

Crowley National Register Historic District Resurvey Report

July 2022



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PROJECT SUMMARY

Background

The Crowley National Register Historic District was listed on the National Register of Historic Places on March 12, 1982. At that time, it was listed under Criterion A: History and C: Architecture with a period of significance of 1887-1931 (what was then the current 50 year guideline). While the period of significance ended in 1931, and thus, any building constructed after 1931 was considered non-contributing to the National Register Historic District (NRHD), there are many buildings in Crowley then and today that are most certainly historic, and merit being counted as contributing to the NRHD. In 2021, Crowley Main Street and the City of Crowley applied for a Certified Local Government (CLG) grant to have their NRHD resurveyed in hopes of updating the NRHD, particularly to update the period of significance and to look at possible boundary expansions or reductions. The resurvey would help to inform when a logical end to the updated period of significance should be as well as to document fully more commercial and residential historic buildings, objects, and structures in the district that were not documented in 1981. It also aims to identify some properties outside of the existing National Register Historic District that may be individually eligible for the listing on the National Register.

Objectives

The goal of this resurvey was to document over 400 buildings, objects, structures, and sites within the existing NRHD boundaries as well as to survey buildings on the direct periphery of the NRHD to evaluate if a boundary expansion is warranted. Prior to this resurvey, the entire district had been included in the original 1981 NRHD inventory, but only a handful (around 100) of the buildings in the district had a formal Louisiana Historic Resource Inventory (LHRI, formerly known as Standing Structure forms) filled out for them. Through this resurvey, all historic resources in the NRHD, as well as around 30 on the periphery, would have an LHRI form filled out.

In addition to the resurvey, this project sought to digitize accurate geographic locations for all of the surveyed resources, link the LHRI form to these locations, and provide this information to the City of Crowley and Crowley Main Street so that it can be easily accessible for their constituents. This resurvey project will then have made information available for the local community as well as those outside the community, but it also helps to provide information to update the existing NRHD. By updating the period of significance for the district, over 100 historic buildings would now be considered contributing and could be eligible to apply for the Federal Rehabilitation Tax Incentive, which helps rehabilitate historic buildings in our communities nationwide.

Unless noted otherwise, all photographs of historic resources were taken by the author during the resurvey project.

HISTORIC BACKGROUND

History of Acadia Parish

Per a Crowley *Signal* “Then and Now” article from May 1898, “To the homeseeker, Acadia Parish stands invitingly open – all such are welcome, and all such, almost without exception, find here that which they came to seek.”¹ Acadia Parish and its cities, including Crowley, grew out of neighboring St. Landry Parish as a result of growth due to the arrival of railroads in the 1870s and the increase of settlers from the Midwest. After the settlement and inhabitation of the area now known as Acadia Parish by the Attakapas, white settlers likely first arrived c. 1757 with the French-Canadians, or Acadians. Later white settlers came to the area in the 1870s to establish permanent settlements. Most of these settlers chose the banks of the Mermentau River at the western edge of the current parish and included Joseph Fabacher, from New Orleans, who set up a German colony from 1870-71.² At that time, all of this area was included as part of St. Landry Parish, which is now located to the northeast of Acadia Parish. Washington, located approximately 50 miles northeast of Crowley, was the main port in the parish then and with the addition of railroads in St. Landry Parish, the town began to lose its hold on being the center of trade in the parish. Additionally, residents living in the southwestern portion of the parish found that it was a very long trip to do personal or commercial business in Washington and Opelousas (the parish seat). Voters in the southern section of St. Landry Parish began to ask for the creation of a new parish and in March 1886, men from the town of Washington met in Rayne to gauge the interest in person. Just one month later, over 1500 men met in Rayne and unofficially created the new Acadia Parish. A house bill was introduced on May 19, 1886, creating Nicholls and Acadia parishes.³ In October of that year, a vote was held and Acadia Parish was officially born with a vote of 2516 in favor and 1521 opposed.⁴

With the creation of the new parish, it was now time to select a parish seat. Rayne, Prairie Hayes, and Mermentau all put in bids to be considered. While these towns were putting bids in, Crowley was just being created by the Duson Brothers. W.W. and C.C. Duson were children of Mermentau River settlers and grew up poor, working odd jobs including herding cattle, mail carriers, and working in a sawmill. In 1884, W.W. started a small real estate business in Rayne and he was very interested in developing the land near where the brothers had grown up. After he purchased the local newspaper, the *Rayne Signal*, W.W. used his newspaper to help advertise the area as a “garden spot of the world.”⁵ He and his brother, through the creation of the Southwest Louisiana Land Company, with a headquarters in Opelousas, purchased 174 acres for \$80 on what is now the City of Crowley. Because of its large acreage and location, Crowley now became a fourth contender for the Acadia Parish seat. The Duson brothers launched major advertising campaigns to entice settlers to the Crowley area including such claims as:

“There are many reasons that can be given why a farmer should locate in Southwest Louisiana. In the first place, a complete crop failure is almost unknown, since a drought, the greatest of all the disasters to the Western farmer, practically never occurs. There are no long winters here during which the farmer has to sit with folded hands and kill time till spring rolls around again, but on the

¹ “Then and Now.” Crowley *Signal*, May 1898.

² Mildred Duson Cossey, “Vision of Founders Realized in Acadia, St. Landry’s Godchild”, Crowley Daily *Signal*, 50th Anniversary Edition, 51.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Velma Lea Hair, *History of Crowley*, (October 1944), pg. 5.

⁵ Cossey, 51.

other hand the climate is so mild that he can work out doors almost constantly. And not the least of the reasons is the greater opportunity for profitable investments. All of these advantages combine to make Southwest Louisiana the most desirable home for the man looking for a new location.”⁶



Figure 1. Advertisement from “The Crowley Handbook,” 1903.

Rayne claimed its convenience and economy would make it the most logical choice. Prairie Hayes noted that it had already donated land for a parish courthouse. Despite their individual campaigns, the newly created Crowley and its platted planned town ended up winning out and became the parish seat in March of 1887 with 698 votes over Rayne’s 560 votes and Prairie Hayes’ 519 votes.⁷

History of Crowley

As noted above, the land that would become Crowley was purchased by the Southwest Louisiana Land Company in 1886 for \$80. Naturally, one would think that because it was bought and planned by the Duson Brothers, the town would be called Duson. This was not the case. Instead, the town was named for Patrick Crowley, who had a railroad switch adjacent to the 80 acres and was urged to help convince the bosses of his railroad line to run a line through the newly laid out tract of land. Thus, Crowley was born.⁸ The Duson brothers hired Leon V. Fremaux to survey and lay out the town. In doing so, streets were all carefully planned. Streets ran west-east and were numbered. Avenues ran north-south and were named

⁶ “Then and Now.” *Crowley Signal*, May 1898.

⁷ Cossey, 51.

⁸ *Ibid.*

with letters. The main boulevards – Parkerson and Hutchinson - ran through the center of town and where they intersected, a courthouse was planned. Western, Northern, and Eastern Avenues bordered their respective sides of town. The railroad served as the natural southern border of the original one square mile town. Per Crowley: A Louisiana Romance, published in 1919: “Crowley was laid out with an eye to beauty and uniformity, as well as to the comfort of those who live within her boundaries; and, therefore, instead of a network of crooked streets which so often disfigure out cities, Crowley boasts of a beauty of arrangement in her streets that no small Southern city can approach.”

