoric residences. Most habitation sites in the park area were occupied throughout the year and will show evidence of a wide range of activities including food preparation, food storage, a variety of tool use, and the building of relatively permanent shelters. Larger sites, sites with earth as well as shell middens, and sites with moderate to large numbers of artifacts are presumed to be habitation sites. Very large sites with a complex of mounds are recognized as social centers, the hub of social authority. Such centers show evidence of social complexity such as the display of wealth by a certain class and ceremonial elaboration, represented by religious objects and structures.

Two sites are social centers, #53, the Isle Bonne Site, and #57, the Coquille Site. The Isle Bonne site is located at the northwest corner of the confluence of bayous Villars and Barataria and consists of an extensive shell midden and two shell mounds. There were once three or four mounds of this site, two of which may have been removed by the dredging of the Intracoastal Waterway (which cut through Jones Point and made Isle Bonne as an island), the appropriation of shell for road building, or by erosion. Test excavations have been done on the existing mounds, but have not been documented. Surface collections indicate that the site was occupied as early as the Tchefuncte period, 500 B.C. to as far as the Plaquemines period A.D. 1700. The mounds probably date from the later occupation of the site. The Isle Bonne site is associated with two other sites with large shell-and-earth middens and shell mounds. The Fleming and Bayou Villars sites are located across Bayou Barataria and Bayou Villars, respectively. The occurrence of these sites in close proximity is unusual, suggesting a high degree of centralized control.

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At the confluence of bayous des Familles and Coquille, the Coquille site (Photo 1), consists of a large earth-and-shell midden, one shell-and-earth mound, and the remains of possibly three additional shell mounds, remnants of which exist under old oak trees. These mounds and the earth-and-shell midden were mined in this century for road construction, but there are still extensive undisturbed deposits in the midden and the remaining mound. Excavations at the Coquille site, while incompletely documented, indicate occupation by the Tchefuncte through Plaquemines cultures. A systematic survey of the levee ridges of bayous des Familles and Coquille found small habitation sites at 200m intervals up and down Bayou des Familles and smaller special-activity and habitation sites to the west on Bayou Coquilles. The number and density of these sites, probably contemporaneous with the Coquille site, are unique. It is quite possible that such a settlement existed near the Isle Bonne and related mound sites and that its remains have been destroyed by dredging the Intracoastal and Barataria waterways. Further investigation of site occupations and economies would throw light on the relation of central and peripheral sites.

A third site (#54, Chenier Grandes Coquilles) may have been a ceremonial center, but it is difficult to interpret its function because modern shell dredging has removed over one hundred feet of the shoreline. The site appears to be a natural shell beach; artifacts in the shell are wave-washed and may have been deposited from an eroded site elsewhere on Lake Cataouatche. Longtime camp residents have said that shell dredging has moved the shoreline over one hundred feet back in places, and the area once had the appearance of a three or four foot high shell mound. This mound could have been an extensive earth-and-shell midden, since eroded and reshaped as a beach. There were several large shell mounds on the shores of Lake Salvador at the beginning of this century, none of which survive intact today.

Indigenous occupation of the district left large and small landmarks in the form of shell middens and mounds, significant landscape features on a relatively flat topography and resources for later settlers. From colonial times on, contractors mined the shell for both roads and buildings (sites #54, #57). The mounds were favored and well drained habitation sites (sites #54, #53), and sometimes used as cemeteries, (site #52) (Photo 2).<sup>4</sup>

Nineteenth Century Sugar Plantation Field and Drainage Systems

Sugar was the region's major industry in the nineteenth century. Two sugar plantations were established within the district: Christmas and Kenta. The remains of these plantations consist of the sites of the sugar mills, workers cabins, and owner's and/or overseer's houses, as well as extensive field and drainage systems.



Photo 1. Coquilles Site



Photo 2. Barataria District

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Christmas Plantation was established in 1866 and had a wooden sugar mill with open evaporative kettles from 1869 to 1885.<sup>5</sup> The owner of the plantation resided on the premises; besides his home, there were cabins for the workers, probably at the junction of Bayou des Familles and the main plantation driveway. A temporary float bridge was built at this location by the plantation owner in 1867.<sup>6</sup> Besides the major structures, the plantation consisted of "machinery, instruments, mills, wagons, carts, cattle, boats, edged tools, fowls, and . . . farming apparatus."<sup>7</sup> None of the plantation structures survived until 1894; few of them survived into the twentieth century, and nobody remembers where the mill was located.<sup>8</sup>

However, the field system is intact, and can be seen in Plate 3, an aerial photograph taken in 1945.<sup>9</sup> A system of ditches, levees, roads, and furrows exists on both sides of Bayou Barataria. Approximately every 100 to 150 feet a low ditch from 1 foot to 3 feet deep and 3 to 5 feet wide runs perpendicular to the bayou. Occasional main ditches, cut deeper (3 to 6 feet deep) and about as wide, also run perpendicular to the bayou (Photo 3). Ditches facilitated drainage after heavy rains, and fields were leveed to prevent flooding from high water. On the east side of Bayou des Familles there are levees on both the bayou and backswamp; on the west side only the back levee is still apparent, although levees probably enclosed the fields on all sides at one time. In order to build a levee, ditches must be dug for spoil, so levees are paralleled by ditches on their dry side. All the ditches on the west side of the bayou drain into the ditch on the inside of the bayou levee (Photo 4). The bayou levee is cut in several places to allow the bayou ditch to drain into the bayou; in times of flood, these cuts could be filled in. On the west side, the ditches drain into a ditch on the inside of the back levee. Drainage was facilitated by a waterwheel, once made of wood and powered by a steam engine, next to the bayou ditch on a main ditch on the east bank. Today the site of the wheel consists of a series of low brick walls parallel to the ditch.

The fields are cut by one east-west road perpendicular to the bayou, connecting the plantation structures to the main road on the east boundary of the plantation; and one north-south road cutting the fields in half. The roads consist of buildup dirt with some shell paving and are paralleled by ditches on both sides.

Kenta Plantation was established in 1865 as a sugar plantation, although the area may have been farmed for some time prior.<sup>10</sup> There was a wooden sugar mill from 1870 until at least 1883, with open kettles.<sup>11</sup> The workers' cabins, sugar mill, overseer's and owner's houses, and other plantation structures were just outside the district to the east on Bayou Barataria and one just inside the district on Kenta Canal.



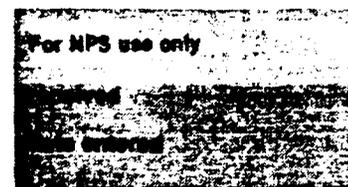
Photo 3. Christmas Plantation - Main ditch.



Photo 4. Christmas Plantation - Front ditch and levee.

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Aerial photography shows the remains of extensive structures and the junction of two roads at the current intersection of Highway 301 and Kenta Canal.<sup>12</sup> This was probably the location of the sugar mill.

Portions of the plantation's drainage system fall within the District. North of Highway 301, the ditches run north to a feeder ditch draining west into Kenta Canal. Kenta Canal probably began as a main drainage ditch running from the Bayou Barataria levee north into the backswamp.<sup>13</sup> It lies along a property boundary that was first established in 1768;<sup>13</sup> during the colonial period landowners commonly placed major drainage ditches along property boundaries. Therefore, Kenta Canal may have begun as a drainage ditch in 1768, and was used as such during the operation of the plantation era.