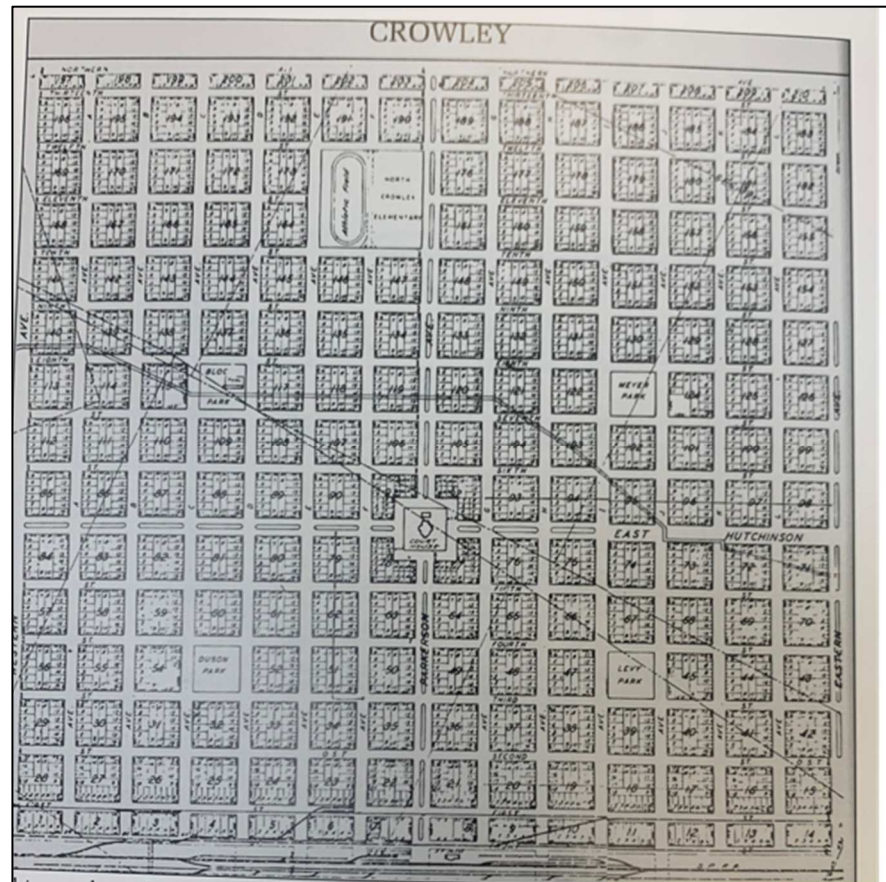


Figure 2. Original Plat of the Town of Crowley. Image courtesy of *Images of America: Crowley*.

On February 11-12, 1887, an auction was held at 3:00 pm both days, specifically planned to take place just after the train from New Orleans had arrived. Terms for the auction were “one-half in cash and the balance in twelve months without interest, with the privilege of two lots at the price bid for one.”⁹ Prior to the auctions, some businesses had already been located in town included J.N. Foote’s lumberyard, a depot, a schoolhouse, blacksmith, livery stable, company store, coffeehouse, and cottage were all under construction. Workers had also been digging ditches and streets had been laid out and leveled just in time for the big days.

The lots auctioned off were 50’x100’ in size (for the most part) and Henry Rose of New Orleans purchased the first lot for \$50. On the first day of the auction, 99 lots were sold for a total of \$9600. The second day total was nearly double at \$17,000 including a lot that had an unfinished hotel (the future Crowley House)

⁹ Hair, pg. 8.

selling for \$2500. A quote from the days following the auction helps to illustrate just how quickly the town of Crowley had been created:

“The Crowley Boom which started a thriving village on an open prairie in a few days time, mainly through the liberal use of printer’s ink and the determined energy of its projectors, bounced the embryo town into the staid dignity of a parish site last Tuesday. This gives the place a permanent habitation and a name which will not prove, the evanescent bubble that many predicted it would be. As a matter of course, its success is now assured and Crowley will take its stand among the sisterhood of the parish capitals and march on the road of rapid progress and prosperity.”¹⁰

Crowley certainly was started on a road of rapid progress. Over the next 30 years, Crowley steadily grew. In 1886, Crowley had one store; by 1892, there were over 50 commercial businesses. The first (of three) courthouses was completed in June of 1888. Incorporated as a town in 1899, Crowley became a city in 1906.¹¹

Spurring the growth of Crowley was the construction of five rice mills between 1893 and 1898. Irrigation canal companies were also booming with five also built during those five years and by 1904, there were over 600 miles of canals in the parish. Settlers from Indiana, John B. Wright and his brother Samuel Lusk Wright, would introduce new rice varieties to the area.¹² What was formerly several rice mills is just one large rice mill today – Supreme Rice. By 1919, 1/3 of the rice raised in the United States was grown within a thirty mile radius of Crowley.¹³ Rice became and still is what Crowley is known for.

In addition to the rice industry, Crowley prospered and grew with the discovery of oil in 1901 in the Mamou Field. Within the next two years, twenty oil and mineral companies were chartered in response to this discovery.¹⁴ Over the next thirty years, three more oil fields were discovered in the area. With the growth of the city due to rice and oil (as well as cattle, cotton, and truck farming), construction in Crowley expanded from just the commercial area on N. Parkerson and residential areas to the east and south, to areas west of N. Parkerson and north of E. Hutchinson.

By 1927, Crowley had residential, commercial, and industrial districts zoned, and by 1939, the boundaries of the city were expanded to include all land between N. Parkerson Avenue and N. Avenue I. In 1940, a catastrophic flood, which damaged many buildings in town, helped to spur city officials to improve drainage in the area, primarily through cleaning out the many miles of irrigation canals constructed in the late 1800s to early 1900s.¹⁵

Crowley continued to grow through the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s at a steady rate. After World War II, with the return of servicemen, additional housing was needed. In many cases, particularly in South Crowley, this resulted in smaller residences being moved to make room for new construction (see architectural styles for more discussion of minimal traditional cottages in the existing district).

¹⁰ Hair, pg. 9.

¹¹ Cossey, 51; the population of Crowley in 1900 was 4,214.

¹² Prier B. Wright “Crowley Owes Much to Parke County of Indiana for Contributing Many Families and Northern Capital for Early Progress”

¹³ Crowley: A Louisiana Romance, 1886-1919

¹⁴ Hair, pg. 18.

¹⁵ Ibid, pg. 25-26.

It wasn't until the construction of Interstate 10, approximately 2 miles northwest of the courthouse, in 1963-66, that construction in the existing National Register Historic District slowed. There was not as much available land in the original boundaries of Crowley platted in 1886 and with the new interstate passing by just north of the original boundaries, growth was focused on this new interchange. Thus, like many other American cities, Crowley experienced suburban sprawl, primarily to the north.

Neighborhoods of Crowley

As discussed above, Crowley's original neighborhoods included the commercial district along N. Parkerson Avenue, the residential district located in the southeastern quadrant of the city (referred to locally as the "Historic District"), and South Crowley, south of the railroad tracks.