The ditch and levee systems were originally designed and built to drain the land, but from about 1885 until the turn of the century, when the plantations were converted to rice production, they were used to flood the fields.

The field systems persist as a major landscape feature. The levees and roads provide dry land access; the flooded ditches provide small boat access. The furrows are clearly distinguishable in fields not used for rice cultivation (Photo 5). The fields are no longer clear, but heavy undergrowth indicates their former presence.

#### Logging Canal

With the decline of the sugar plantations, the cypress logging industry moved onto the swamps. Kenta Canal was widened, deepened, and extended during the 1880s to accommodate pullboats and log rafts from lumbering operations on the west side of Bayou des Familles (Photos 6, 7). Approximately 8 miles long, 15 to 20 feet wide, and 5 to 3 feet deep, the canal followed the edge of the cypress swamp. In addition, short deadend canals were dug from Kenta Canal into the swamp. The pullboat was stationed at the end of the deadend canal. After cypress trees were attached to the pull boat with chains, a steam engine would pull the logs to the canal, where they were tied together in rafts and floated to the sawmill. The pullboats left a multitude of radiating scars in the swamp, some of which were still visible in the district in 1984. The logging industry dramatically changed the swamp, removing all the large cypress trees and leaving smaller traces in the form of occasional sunken cut logs lodged in the mud of the main or side canals (Photo 8). Kenta Canal was probably used up until World War I, when the industry ran out of large trees. An oil pipeline canal coming from the southwest and tying into the curve of Kenta Canal was dug in the 1950s; a natural gas wellhead cuts the canal within the district. In the 1980s, subdivision development cut short the northern end of the canal outside of the district.



Photo 5. Christmas Plantation - Sugar Cane Furrows.



Photo 6. Kinta Canal



Photo 7. Kinta Canal.

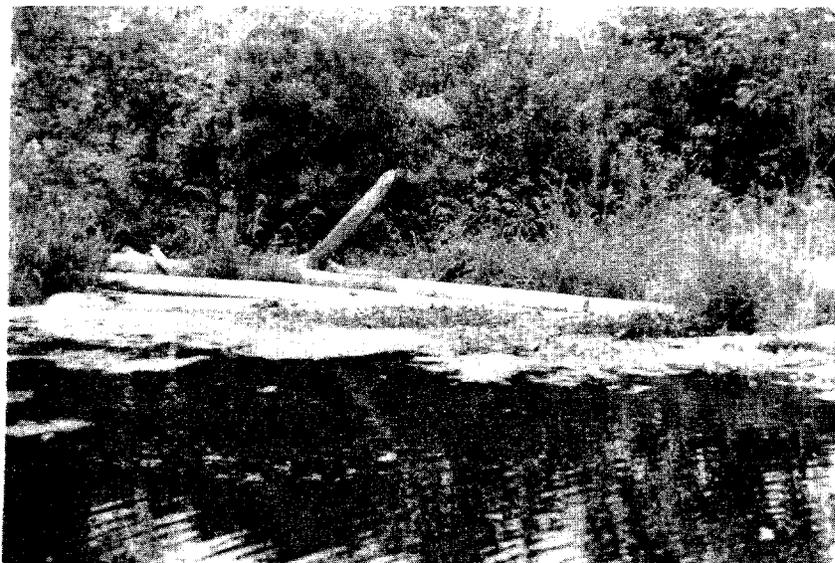
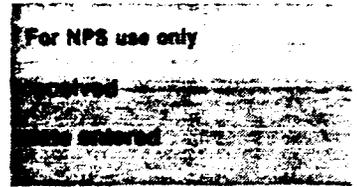


Photo 8. Cypress logs.

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Hunting and Fishing Camps

When wealthy developers were building the plantations, the inhabitants of the Barataria region developed an economy that was based on harvesting a variety of resources. The "little man" and his family supported themselves by hunting alligators, deer, and ducks, trapping muskrat and mink, catching catfish, gathering moss, and smallscale farming. In order to pursue this style of living, the locals built seasonally occupied camps near the resources.

Camps have been located within the historic district at Cheniere Grandes Coquilles, Kenta Canal, and the Christmas Plantation Road. The camps on the Christmas Plantation Road and Kenta Canal are no longer occupied, and not much information is available on them. A trapping camp was located at the junction of the oil well access road near Bayou Coquilles and Kenta Canal on the southeast corner. A set of pilings in this area may have been a foundation for the camp. Three camps along the Christmas Plantation road were built as hunting camps within the last several decades (Photo 9). In addition, three houses stood on the west side of Bayou des Familles near this road in the first half of the twentieth century, including the residence of the landholding company's caretaker who farmed on both sides of the Bayou. These houses were occupied year-round.

Of the four camps on Chenier Grandes Coquille (Photos 10-16), at least three are occupied. Although the oldest of these camps may be only thirty years old, there have been camps on the shell beach for at least fifty years. There were also camps on the shell mound directly east of the beach and several burials of beach residents. Because of its favorable location, Chenier Grandes Coquilles has probably been used as a camp location since the nineteenth century. The old outlet of Bayou Coquilles was located here; it is on the lake; and the shell beach provides a relatively high elevation, with old live oaks growing on it. The camps on Chenier Grandes Coquilles are used as holiday and weekend vacation camps; the residents come from the suburban areas and may have no other ties with Barataria.

Camps are typically built on piers or stilts, with an inevitable pier fronting the waterway. The houses are built from salvaged material, wood frame, with roofs commonly made of corrugated metal, or wood and tar paper. A screened porch covers the length of the front. Interiors are laid out in three or four rooms with no hallway. Electricity is rare; indoor plumbing, rarer. Residents have deliberately invested little in camp houses because they are always in danger of being swept away by hurricanes or visited by vandals.



Photo 9. Eastermost Camp.



Photo 10. Camp 1, Chenier Grandes Coquilles.



Photo 11. Camp 1, Chenier Grandes Coquilles.



Photo 12. Camp 2, Chenier Grandes Coquilles.



Photo 13. Camp 2, Chenier Grandes Coquille.



Photo 14. Camp 3, Chenier Grandes Coquilles.



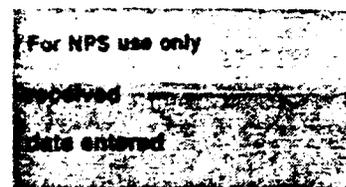
Photo 15. Camp 4, Chenier Grandes Coquilles.



Photo 16. Beach at Chenier Grandes Coquilles.

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Roads

The colonial road to Barataria started at the Mississippi River, went down the east bank of Bayou des Familles, and ended at the junction of Bayous des Familles and Barataria opposite what is now Crownpoint, following the ridge of the natural levee. In the area later known as the Christmas Plantation, it must have followed a slightly flattened curve to the east of the bayou, because the highest point of the des Familles levee lies several hundred yards to the east in that area (Photo 17). The former appearance of this road is unknown. It may have had a shell base because it was clearly and consistently marked on property surveys and maps at the turn of the nineteenth century. After the area on the east side of Bayou des Familles was subdivided into 10 arpent tracts in 1768, the owners of these properties probably built the road. During the first half of the nineteenth century it was widened to 25 feet wide within a cleared corridor of 40 feet. The Camino Real, as it known, was the major land access route from New Orleans to the communities of Barataria, Crown Point, and Lafitte. It was used well into the twentieth century, when a cattle track on the west side of Bayou des Familles was developed and only recently paved as the area's main highway. The two roads follow the high ground of the levee on both sides of the bayou.

The main road to Christmas Plantation and an oil well access road next to Bayou Coquille also come within the district. The Christmas Plantation road was improved with additional shell in the 1950s to improve access to a series of oil holes just east of the district. The Coquilles road was built at the same time for access to an oil well west of the district. After logging slowed down in the 1920s, oil became the area's major industry, and remains so today. Together, the two roads total no more than one and a half miles within the district; they are payed with loose shell, a paving material which has been in use in this area since the colonial period.

Intrusions and Integrity

There are remarkably few intrusions on the cultural landscape. Although the district has not been deserted since the decline of the plantations and the lumber industry, its use has been limited to small-scale, traditional pursuits such as hunting and fishing. Market garden farming of the Christmas Plantation continued until 1945, but without obliterating the old field system. On the contrary, it made use of it. All the old fields were abandoned and overgrown by the 1980s.

As a utility corridor, the highway right-of-way has been the major cause of intrusions. Telephone and power lines, water lines, and a small pumping station are all found along the road (Photo 18). Two major additional intrusions have been built in the last fifteen years: an illegal pumping station for draining lands north of the district (Photo 19) and a high-voltage power line running east-west across its southern end (Photo 20).



Photo 17. Camino Real, Christmas Plantation.

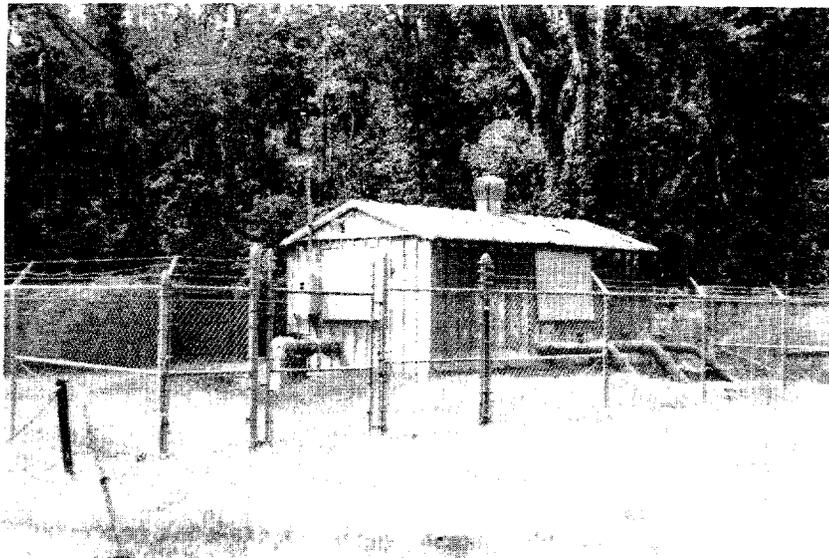


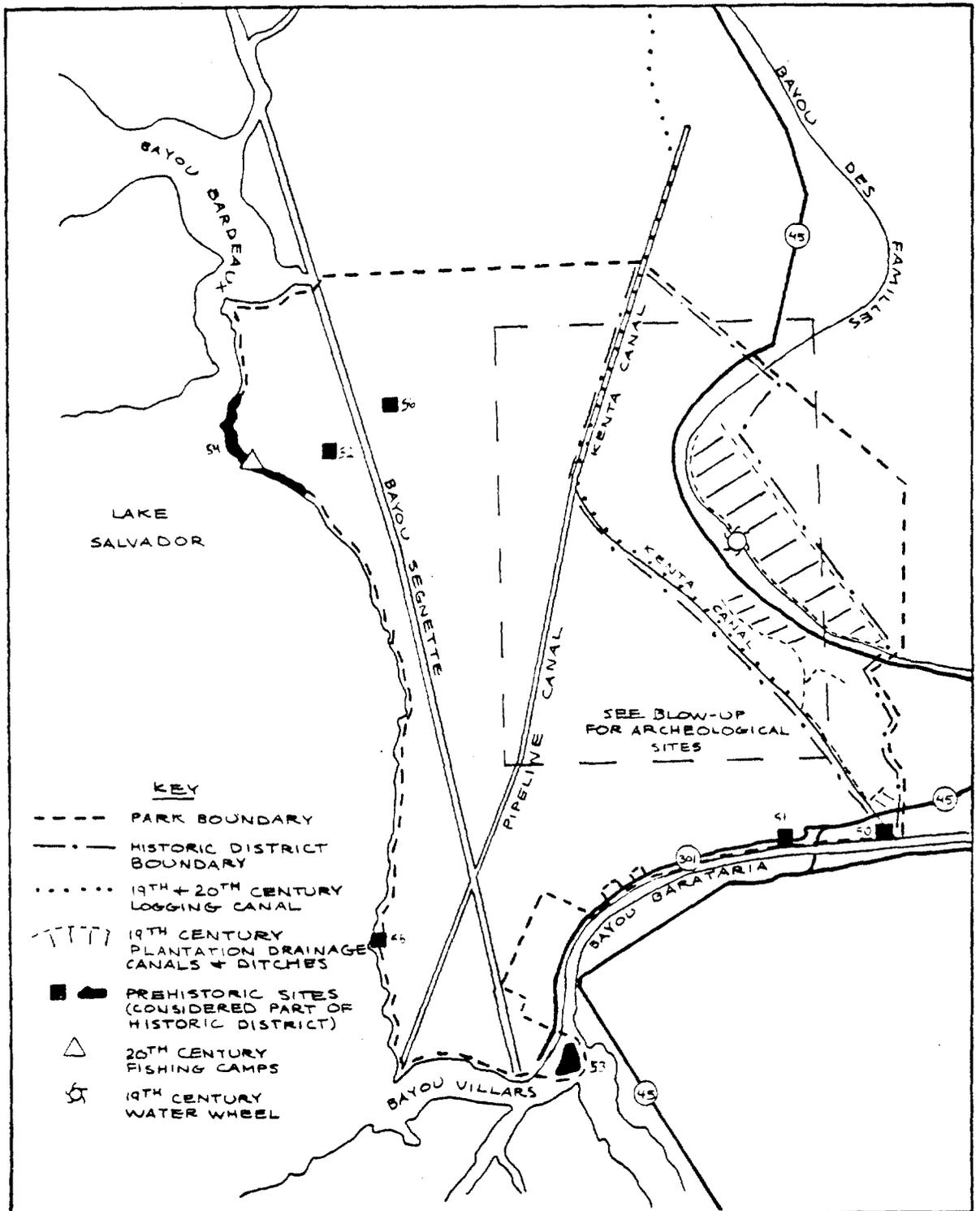
Photo 18. Parish Pumphouse, Baratavia District.