South Crowley lots started to be sold in December of 1897. This area of town developed along with the rice mills served mostly to house mill workers. There are a range of houses in the area including larger houses, for mill managers and other wealthy business owners, with the majority of houses being smaller residences. In just 3 hours in December 1897, 350 lots were sold at an average price of \$75 each, totaling over \$25,000.¹⁶

The area to the west of N. Parkerson, both north and south of Hutchinson, is referred to as West Crowley. There was a spattering of construction in the area dating back to Crowley's earliest days; however, the area wasn't heavily populated until the 1910s when electric lights were extended to the area and new residential areas were constructed by the high school (by the current Crowley Kindergarten School) in 1919.¹⁷ This area further grew in the 1940s and 1950s with the construction of more schools in the area and naturally, more residences near these schools.

¹⁶ Hair, pg. 13.

¹⁷ Ibid, pg. 32.

RESURVEYING THE CROWLEY NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICT

Existing National Register District

Listed on the National Register of Historic Places on March 12, 1982, the Crowley National Register Historic District has an inventory of 382 buildings. Upon close inspection of the inventory as compared to buildings that are extant today, there are actually 390 resources within the district today. A couple were found to have been left out of the inventory and include Levy Park (a site) and original concrete post street signs (dating to 1950). This count also includes the loss of some of the historic resources over the last 30 years.

Per the original National Register nomination, the inventory breakdown in 1981 according to construction periods is as follows:

Table 1. Resources by Construction Period, 1981 Nomination.		
Construction Period	Number of Resources	Percentage of District
1887-1910	166	43.5%
1911-1931	105	27.5%
Post-1931 (i.e. intrusions)	111	29.0%
Total	382	100%

Intrusions in the district included any building¹⁸ constructed after 1931 because of the 50-year guideline. Per National Register Bulletin 15, “The National Register Criteria for Evaluation excludes properties that achieved significance within the last fifty years unless they are of exceptional importance.”¹⁹ For many years, this was referred to as the 50-year rule, but in reality and practice, it is more of a guideline. However, for the most part, if a building is not 50 years old when a district is nominated or listed, it is considered an intrusion. Intrusions at that time included 1940s minimal traditional cottages, mid-century modern commercial buildings, and even the Acadia Parish Courthouse, constructed in 1952.

When it was listed, the district was listed under Criteria A: History, in the areas of agriculture, commerce, and community planning, and C: Architecture for its large collection of late 19th to early 20th century architectural styles. The period of significance for the district is 1887-1931, encompassing the years that Crowley was first created through that 50-year guideline. The listed district includes the commercial district and the two earliest residential districts (though it is key to point out that there are structures dating to the early and significant years of Crowley in West and North Crowley). As with many older districts that have an early end to the period of significance, it is appropriate to resurvey and update these districts to include more historic resources that continue to tell the history and growth of Crowley.

Existing Individual National Register Listings

Crowley has four current National Register Listings, including the above described historic district. The other three listings are all individual listings: David L. and Jeanette Ross May House, St. Theresa Catholic Church and School, and the Colorado Southern Railroad Depot.

¹⁸ It is important to note that older National Register nominations generally only accounted for building counts and didn’t include structures, sites, or objects. The resurvey project sought to include other types of historic resources outside of just buildings.

¹⁹ National Register Bulletin 15, pg. 41.

The David L. and Jeanette Ross May House was listed on the National Register on February 27, 2019 at the local level under Criterion B: Association with a significant person. The property is located in West Crowley at 576 N. Western Avenue and was constructed c. 1935. The house is a single-story Craftsman bungalow that was owned by David and Jeanette Ross May. Jeanette Ross May was the daughter of Henry Ross, who was a strong proponent for education, particularly for black students during times of strict segregation. Henry Ross came to Crowley in 1899 and served as the teacher at the one room school for black students. He would go on to be the principal of Crowley Industrial School (later Ross High School, now Ross Headstart) and is credited with bringing Booker T. Washington to Crowley in 1915.



Figure 3. David L. and Jeanette Ross May House; image courtesy of the Louisiana Division of Historic Preservation.

Jeanette May was a long-time teacher at Ross School, where she met her husband, David May. David served as principal at Crowley Industrial School for many years in addition to being one of the first two black alderman in the state. Together, the Mays held numerous meetings and gatherings at their house, located just a few blocks south of Ross High School. The Mays were a driving force in the black community in Crowley, during times of strict segregation and beyond, and their house is significant as a place where many civic meetings took place as well as an extension of Ross High School.²⁰

The St. Theresa Catholic Church and School were listed on the National Register on June 19, 2018, at the local level under Criterion A: History in the areas of education and ethnic heritage. The property is in West Crowley at 417 West 3rd Street and was constructed in 1922. The property contains five buildings, four of which are considered contributing for the National Register nomination: the church, rectory, sister's house, and kindergarten building (known today as the prayer chapel). The buildings all date from c. 1922 through 1957 and were all used as the campus for the St. Theresa Catholic School from 1922-1971. St. Theresa's is the oldest and only Catholic church in Crowley that was built for the black community. Per the nomination, "It represents the initial development of an educational facility for African American students during a time



Figure 4. St. Theresa Catholic Church and School; image courtesy of the Louisiana Division of Historic Preservation.

²⁰ National Register of Historic Places, David L. and Jeannette Ross May House, Crowley, Acadia Parish, Louisiana, Reference # 100003380.

when segregation was alive and thriving....In addition to its educational significance, St. Theresa Catholic Church played a central role in the black community of Crowley.”²¹

The Colorado Southern Railroad Depot was listed on the National Register on March 26, 1980, at the local level under Criterion A: History and C: Architecture. The depot is located at 114 East 1st Street at the southern end of the commercial district, naturally near the railroad tracks. It was one of two depots that Crowley had but is now the only surviving depot. The 1907 building is significant in the areas of architecture as a prime example of a Mission Revival railroad station. It is also significant under transportation as it remains today as the city’s foremost reflection of the significance of the railroad to the city’s creation and continued growth. The building ceased to be used for railroad use in the 1930s and was then used as the American Legion Post No. 15. In the late 1970s, the depot was purchased with plans to restore it and use it as a showroom. Since its listing date, the depot has been restored, at least on the exterior, as seen below.



Figures 5 and 6. Colorado Southern Railroad Depot; images courtesy of the Louisiana Division of Historic Preservation and 2021 resurvey.

Funding

The resurvey of the existing National Register Historic District was funded by the City of Crowley, Crowley Main Street, and matching funds from the Louisiana Division of Historic Preservation’s Certified Local Government grant program.

The grant was awarded on XXXX, XX, 2021, and the end date of the project is June 30th, 2022. Per the grant proposal, the project would survey all existing buildings in the National Register Historic District (NRHD) to determine if the period of significance for the district warrants updating as well as to determine if the boundaries of the district should be altered. Information gathered in the survey is to be used to inform next steps for updating the NRHD nomination. All information would be recorded on the current 2021 Louisiana Historic Resource Inventory (LHRI) forms as well as saved digitally.

²¹ National Register of Historic Places, St. Theresa Catholic Church and School, Crowley, Acadia Parish, Louisiana, Reference # 100002576.