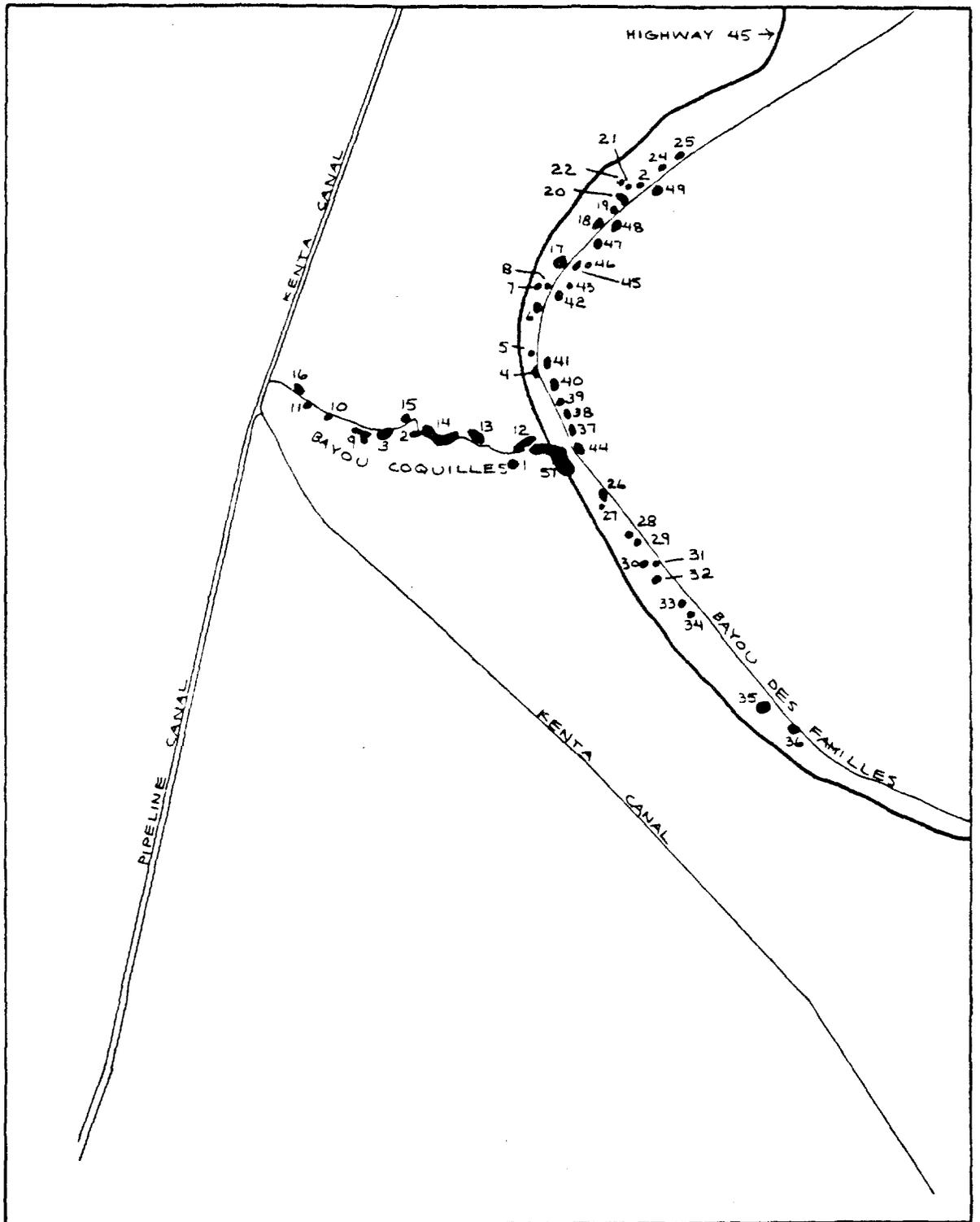
Photo 19. Illegal Pumphouse, Barataria District.



Photo 20. Powerline, Barataria District.



Sketch Map. Historic district, Barataria Unit.



Sketch Map Insert - Archeological Sites at the junction of bayous de Familles and Coquilles.

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Endnotes Appendix C

1. Richard Beavers, "Archaeological Site Inventory, Barataria Basin Marsh Unit, Core Area Jean Lafitte National Historical Park Jefferson Parish, Louisiana" (Photocopy, Archeological Research Program, University of New Orleans, 1982).
2. Sherwood M. Gagliano, Richard A. Weinstein, Eileen K. Burden, Katherine L. Brooks, and Wayne P. Glander, "Cultural Resources Survey of the Barataria, Segnette, and Rigaud Waterways, Jefferson Parish, Louisiana (Photocopy, Coastal Environments, Inc., 1979), 4-45, A-72.
3. Mr. and Mrs. Matherne, interview with Barbara Holmes, June 16, 1984.
4. Ibid.
5. Jefferson Parish, COB I-J, July 27, 1866, 444; COB I-J, Oct. 5, 1866, 545; A. Bouchereau, Statement of the Sugar and Rice Crops Made in Louisiana (New Orleans: F. F. Hansell, 1870-92.)
6. Jefferson Parish Police Jury Minutes, West Bank, Apr. 2, 1867.
7. Jefferson Parish COB I-J, July 27, 1866, 444.
8. Percy Prestenbach, Sr., interview with Barbara Holmes and Bill Jackson, June 15, 1984.
9. U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey, May 17, 1945, photograph 20LA1250 2788.
10. Jefferson Parish CO, book IJ, Nov. 11, 1965, 172; Allou d'Hebecourt, Apr. 13, 1835, New Orleans Notarial Archives, plat book 107, Folio 22.
11. Bouchereau, Statement of the Sugar and Rice Corps (1871-87).
12. U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey, photograph.
13. Allou d'Hebecourt, Apr. 13, 1835.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The history of land use in the Barataria Rural historical District is characterized by both continuity and change. During prehistory, the inhabitants established a broadly based economy and a settlement pattern of permanent villages and seasonal camps. The early historic inhabitants of the area continued this way of life, supplementing it with capitalized largescale agriculture. When the plantations failed, the lumbering industry took over. Since World War II, most economic changes in the region have missed the district, which continues to resemble the prehistoric and historic rural landscape. The district is eligible for the National Register under criterion A because it is associated with major economic episodes of the Mississippi Delta and under criterion D because it contains sites and cultural features which may yield important information on regional economy, settlement patterns, and land use.

People and the land have left their mark on one another. The old course of the Mississippi River down bayous des Familles and Barataria built natural levees where people built permanent homes and farmed. Behind the levees in the swamp, marshes and lakes, people camped, hunted, trapped, fished, cut wood, and drilled for oil. As defined, the district encompasses mostly levee and swamp, with some lake shore sites; the marsh is relatively fragile and human activity there has been mostly shortlived. It is important to emphasize that historically, all land use in the district belonged to a economic system and settlement pattern which utilized the full range of contiguous environments and their resources, even in cases where a particular activity or episode involved only one resource.

Prehistoric man was in the Barataria District from as early as the Tchefuncte (700-200 B.C.) to a state as the Plaquemines (AD 1100-1600) cultures, and archeological sites represent the complete span of occupation in the Mississippi Delta. Sites in the park area represent a continuous local cultural development from the Marksville through the Plaquemines cultures, a development that has only been defined for the lower Mississippi Valley, but that is poorly understood in the delta. Known Marksville sites in the delta are extremely rare, probably because they are overlain by later occupations. Consequently, the ceremonial and social parallels between the Delta Marksville and lower Mississippi

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Valley cultures are unknown. This gap in delta information led to interpretations based on more complete data from the valley and put the delta in a position of neglect. New work on the earlier Tchefuncte Delta culture has shown this hierarchy to be prejudicial on the part of valley archeologists, and more work on the Delta Marksville might be equally as enlightening.

The variety of site types found in the district and their well-preserved faunal remains may allow us to expand our knowledge of settlement patterns and economy. The special use sites may have been seasonally occupied hunting or gathering camps; the ceremonial centers were occupied permanently. Test excavations at the Coquille site indicated a wide variety of faunal resources from the complete range of delta habitats. Even a few corn cobs have been found on the Isle Bonne Site. The relative importance of intensive huntinggathering and agriculture in the late prehistoric occupation of the Mississippi Delta is openly debated, and sites in the district may prove relevant to this question as well. The study of prehistoric economy leads naturally to questions of social complexity and organization. The Coquilles site with its cluster of associated smaller sites, and the Isle Bonne site, which is associated with two equally large sites outside the district, present unprecedented opportunities to learn more about intersite relationships.

Available information on the prehistoric occupation of the district indicates that the inhabitants developed an economy based upon the use of a wide variety of resources rather than the intensive use of one resource or intensive reliance on agriculture. Coupled with this broad-based economy, a flexible settlement pattern involved seasonal camps near particular resources as well as permanent village sites on the levees. This pattern continued throughout the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries. Inhabitants of the communities of Crownpoint, Barataria, and Lafitte built seasonal fishing and hunting camps on stilts or moored houseboats on bayous, favoring the shores Lake Salvador, and particularly, shell mounds such as Chenier Grandes Coquilles. Camps were not built as permanent structures because they were exposed to hurricanes. Campsites have been used seasonally since at least the early nineteenth century and should reveal significant information on the economy, function, and material culture of camp life throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Colonial land grants and land clearing paved the way for largescale agricultural development in the nineteenth century. John McDonogn temporarily interrupted development in the district by holding his

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property as an investment. McDonogh amassed a fortune in real estate including most of the district. Famous character in New Orleans society before his death in 1850, he opposed slavery on moral grounds and devised a complicated means of manumitting his slaves based on seemingly selfish capitalistic principles. He was also an active member of the African Colonization Society and the close friend of Andrew Dunnford, a planter and a free person of color. While his ownership of land in the district achieved little in the way of improvements, McDonogh bequeathed the property to the cities of New Orleans and Baltimore, and in 1860, its sale helped to fund free public education in both cities.

After the McDonogh estate was settled, the Christmas and Kinta plantations were established. The surviving field systems are a rare, littleknown, and representative remnant of the sugar plantations. While historians have studied the society and material culture of the planter elites, the economic and agricultural practices of the plantation the underpinings of delta economy are poorly understood. For example, it is not yet known why the sugar plantations failed early in the Barataria region and why the plantations in the district and surrounding areas switched to rice. Further work on the field systems and sites of the plantation structures would shed light on these matters.

When the rice plantations failed, the cypress lumber industry moved into the district, and intensive lumbering of the Barataria region lasted until the first World War. Kenta Canal was widened, deepened, and lengthened to accommodate logging machinery and logs. The cutting of timber and radial scarring of the swamp by secondary logging canals also worked substantial changes on the landscape. Like the plantations, the logging industry provided seasonal employment to local inhabitants, but did not interfere with their other pursuits.

The Barataria Historic Rural District encompasses historic resources ranging from prehistoric camps to historic logging canals, yet they are all tied together by their common environment and participation in similar economic and settlement patterns. These sites represent of important events in the history of the region (Criterion A) and are likely to yield important information concerning these events (Criterion D).

**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

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 1976 Barataria Basin: Geologic Processes and Framework. Baton Rouge:  
 Louisiana State University Center for Wetland Resources

Beavers, Richard  
 1977 "The Archaeological Potential of the Jean Lafitte National Historical Park:  
 New Orleans: Ms. on file, Jean Lafitte National Historic Park

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1,850  
 UTM REFERENCES

A	1,5	777950	3298360	B	1,5	779330	3296970
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C	1,5	780190	3295750	D	1,5	780340	3295770
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The district is an irregular shape with several non-contiguous sites. The irregularities are due, in part, to the overlap of political, historical, and natural boundaries. The political boundaries of the Park unit define the southeastern . . . continued

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

**11 FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME / TITLE

Barbara Holmes, Research Historian

ORGANIZATION

Southwest Region, National Park Service

DATE

9/84

STREET & NUMBER

P.O. Box 728

TELEPHONE

505-988-6787 or FTS 476-1787

CITY OR TOWN

Santa Fe,

STATE

New Mexico 87501

**12 CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION**

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

YES\_\_\_ NO\_\_\_ NONE\_\_\_

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

In compliance with Executive Order 11593, I hereby nominate this property to the National Register, certifying that the State Historic Preservation Officer has been allowed 90 days in which to present the nomination to the State Review Board and to evaluate its significance. The evaluated level of significance is \_\_\_National \_\_\_State \_\_\_Local

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
 ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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Beavers, Richard C., Teresa R. Lamb and Gary B. Deilarcy. "Data Recovery for Area of Adverse Impact by Proposed Public Access Facilities, the Barataria Basin Marsh Unit-Core Area." Photocopy, Archaeological Research Program, University of New Orleans, 1982.

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UTM's: are keyed to points on the enclosed USGS 7.5' Topographic quads.

	Zone	Easting	Northing	
E	15	780330	3296530	
F	15	780160	3296790	
G	15	780320	3297010	
H	15	780120	3297470	
I	15	780260	3297650	
J	15	778660	3299850	
K	15	779170	3300380	
L	15	777880	3301550	
M	15	777770	3301640	
N	15	777040	3299350	
discontiguous sites				
15	15	774310	3299330	
16	15	773650	3299700	Chenier Grandes Coquilles Site #54
17	15	773720	3300390	
18	15	774600	3299710	Approx. center point, Site 52
19	15	775300	3300280	Approx. center point, Site 50
20	15	775040	3295760	Approx. center point, Site 55
21	15	776980	3293590	Approx. center point, Site 53
22	15	779310	3295720	Approx. center point, Site 51

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Verbal Boundary Description continued.

Edge of the district as it begins at Bayou Barataria, moves north along the western edge of the right-of-way for the Lafitte--Larose Highway, and avoids the western edge of the community of Crownpoint. After crossing Bayou des Familles, the district boundary departs from the park boundary and includes the back levee and road of the Christmas Plantation. At the northern end of the Christmas Plantation, in order to include the archeological sites found on the levee, the district boundary curves east to follow the natural levee of Bayou des Familles. The boundary then turns northwest at the boundary of the park unit until it meets Kenta Canal. The district follows and includes Kenta Canal southward until it ends at Bayou Barataria. The boundary then turns east along Bayou Barataria until it hits the eastern park boundary.

Noncontiguous portions of the district include prehistoric and historic resources scattered on the levees of bayous Barataria and Coquille and scattered sites on Lake Salvador.

Within the boundaries of the park, the district includes:

1. All of the bayous Coquilles and des Familles levees, with the prehistoric site concentration.
2. Christmas and Kenta plantations.
3. Kenta Canal and the swamp area which was logged from it.
4. Scattered archeological sites.

## SOURCES

The Barataria region is not academically popular or fashionable with historic preservation enthusiasts. It has never been particularly rich or poor, progressive or traditional, culturally isolated or cosmopolitan; rather, it has always been a little of all of these. Consequently, the historic documentation, which was never voluminous lies scattered in litted sources, and has not been gathered together into significant collections. Moreover, since much of the history of the area derived from the "little" man, tradition and oral history are significant sources of information. The following bibliography was annotated to steer the reader and future researcher around some of the disappointing dead ends and in some fruitful directions.

1. National Archives (NA) and Washington National Record Center (WNRC)

Bureau of the Census, national census 18101870, RG29. Beginning in 1850, the forms filled in by the census takers are quite detailed. Microfilm copies of the manuscript forms are available at the New Orleans Public Library.