Methodology of Resurvey

Prior to the survey field work, prep work was done to review the existing district, particularly as the original NRHD nomination did not contain addresses either in the inventory or on the map. Rather, the nomination inventory only listed buildings that were considered contributing to the district. Inventory numbers in the nomination corresponded to the map. All intrusions were marked on the map with an "I" and were not individually spelled out in the nomination. Current aeriols, through Google and the Acadia Parish Tax Assessor maps were used to compare to the original map (see below).

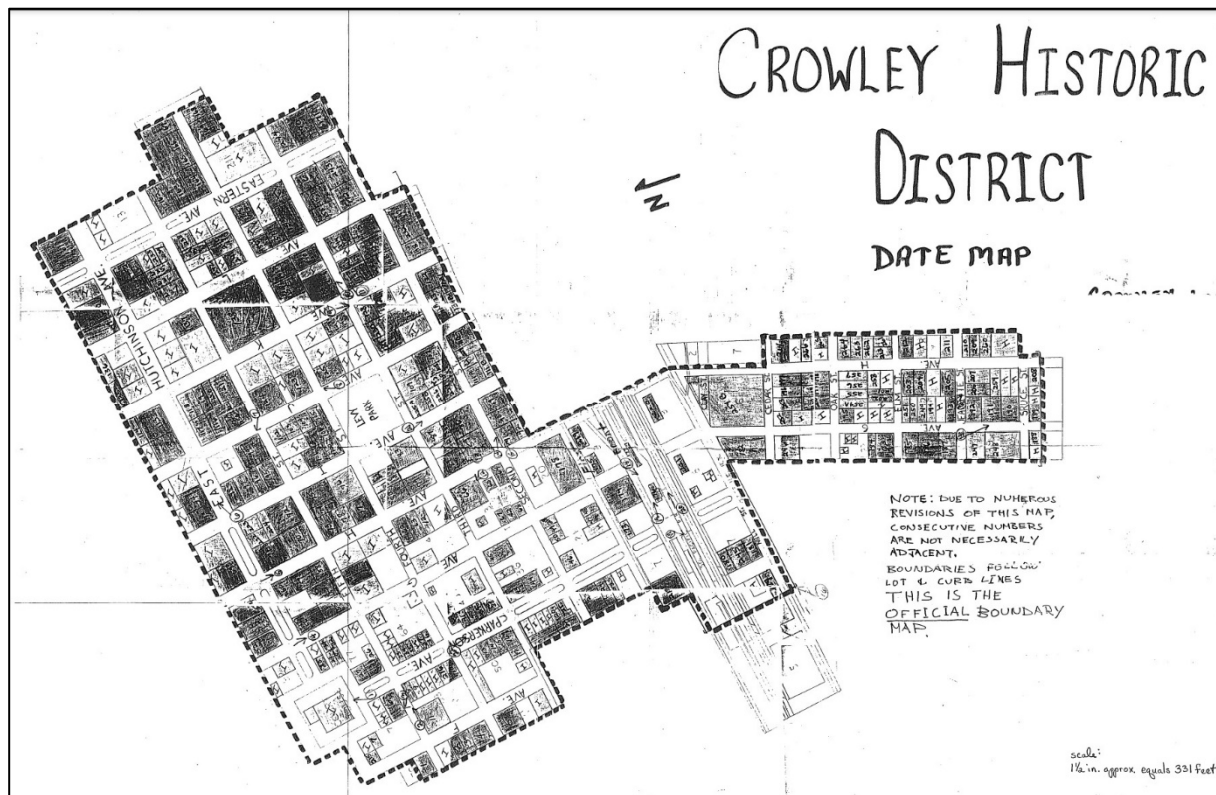


Figure 7. Crowley National Register Historic District Map; image courtesy of the Louisiana Division of Historic Preservation.

Once an accurate list of addresses was created, a spreadsheet was used to create points for every building (that was known at that time) in the district. ESRI's ArcGis Collector was used to create entries for each point and original inventory listings were added for properties that had them (i.e. anything that wasn't an intrusion). Preliminary work was also done prior to going in the field to determine if properties were still extant and any notes concerning possible loss of buildings was added to the Collector entry.

Fieldwork via intensive survey was done on September 25, October 9, and October 23, 2021. Photos were taken of every property that had a Collector entry, even those that no longer had buildings on them, in order to document that inventory entry for future use in updating the NRHD nomination form. This way, when the form is updated, the original inventory number can be referenced and noted, for example, Inventory #32 is no longer extant. These photos were taken directly in the Collector app and upon returning from each day of field work, the photos were linked to the map that was previously created (see below).

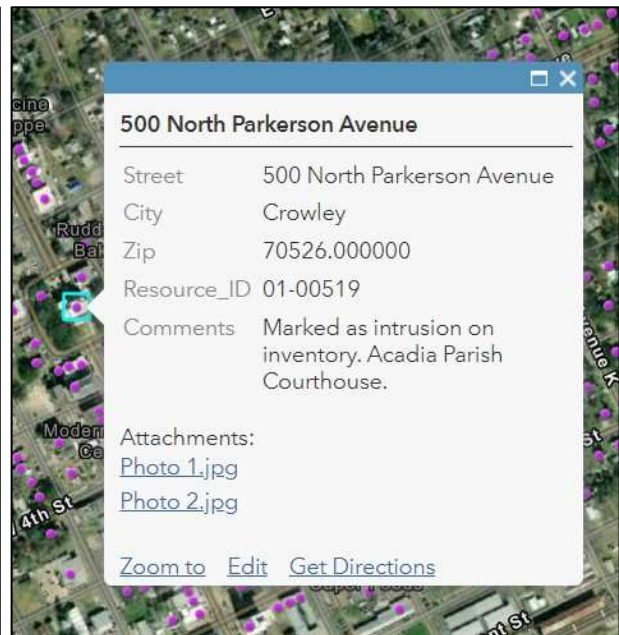


Figure 8 (Left). Map of points created for every historic resource in the existing NRHD, plus some on the periphery.

Figure 9 (Above): ArcGIS Collector Entry for the Acadia Parish Courthouse with info prepared prior to fieldwork and photos taken during fieldwork.

If it was discovered that a point was wrong while in the field, it was easily corrected by moving it to its correct location. Furthermore, prior to going in the field, the existence of many original concrete street posts was not known. Thus, when in the field, points were added for these when found.

The boundaries used for the survey were the original National Register Historic District boundaries consisting roughly of E. Hutchinson to the north, N. Eastern to the east above the railroad tracks, S. Avenue I to the east below the railroad tracks, W. Spruce Street to the south, S. Avenue G to the west in South Crowley, and W. 4th Street to the west north of the railroad tracks. Properties that were located directly adjacent to the existing boundaries were surveyed as well. For example, along E. Hutchinson Avenue between N. Parkerson and N. Eastern Avenues, the boundary cuts through the block between E. 6th and E. Hutchinson. Properties on the other half of the block that is not within the district were surveyed to gain an understanding if the block should be included. All properties on the other half were not surveyed, but rather, a handful were to help make an informed decision. The same process was used around the other boundaries as well. General streetscape photos were also taken at the boundary edges to further help with this decision as to whether the existing boundaries should be expanded or whether other National Register-eligible districts exist within Crowley.

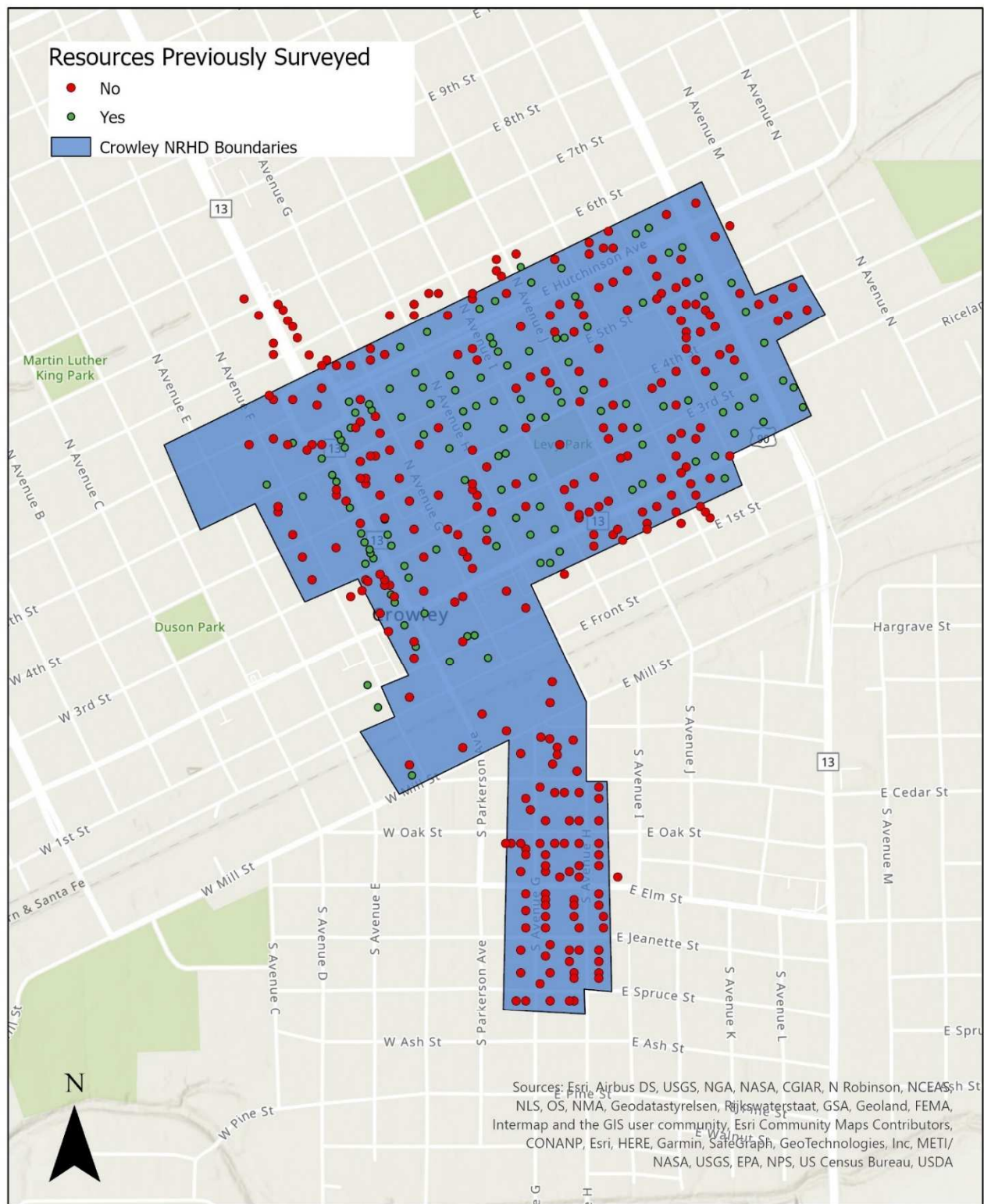
Lastly, through the use of Google aerals as well as guided tours with Claire Doré, the archivist for the

Acadia Parish Library, potential individual listings as well as potential other National Register districts in Crowley were windshield surveyed and photographed on February 11, 2022. Further information on these resources can be found in the survey results and recommendations section. These areas included West Crowley, areas surrounding South Crowley that aren't in the NRHD, and portions of northeast Crowley north of E. Hutchinson and east of N. Parkerson Avenue.

RESURVEY RESULTS

The resurvey of the existing NRHD revealed that first and foremost, the district retains a high degree of integrity and numerous historic commercial and residential buildings. The resurvey also confirmed that the existing period of significance, 1887-1931, needs to be expanded to include more of the historic resources within the district boundaries. This section aims to discuss the dominant architectural styles found in this district and recommendations for the district moving forward as well as providing maps showing the survey results.

The map on the following page shows how many historic resources already had Louisiana Historic Resource Inventory (LHRI) forms versus those that did not. All resources, no matter what their LHRI status, were surveyed during the 2021-22 resurvey. The map on page 20 shows all resources surveyed displayed by their architectural styles. The category of "Other" was used either for buildings that had very simple details that did not fit into a specific category or for buildings that combined a couple different architectural styles into one. It is important to note that many buildings in South Crowley are noted as "Other," primarily because they fall into more of a vernacular style as these were and remain today, more modest residential structures. Following these maps is a more in-depth discussion of the various architectural styles found in Crowley.



Crowley Resurvey Map
Recorded Historic Resources
Acadia Parish, LA

Figure 10. Map showing all surveyed historic resources showing those that had an LHRI form prior to 2021 and those that did not.