General Land Office, Division D(PLC), Louisiana, RG49. These records are split between the National Archives, which contains all documentation up to the time when private claims were approved by Congress, and the Suitland Washington National Record Center, which holds all files concerning the claims subsequent to their approval and the issue of patents. Records on claims for which no patent has yet been issued are held by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The National Archives do not contain much more than what was published in the American State Papers. More complete documentation concerning the colonial grants upon which the claims were based was on file in New Orleans in the surveyor's general's office when it burned.

2. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Eastern States Office, Tract Books and Private Land Claims Index, Reston, Virginia.

BLM keeps all the tract books on private land claims, copies of patents issued, and index by state and name of private land claims. The office also retains records on claims for which no patent has yet been issued.

3. Colonial Archives

Archives Nationales, Archives Coloniales and Archivo General de Indias.

Microfilm copies of documents in the above repositories were consulted at the Historic New Orleans Collection. Microfilm copies of documents from various Spanish repositories were also available through the National Park Service, Southwest Region.

A calendar of this collection is available in that office. Published index and catalogues to Louisiana documents follow.

Camara, Jose de La Pena, Ernest J. Burrus, S.J., Charles Edwards O'Neill, S.J., Maria Teresa Garcia Fernandez. Catalogo de Documentos del Archivo General de Indias, Seccion V, Gobierno, Audiencia de Santo Domingo Sobre La Epoca Espanola de Luisiana. Madrid: Direccion General de Archivos y Bibliotecas, 1968.

Gonzalez, Julio. Archivo General de Indias, Catalogo de Mapas y Planos de la Florida y la Luisiana. Madrid: Direccion General del Patrimonio Artistico, Archivos y Museos, 1979.

Messier, MarieAntoinette, Etienne Taillemite, and Gilberte de Forges.

Archives Nationales, Inventaire Des Archives Coloniales, Correspondence a l'Arivee en Provenance de la Louisiane Tome 1 et 2. Paris: Archives Nationales, 1976 and 1983.

#### 4. Notarial and Judicial Archives

Jefferson Parish Notarial Archives, Jefferson Parish Court House. Not as well indexed as the New Orleans Notarial Archives, and so less valuable. By the second half of the nineteenth century, the inhabitants of the Barataria region were conducting much of their business in Gretna, so their notarial acts are filed in Jefferson Parish. No indexes exist for these records.

Jefferson Parish Old Judicial Records, Jefferson Parish, Old Judicial Records Building. Old judicial records are kept in a separate repository. Good indexes for the records by names of plaintiff and defendant are available. Successions are listed under names of defendants. This is an excellent source of information on the economic affairs of the inhabitants during the second half of the nineteenth century. After that, the records become too voluminous for easy access.

Jefferson Parish Plats, Jefferson Parish Court House. The plat room is well organized, with a good index, but most of the material is limited to the twentieth century.

Jefferson Parish Police Jury Minutes. Typescript copies of the jury minutes of the nineteenth century provided by Ms. Betsy Swanson. They contain some important data on police jury business, such as roads.

New Orleans Notarial Archives and Plat Books, New Orleans Courthouse.

This is an outstanding resource on the business lives of New Orleans residents, and economic aspects of their personal lives.

The notarial acts go back through the colonial period and are referenced by the name of the notary and the date of the act. Plats are referenced by volume and folio.

Jefferson Parish was part of Orleans Parish until 1825, and records of the Barataria area before then are found in Orleans Parish. However, for many years after 1826, many landowners in Jefferson parish lived or conducted their work in New Orleans and records pertaining to Barataria are found in New Orleans throughout the nineteenth century. There are no general indexes for all the notarial acts, as there are for the plats, wills, inventories, and successions of the late eighteenth century and all of the nineteenth centuries, available in the New Orleans Public Library.

Spanish and French Judicial Records, Louisiana State Museum History Center. Original judicial records dating from the colonial period within the state, extensively indexed, on the economic affairs of the colonists.

#### 5. Manuscripts

Gregory, Hiram. "Indian Sites of Louisiana." Department of Anthropology, Nichitoches State University, n.d. A series of maps of Indian site locations prepared by the most knowledgeable expert on Louisiana Indians. It is flawed by a lack of citations and dates of occupation.

"John McDonogh Papers," Special Collections Division, Tulane University Library.

John McDonogh saved correspondence he received and many of the original drafts of his own letters. Although the material is extensive, there are few references to Barataria.

"A Journal of the Mavis Grove Plantation." Louisiana State Museum Historical Center, New Orleans, 2856-8. Contains a wealth of data concerning the allocation of tasks, seasonal round, labor policy, and an unforgettable firsthand account of the effects of the Bell Crevasse.

#### 6. U.S. Government Publications (listed chronologically)

Sibley, John. "Historical Sketches of the Several Indian Tribes in Louisiana, South of the Arkansas River, and Between the Mississippi and River Grande." American State Papers. Vol. 7, Indian Affairs 1. Washington: Gales and Seaton, 1805. Useful short summary of Indian groups in the newly acquired Louisiana Purchase.

American State Papers, Public Lands, Washington: Gales and Seaton, 1832-1861. Published reports sent to Congress on the private land claims made on public lands.

Ninth Census of the United States. Vol 3, The Statistics of the Wealth and Industry of the U.S. Washington, Government Printing Office, 1872. Agricultural production figures for Jefferson Parish.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Report of the Chief. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1920-1973. Annual statements of work completed as well as statistics of shipping tonnages on corps waterways.

Fifteenth Census of the United States, Agriculture Vol. 2, The Southern States. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1930. Extensive summary figures for all of Jefferson Parish. By this time most of the agriculture in the parish was limited to the Barataria Basin.

1978 Census of Agriculture, Vol. 1, State and County Data. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1981. Agricultural production figures for Jefferson Parish, which by this time reflected Barataria Basin almost exclusively.

#### 7. Periodicals

Jefferson Parish Yearly Review. Jefferson Parish, 1936-1950. Although it sounds like a chamber of commerce publication, the Review contains valuable information on the economy of Barataria.

New Orleans Times Picayune and New Orleans States Item, etc. The New Orleans Public Library has a topical index and necrology file for New Orleans newspapers beginning in the first half of the nineteenth century and continuing through the first few decades of the twentieth.

Swanson, Betsy. "Did You Know." Transit Riders Digest, New Orleans Public Service, 1974-1980. Vignettes on New Orleans history based on original research.

#### 8. Interviews

Camp residents of Bayou Segnette. Interviews with author, Aug. 16, 1984. The names of the four residents interviewed were not requested to make the conversations as informal as possible. They were mostly short-term residents from the metropolitan area.

Coulon, Maria Mercedes. Interview with author and Bill Jackson, Aug. 6, 1984. Mrs. Coulon (nee Perrin) grew up on Barataria Island and has lived there most of her life. She is eighty seven years old.

Creppelle, Mr. and Mrs. Ursen J. Interview with author and Bill Jackson, Aug. 6, 1984. Mr. and Mrs. Creppelle are long-term residents of Rosethorn Road, on the south side of Bayou Barataria.

Ehret, Frank. Interview with author and Bill Jackson, Aug. 6, 1984. Mr. Ehret's father ran cattle on Bayou des Familles and Barataria Island. He is a lifelong student and supporter of the natural and cultural history of the area.

Mamalo, Lizette and Edgar. Interview with author and Bill Jackson, June 13, 1984. Mr. and Mrs. Mamalo are caretakers for the Inez Plantation owned by the Louisiana Land and Exploration Company. They have lived on the north side of Bayou Barataria since the 1940s.

Matherne, Mr. and Mrs. Interview with author, Aug. 16, 1984. Mr. and Mrs. Matherne have had a camp on Cheniere Grandes Coquilles for the past thirty years or so. Before that, their families moored houseboats in that area.

Odom, Dr. Charles. Interview with author and Bill Jackson, June 15, 1984. Dr. Odom's grandfather was Charles I. Brown, the Harvey storeowner who bought the defunct plantations on Bayou des Familles.

Prestenbach, Percy, Sr. Interview with author and Bill Jackson, June 16, 1984. Mr. Prestenbach is a longtime resident of Crownpoint. He has worked on small saw mills in the area.

Verdun, Frank. Interview with author and Bill Jackson, June 13, 1984. Mr. Verdun's father bought their land and built the family house on the north side of Bayou Barataria in 1926-27. Mr. Verdun has lived there most of his life.

#### 9. Photographs

U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey. Photographs 456 2787-2790, May 17, 1945. Useful aerial photographs at a scale of approximately 1:20,000.

#### 10. Map Collections

Historic New Orleans Collection and New Orleans Public Library. The New Orleans Public Library has a particularly good index, but fewer pertinent maps. The Historic New Orleans Collection has a fine selection of colonial maps.

#### 11. Books and Articles

Adams, R. D., B. B. Barrett, J. H. Blackman, B. W. Gane, and W. G. McIntire. Barataria Basin: Geologic Processes and Framework. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Center for

Wetland Resources, 1976. A concise summary of the geological underpinnings of the Barataria Basin, written in relatively nontechnical language and dealing with the effects of current human activities such as canal dredging.

Allan, William. Life and Work of John McDonogh. McDonogh, MD: The Trustees of the McDonogh School, 1886. Reprint. Metairie, Louisiana: Jefferson Parish Historical Commission, 1983. Written by the head of the McDonogh School in Baltimore, this work is not unbiased, but relatively comprehensive.

Arthur, Stanley Clisby. Jean Laffite: Gentleman River. New Orleans: Harmanson, 1952. The first historical treatment of Jean Laffite, but out of date: Arthur did not see all of Laffite's journals.

Bahr, L. J. and J. J. Hebrard, Barataria Basin: Biological Characterization. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Center for Wetland Resources, 1976. This study focuses on the wetlands and the flora and fauna found in them, emphasizing items of economic importance.

Beavers, Richard, "The Archaeological Potential of the Jean Lafitte National Historical Park." Photocopy, Archeological Research Program, University of New Orleans, 1977. Although this summary Beaver's survey and testing for the park, it is his only statement concerning the whole site.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Archeological Site Inventory, Barataria Basin Marsh Unit, Core Area Jean Lafitte National Historical Park, Jefferson Parish, Louisiana." Photocopy, Archeological Research Program, University of New Orleans, 1982. An archeological survey of the core area of the unit, flawed by lack of a systematic record of the historic sites.

Beavers, Richard C., Teresia R. Lamb, and Gary B. Dellarcy. "Determination of Degree of Adverse Impact on Known Cultural Resources by Proposed Public Access Facilities at the Barataria Basin Marsh Unit, Core Area." Photocopy, Archeological Research Program, University of New Orleans, 1982. A brief report on the testing program on the Coquilles site, with little analysis.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Data Recovery for Area of Adverse Impact by Proposed Public Access Facilities, The Barataria Basin Marsh Unit, Core Area." Photocopy, Archeological Research Program, University of New Orleans, 1982. The second phase of archaeological testing at the Coquilles site, also with very little analysis.

Bouchereau, A. Statement of the Sugar and Rice Crops Made in Louisiana in 1868-69. New Orleans: F. F. Hansell, 1869-1892. This is an excellent source of plantation names, owners, equipment, and crops.

- Champomier, P. A. Statement of the Sugar Crop made in Louisiana in 1845-46. New Orleans: Cook, Young and Co., 1846. Yearly statements through 1862. An excellent source of information on plantation production.
- Cohen, H. and A. Cohen. New Orleans Directory. New Orleans: Daily Delta, 1853. The early directories are useful for their short biographical sketches of prominent citizens.
- Comeaux, Malcolm R. Atchafalaya Swamp Life: Settlement and Folk Occupations, Geoscience and Man. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1972. The occupations and technology of swamp life, with a historical perspective on the twentieth century.
- Cowdrey, Albert E. Land's End: A History of the New Orleans District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and Its Lifelong Battle with the Lower Mississippi and other Rivers Wending Their Way to the Sea. New Orleans: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 1977. A short history of the district, but very readable, and a good place to start further research.
- Dart, Henry P. "The Career of Dubreuil in French Louisiana." Louisiana Historical Quarterly 18 (1935): 267-91. Although the article is rather poorly organized, it does contain useful information taken from primary documents.
- Diderot, Denis. Encyclopedie ou Dictionnaire Raisonne Des Sciences, Des Arts, et Des Metiers. 1751-1780. Reprint. Stuttgart: Friedrich Frommann Verlag, 1961. The dictionary is an excellent source for economic and technological information on the French world of the eighteenth century.
- Dinn, Gilbert C. "The Canary Islanders of Louisiana: A History to 1945." Photocopy, Jean Lafitte National Historical Park, 1985.
- Dobyns, Henry F. Native American Historical Demography: A Critical Bibliography. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1976. A critical bibliography and short overview by the dean of American Indian historical demography, the overview provides a perspective on the study area not available elsewhere.
- Drechsel, Emanuel J., and T. Haunani Makuakane-Drechsel. "An Ethnohistory of Nineteenth Century Louisiana Indians." Department of Anthropology, University of Oklahoma, 1982. A thorough review of the available literature, but without much analysis or regard for primary documentation.
- Eggan, Fred R. "The Ethnological Cultures and their Archeological Backgrounds." Archeology of Eastern United States, ed. James B. Griffen. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952. An admittedly speculative and synthetic work which integrates ethnological and archeological data on the grand scale. Provocative.

- Evans, Sally Kittredge, Frederick Stielow, and Betsy Swanson. Grand Isle on the Gulf: An Early History. Metairie, Louisiana: Jefferson Parish Historical Commission, 1979. A history of Grand Isle from the colonial period through the nineteenth century, with a refreshing emphasis personal history.
- Evans, William Julian. The Sugar-Planter's Manual, Being a Treatise on the Act of Obtaining Sugar from the Sugar Cane. Philadelphia: Lea and Blanchard, 1848. An extensive work on sugar production in the United States and the Caribbean.
- Ford, James A. "Analysis of Indian Village Site Collections from Louisiana and Mississippi." State of Louisiana Department of Conservation Anthropological Study 2. New Orleans: Department of Conservation, Louisiana Geological Survey, 1936. An early but still useful reference on the material culture of the early historic tribes of the lower Mississippi.
- Frazier, D. "Recent Deltaic Deposits of the Mississippi River, Their Development and Chronology." Transactions of the Gulf Coast Association of Geological Societies 17 (1967): 287315. The standard reference on delta lobe definition.
- Gagliano, Sherwood M., Richard A. Weinstein, Eileen K. Burden, Katherine L. Brooks, and Wayne P. Glander. "Cultural Resources Survey of the Barataria, Segnette, and Rigaud Waterways, Jefferson Parish, Louisiana." Photocopy, Coastal Environments, Inc., 1979. An archeological survey with good geologic, prehistoric, and historic sections on the Barataria Basin.
- Gary, Don L. and Donald W. Davis. Recreational Dwellings in the Louisiana Coastal Marsh. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Center for Wetland Resources, 1979. A look at the environmental and sociological characteristics of contemporary camps. This book is most useful for planners.
- Gayarre, Charles. History of Louisiana. New Orleans: Armand Hawkins, 1885. A monumental, but uneven history by a native son.
- Giardino, Marco. "Report on the Ceramic Materials from the Coquille Site (16JF:57), Barataria Unit, Jean Lafitte National Historical Park." Photocopy, Jean Lafitte National Historical Park, New Orleans, 1984. Important basic analysis.
- Guillote III, Joseph Valsin. "Masters of the Marsh: An Introduction to the Ethnography of the Isles of Lower St. Bernard Parish, Louisiana." Photocopy, Department of Anthropology, University of New Orleans, 1982. The Isles of St. Bernard Parish and of