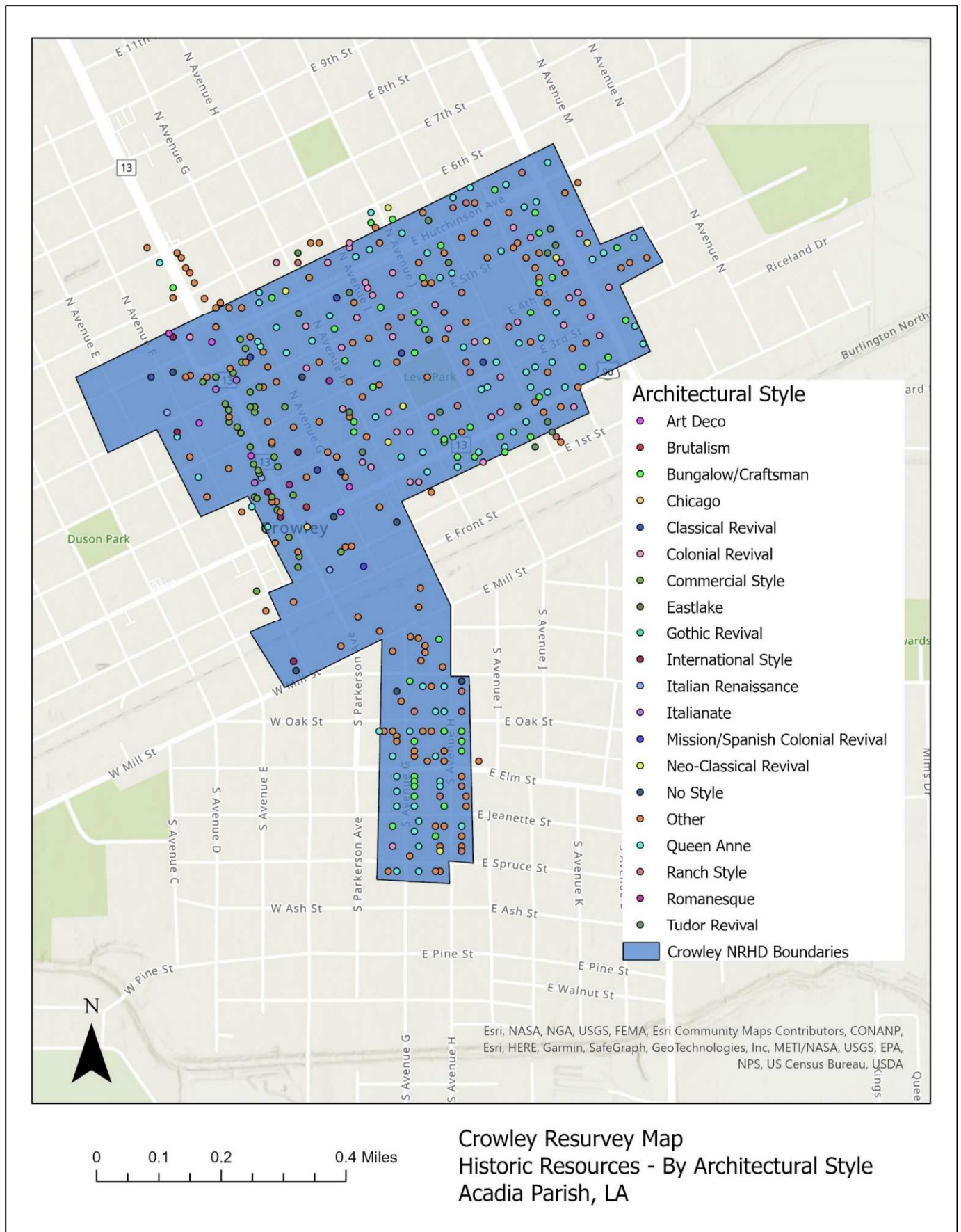


Figure 11. Map showing all surveyed historic resources by their architectural style.

Architectural Styles Observed within the Crowley National Register Historic District

As it was founded in the late 1880s and experienced steady growth through the latter 19th and early 20th century, the styles found in the district follow the general timeline of American styles during those time periods. The styles listed below have general time periods from Virginia Savage McAlester's *A Field Guide to American Houses*. It is important to keep in mind that prevalent time periods for architectural styles in Louisiana usually started between 10-20 years later and ended the same amount of years past when the styles went out of use in other regions of the country. For example, Queen Anne form, in particular, was used through the 1920s and sometimes into the 1930s as can be seen in Crowley. The asymmetrical Queen Anne form was used for a longer period of time with other later styles such as Craftsman for the details.

As previously stated, there are three "districts" within the existing National Register Historic District (NRHD): the commercial district along North Parkerson Avenue, the "historic district" consisting of the residences to the east of North Parkerson Avenue and north of the railroad, and South Crowley consisting of the residences and a handful of commercial structures south of the railroad. Within each of these areas of the NRHD, there are some styles that are more prevalent because of when these areas developed and why they developed (see map of resources by their architectural style on page 20). In the "historic district", the most prevalent residential styles are Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, and Craftsman. For the commercial area along North Parkerson Avenue, the most prominent styles are commercial or "other", used to describe the 1950s-60s mid-century "Everyday Modern" buildings. Within South Crowley, the prominent styles mimic those in the "historic district" but on a more restrained scale. There are a handful of higher style residences, but most are simpler bungalows.

Gothic Revival (1840-1880)

The Gothic Revival style was used on a variety of building types including churches, residences, and schools. In Crowley, a prime example of the style is First Presbyterian Church (1929). While this church was constructed well after the typical end of the style's use elsewhere in the country, it remained a popular style, particularly for religious structures. Common features of this style include an emphasis on verticality, differentiation between the nave and chancel, a prominent tower, windows and other openings shaped in pointed arches, use of flying buttresses to provide structural support, and crenellated tower tops. The style is used on both wood and masonry buildings. On residences, other Gothic Revival details include steeply pitched roofs, decorative bargeboards and flattened arch porch supports with trefoils and quatrefoils, and hooded moldings over windows.²²



Figure 12. First Presbyterian Church, a prime example of the Gothic Revival style in Crowley, was constructed in 1929.

Italianate (1840-1885)

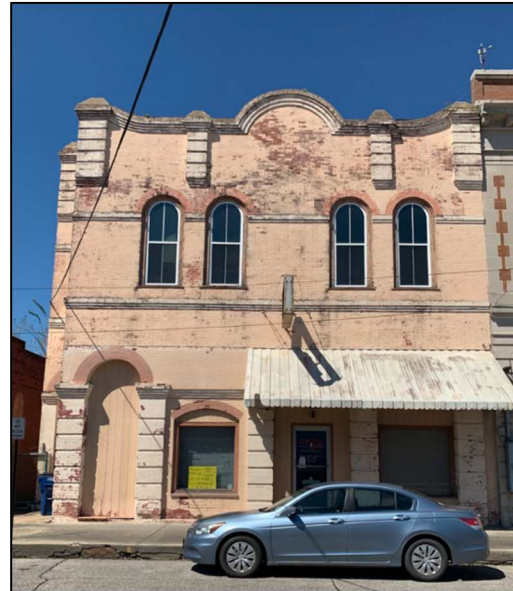
The Italianate style was used in Louisiana past the 1880s and applied to various building forms including shotgun houses and commercial blocks. The style is highly ornamented, including round arch topped windows and doors, segmentally arched openings, quoining, low pitched roofs, two to three story height,

²² Fricker, Jonathan; Donna Fricker, and Patricia L. Duncan. Louisiana Architecture: A Handbook on Styles. The Center for Louisiana Studies: Lafayette, LA, 1998: pgs. 18-25.

tall narrow windows, moderate to wide overhanging eaves supported by brackets, and elaborate window headers.²³ In Crowley, there are three commercial buildings designed in the Italianate style, including the Grand Opera House at 505 North Parkerson Avenue.



Figure 13 (Above). The Grand Opera House, a prime example of the Italianate style in Crowley, was constructed in 1900. Figure 14 (Right). 110 West 3rd Street, another prime example of the Italianate style, constructed in 1902.



Folk Victorian (1870-1910)

The Folk Victorian style predates the Queen Anne style found throughout older American cities. The style consists of typical Queen Anne/Victorian details applied to simple vernacular house forms. For the most part, these details were applied to the porches and cornice lines and included turned spindles, chamfered posts, lace-like spandrels between porch posts, or bracketed eaves.²⁴ The examples seen below in Crowley both have a simple ell shaped form with simple Folk Victorian details.



Figure 15 (Left): 565 North Avenue L was constructed in 1907. It has the simple ell shape form with some Folk Victorian details on the porch. Its original columns have been replaced with a more Craftsman like column, but it is still recognizable as a Folk Victorian style house. Figure 16 (Right): 218 East Cedar Street was constructed c. 1908 and has simple chamfered columns supporting the porch.

²³ Fricker, pgs. 26-34; Virginia McAlester. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. Alfred Knopf: New York, 2013, pg. 282.

²⁴ McAlester, pg. 396.

Queen Anne (1880-1910)

The Queen Anne style focuses on structures, primarily residences, with asymmetrical forms, a variety of textures, multiple gables, polygonal bays, dormers, prominent chimneys, and turrets. Queen Anne details sought to follow the Victorian quote, “too much is never enough.”²⁵ Texturally, Queen Anne residences are often clad in horizontal wood siding with sections of fish scale or other shaped shingles to add detail. Most often, this is done in the gable ends. Further ornament can be found in the porch details and bargeboard and scrollwork at gable ends and between porch posts. Stained glass windows were also utilized a lot on Queen Anne residences to add further color to the style. There is no shortage of good Queen Anne examples in Crowley, from small single-story residences to large, multi-story residences. There are over 70 Queen Anne residences in Crowley, with even more asymmetrical Queen Anne form residences with later styles applied.



Figure 17 (Left). 320 North Avenue J was constructed in 1895. It is a prime example of a high style, multi-story Queen Anne residence complete with almost every Queen Anne detail imaginable. Figure 18 (Right). 119 East Elm Street was constructed in 1905 and is another example of a higher style, multi-story Queen Anne Residence.

²⁵ Fricker, pg. 45.



Figure 19 (Left). 305 East Second Street was constructed in 1898. It is a prime example of a high style, single story Queen Anne residence. Figure 20 (Right). 219 East Oak Street was constructed c. 1905 and is a good example of what most single-story Queen Anne Residences in Crowley look like.

Colonial Revival (1880-1955)

The Colonial Revival Style has roughly 50 examples within the existing Crowley National Register Historic District. It has been used since Crowley was first founded up through the 1950s when historic revivalism made a comeback. Typical Colonial Revival details include double hung windows with multi-pane lights, paired windows, accentuated front door with a single width front porch supported by slender columns, symmetrically balanced façade, and the use of fanlights and sidelights over front doors. Some larger Colonial Revival residences have single story wings on one or both sides, and roof dormers.²⁶ Crowley has examples of larger, high style Colonial Revival residences and quite a few, simpler single-story examples. In addition to residences designed in the Colonial Revival style in form and details, there are also many Queen Anne cottages in form adorned with Colonial Revival porch and window details.



Figure 21 (Left). 420 North Eastern Avenue was constructed in 1901. It is a good example of an early single story Colonial Revival home with a Queen Anne form. Figure 22 (Right). 503 East Second Street was constructed c. 1910 and is a good example of a larger two story, classically symmetrical Colonial Revival house.

²⁶ McAlester, pg. 408-411.



Figure 23 (Left). 517 North Avenue L was constructed c. 1940. It is a good example of how the Colonial Revival form was typically used in the latter decades of its popularity. Figure 24 (Right). 316 North Eastern Avenue was constructed c. 1955 and is a second example of the latter Colonial Revival style on a grander scale.

Romanesque Revival (1840-1900)

First popularized by the work of H.H. Richardson, the Romanesque Revival style was used primarily for public institutions such as schools, churches, and governmental buildings. Typical features include pronounced round arches, heavy use of stone or brick, squat columns, the use of round towers, polychromatic stonework details, and double hung windows (both rectangular and arched).²⁷ Perhaps the best example of this style in Crowley dates from 1945 – First Baptist Church. As stated in the Colonial Revival section, historic revivalism during the Post World War II era resulted in the use of many pre-WW II styles on mid-century building forms, a last hold out before the streamlined mid-century styles took off.



Figure 25. First Baptist Church, a prime example of the Romanesque Revival style in Crowley, was constructed in 1945.

Renaissance Revival (1890-1935)

Sometimes referred to as Italian Renaissance Revival, the Renaissance Revival style takes its details directly from original Italian designs. Common characteristics include flat roofs (or wide overhangs when not flat), bracketed eaves or cornice lines, quoins, molded cornices and belt courses, pedimented windows, roof-line balustrades, classical door surrounds, arched windows and doors, and the mix of brick and stone.²⁸ Three examples of the Renaissance Revival style in Crowley are St. Michael's Catholic Church at 224 West 5th Street, the Bank of Acadia at 301 North Parkerson Avenue, and the former Wells Fargo Depot at 100 East First Street. These range from high style down to the simplest form of Renaissance Revival at the former Wells Fargo Depot.

²⁷ <http://www.phmc.state.pa.us/portal/communities/architecture/styles/romanesque-revival.html>; Accessed March 14, 2022.

²⁸ McAlester, pgs. 497-498



Figure 26 (Left). The Bank of Acadia, constructed in 1902-03, is a good example of the Renaissance Revival style with a prominent corner entry. Figure 27 (Right). The former Wells Fargo Depot, dating to 1903, is a simple form of the style with arched windows and overmoldings.

Classical Revival/Neoclassical (1895-1955)

The Classical Revival, or Neoclassical Style, was used a lot during the first half of the 20th century for all types of buildings from residences to governmental buildings. It differs from its close cousin, the Colonial Revival style, in that it includes more elaborate details with one common differentiation being the use of fluted columns with Ionic or Corinthian capitals.²⁹ Many Neoclassical buildings also feature full two-story height columns accentuating the main entry. Other common details include a symmetric façade, bracketed cornice lines, cornice line balustrade, and the use of broken pediments above doors or windows. An example of the Neoclassical style on a governmental building in Crowley is the old Post Office at 124 East 3rd Street.



Figure 28. The 1913 Federal Post Office is a great example of the Neoclassical Revival style in Crowley.

Tudor Revival (1890-1940)

The Tudor Revival style draws inspiration from a variety of English building styles, including simple cottages to high style half-timbered buildings. Common characteristics include large chimneys, prominent front-facing gables on the façade, steeply pitched front-facing gables, decorative half-timbering on some examples, round or Tudor arched front doors or front entry openings, paired or grouped windows with multi-pane glazing, and the use of casement windows.³⁰ Examples in Crowley range from a few classically Tudor Revival houses with half-timbering to several smaller cottages with the main Tudor Revival details in steeply pitched front gables, arched entries, and prominent chimneys.

²⁹ McAlester, pgs. 434-438

³⁰ Ibid, pgs. 448-455.



Figure 29 (Left). 220 East 3rd Street, constructed in 1920, is a good example of the classic Tudor Revival Style.
 Figure 30 (Right). 525 North Avenue H, c. 1920, is a cottage style form of the Tudor Revival Style.



Figure 31 (Left). 511 North Eastern Avenue, constructed c. 1935, is a good example of a Tudor Revival cottage.
 Figure 32 (Right). 203 North Avenue K, c. 1935, has several classic Tudor Revival characteristics.

Mission Revival (1915-1940)

The Mission Revival, or Spanish Revival, style was popular during the same period as the Tudor Revival style and was used on schools, governmental buildings, other civic buildings, and residences. Common characteristics include the use of red tile roofs, arched windows and doors, stucco wall surfaces, low-pitched roofs with small overhangs, and asymmetrical facades.³¹ As seen in Crowley's Colorado Southern Depot, the style's popularity was spread via the decision of several southwestern-based railroad companies to build their depots in the Mission Revival style. The depot features many of the typical characteristics as applied to the building's use as a depot (i.e., deeper overhangs to protect guests at the depot).