Barataria adapted to similar historical and environmental circumstances. A well-rounded ethnography with some historical perspective.

Historical Records Survey, Works Progress Administration.

Inventory of the Parish Archives of Louisiana No. 26, Jefferson Parish. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Department of Archives, 1940. A guide to the parish archives and a history of parish administration.

Holmes, Jack D. L. "Indigo in Colonial Louisiana and the Floridas." Louisiana History 8 (1967): 329-49.

Jackson, Charles Tenney. The Fountain of Youth. New York: Outing Publishing Co. 1914. A fascinating informative account of two New York City dudes who spent three months in a pirogue in the Barataria and Atchafalaya basins.

Judd, Thomas. An Essay on the Improvement in the Manufacture of Sugar Adapted for Louisiana. Boston: Fittle, Weeks, and Dennett, 1836. Endorsed by Laurent Millandon, this treatise represented the best knowledge of the time the Barataria region.

Kammer, Edward J. A SocioEconomic Survey of the Marsh-Dwellers of Four Southeastern Louisiana Parishes. Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 1941. Although this study lumps data from the four parishes, the observations are generally useful for Barataria.

Laffite, Jean. The Journals of Jean Laffite, The Privateer-Patriot's Own Story. New York: Vantage Press, 1958. Either the genuine diary or a good fake. At any rate, the information on Barataria rings true.

Le Page du Pratz, A. The History Of Louisiana. 1774. Facsimile reprint. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1975. Le Page du Pratz was a keen and sympathetic observer of the environment and native people of French colonial Louisiana. He made some observations on the Barataria but spent most of his time in the Natchez area.

Lewis, Peirce F. New Orleans: The Making of an Urban Landscape. Cambridge, MA: Ballinger Publishing Co., 1976. A good but too-brief discussion of the cultural geography of New Orleans. Although it does not deal with rural areas such as the Barataria Basin, an understanding of the city is useful for an understanding of the hinterlands.

Lowery, George H., Jr. The Mammals of Louisiana and its Adjacent Waters. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1978. Useful discussions of the animals and their economic

importance. Menn, Joseph Karl, The Large Slaveholders of Louisiana 1860. New Orleans: Pelican Publishing Co., 1964. An excellent reference for the larger plantations, including information on crops, acreage, and slaves. Moore, John Hebron. "The Cypress Lumber Industry of the Lower Mississippi Valley During the Colonial Period." Louisiana History 24 (1983): 25-47.

Norgress, Rachel Edna. "History of the Cypress Lumber Industry in Louisiana." Louisiana Historical Quarterly 30 (1947): 977-1059. This article has a very painful literary style but contains a fair amount of information.

Nuhrah, Arthur G. "John McDonogh: Man of Many Facets." Louisiana Historical Quarterly 33 (1950): 5144. While this is one of two comprehensive works on John McDonogh, it fails to draw a complete portrait of the man, dwelling on certain controversial aspects of his character.

Phillips, Phillip. Archaeological Survey in the Lower Yazoo Basin, Mississippi, 1949-1955. Papers of the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, vol. 60. Cambridge, MA: Peabody Museum, 1970. Phillips has prepared a monumental work that draws together and synthesizes all archeological work in the lower Mississippi Valley. It contains a valuable review of culture periods and phases.

Quimby, George I. "The Natchezan Culture Type." American Antiquity 8 (1942): 225-75. Quimby defines the late prehistoric and early historic material culture of the Natchez and of several sub-groups.

Saucier, Roger. Recent Geomorphic History of the Pontchartrain Basin, Louisiana. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Center for Wetland Resources, 1962. The standard reference for eastern delta geomorphology, intelligible to the layman, and with excellent illustrations.

Saxon, Lyle. Lafitte The Pirate. New Orleans: Robert L. Crager and Co. 1950. This work is generally ignored because it was written for a popular audience, but faithfully represents the historical data available to Saxon in 1930.

Schoonover, Frank E. "In the Haunts of Jean Lafitte." Harpers Monthly 124 (1911): 80-91. Schoonover's description of Manilla Village is highly romanticized, but perceptive.

Shenkel, J. Richard. "Oak Island Archaeology: Prehistoric Estuarine Adaptations in the Mississippi River Delta." Photocopy, Department of Geography and Anthropology, University of New Orleans, 1980. Although this study is based on a site outside the study area, it was partly

contemporaneous with sites found in the park. Shenkel is reinterpreting early delta prehistory in exciting ways.

\_\_\_\_\_. "An Early Marksville Burial Component in Southeastern Louisiana." Midcontinental Journal of Archaeology 9 (1984): 105-34.

Schenkel restates his provocative examination of the relationships between the Delta Tchefuncte and Marksville and the more northerly Hopewell.

Spitzer, Nicholas. "Mississippi Delta Ethnographic Overview." Photocopy, Jean Lafitte National Historical Park, 1979. Comprehensive in scope, work is a good beginning point.

Swanton, John R. Indian Tribes of The Lower Mississippi Valley and Adjacent Coast of the Gulf of Mexico. Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin 43. Washington: The Bureau, 1911. This early synthesis of historical and ethnological material has never been bettered.

Swanson, Betsy. Historic Jefferson Parish, From Shore to Shore. Gretna: Pelican Publishing Company, 1975. An overview history of the parish with special emphasis on site-specific information. Good illustrations.

Thompson, Erwin. "A Brief History of Jean Laffite and the Baratarians and an Identification of Historic and Archeological Sites for the Planners." Photocopy, National Park Service, Denver Service Center, n.d.

Toth, Alan. Archaeology and Ceramics at the Marksville Site. Museum of Anthropology, University of Michigan Anthropological Papers 56. Ann Arbor, 1974. The only available report for this critical site, written well after the field excavations.

Whitten, David O. Andrew Dunnford: A Black Sugar Planter in Ante-Bellum Louisiana. Natchitoches, Louisiana: Northwestern State University Press, 1981. An interesting and thoughtful biography of a man caught up in the moral issues of his times.

Usner, Daniel H., Jr. "A Cycle of Lowland Forest Efficiency: The Late Archaic-Woodland Economy of the Lower Mississippi Valley." Journal of Anthropological Research 39 (1983): 433-44. Usner synthesizes early historic sources and archeology to arrive at a provocative model of delta settlement patterns and economy.