³¹ McAlester, pgs. 520-522.



Figure 33. The Colorado Southern Depot at 114 East First Street is the best example of the Mission Revival style in Crowley.

Craftsman (1905-1930)

The Craftsman style is very prevalent within Crowley's National Register Historic District, making up almost 30% of the residential building stock. The style's characteristics include low-pitched gable roofs, wide overhanging eaves, exposed rafter tails, partial or full width front porches with square columns, decorative false beams under the gables, columns or piers underneath porch columns, triangular knee braces under the eaves, stickwork in gable ends, multi-lite upper sashes over single sashes on windows, and cottage style windows.³² Many of Crowley's residences within and outside of the existing district feature characteristics of the Craftsman style ranging from Queen Anne cottage forms with a few Craftsman details to full on Craftsman bungalow form and details.



Figure 34 (Left) 703 East 4th Street constructed c. 1915. Figure 35 (Right) 203 North Avenue K c. 1935. Both are good examples of the Craftsman style in Crowley.

³² McAlester, pgs. 566-568.



Figure 36 (Left). 715 East 5th Street, constructed c. 1930. Figure 37 (Right). 220 North Avenue I constructed c. 1933. Both are good examples of the Craftsman style in Crowley.

Art Deco (1919-1939)



Figure 38 (Left). The Rice Theatre, located at 321 North Parkerson and constructed in 1940 is a prime example of an Art Deco theater. Figure 39 (Right). The Acadia Parish Courthouse, located at 500 North Parkerson and constructed in 1950 is a classic example of the Art Deco style on a governmental building. Note that even though this building was constructed in 1950, the Art Deco style was still used, likely because it had been used on so many courthouses throughout the state in the decades prior.

The Art Deco style was prominent during the days before and during the Great Depression and features forms broken down into abstract geometric shapes and designs. It also is well known for its use of sculptural art on both interiors and exteriors. When it was first introduced, it was known as “Modernistic,”

with the term “Art Deco” becoming more prevalent in the 1960s.³³ Common characteristics of the Art Deco style include an emphasis on verticality, use of limestone and terra cotta, abstract geometric ornamentation, and the use of decorative arts.³⁴ Many civic buildings in Louisiana, including the Capitol in Baton Rouge, Charity Hospital in New Orleans, and the Acadia Parish Courthouse³⁵, were all designed in the Art Deco style. The style was also used on many buildings funded by New Deal relief funds through the Works Progress Administration and Public Works Administration.

Commercial Style

The term commercial style is used generally to apply to buildings that are either freestanding commercial buildings or located within a block or row of commercial buildings. The style takes its details from the overall Chicago Commercial style but applies it more simply to general commercial buildings. The Chicago Style was generally applied to larger commercial structures during the first few decades of the 20th century and focused on promoting new technologies of steel frame construction. The ground floors and storefront areas were generally more detailed with an emphasis on verticality for the upper levels. For smaller cities like Crowley, the commercial style is much more stripped down and the terminology applies more generally to commercial buildings that don’t have a distinctive architectural style. Crowley’s best example of the true Chicago style is the First National Bank. During the resurvey for this project, the term ‘commercial style’ is used to describe buildings dating from the early 1900s through the 1960s as the designs for commercial buildings evolved with other prevalent styles, but were stripped down with the main details located at the storefront areas (on both single and multi-story buildings). Naturally, many of Crowley’s commercial style buildings are located on the main commercial street, North Parkerson Avenue.



Figure 40 (Left). First National Bank, located at 126 North Parkerson and constructed in 1920, is a prime example of the Chicago Style in Crowley. Figure 41 (Right). 312 North Parkerson, constructed in 1909, is a more common example of the commercial style found along North Parkerson Avenue.

³³ “Chicago School Commercial Style.” Buffalo as an Architectural Museum website.

<https://buffaloah.com/a/archsty/chicago/chi.html>. Accessed April 15, 2022.

³⁴ “Art Deco.” Chicago Architecture Center. <https://www.architecture.org/learn/resources/architecture-dictionary/entry/art-deco/>. Accessed March 21, 2022.

³⁵ Of the 14 courthouses building between 1929 and 1939, 13 were designed in the Art Deco style. Fricker, pg. 90.



Figure 42 (Left). 115 East First was constructed c. 1940. Figure 43 (Right). 413 North Parkerson Avenue. Both are common examples of the Everyday Modern commercial style found on many buildings in Crowley.

Later examples of the commercial style in Crowley fall within the “Everyday Modern” as coined in the “Modernism Triumphant – Commercial and Institutional Buildings” by Jonathan and Donna Fricker. Within the overall modern style used in Louisiana from 1945-65, the Frickers identified four subtypes: holdover International Style, holdover Art Moderne, Modular Grid Modern, and Everyday Modern. Of these four subtypes, the Everyday Modern moniker applies to many commercial buildings in Louisiana’s smaller towns: “This grouping recognizes a broad swath of smaller commercial and professional office buildings that would have been considered ‘up-to-date’ in their day, but which do not fit comfortably into any well-defined genre...Some of the resulting buildings have a striking visual character, others are very basic.”³⁶ In general, most Everyday Modern commercial buildings have all of their stylistic elements on the façade with side walls left blank. For buildings that fell into this Everyday Modern category, the style “other” was chosen as it seemed to fit best versus the other categories available.

Minimal Traditional (1935-1950)

The Minimal Traditional style applies to residential structures and arose out of the Great Depression and World War II. Particularly following World War II, there was a demand for housing for returning servicemen and women and their families. In larger cities, this resulted in entire neighborhoods of minimal traditional cottages. In places like Crowley, this resulted in infill within existing residential districts. Coming between the earlier revival styles and the mid-century ranch style homes, the minimal traditional style broached the divide between streamlined design and ornamentation. Common characteristics of the style include low or intermediate pitched roofs, small house size (usually one story), use of double hung windows, and minimal amounts of added architectural details.³⁷ Crowley’s examples can be found in both the South Crowley area and the original “historic district” area. In South Crowley, these were usually built after moving older cottages over on large lots to make room for the new construction. In the “historic district”, minimal traditional cottages were sometimes added to larger existing lots or replaced earlier houses.

³⁶ Modernism Triumphant, pg 8.

³⁷ McAlester, pgs. 586-589



Figure 44 (Top Left). 607 East Hutchinson Avenue, c. 1950.

Figure 45 (Top Right). 711 South Avenue H., c. 1955.

Figure 46 (Bottom Left). 122 East Oak Street, c. 1950.

These are all examples of the minimal traditional style in Crowley.

Ranch (1935-1975)

Originating in California in the mid-1930s, the ranch style gained popularity during the 1950s and 1960s throughout the rest of the country. In Louisiana, the ranch style was used through the 1970s as well. Common details of the style include a low one-story shape, low pitched roofs, moderate to wide roof overhangs, large picture windows, off-center front entry underneath the main roof of the house, asymmetrical façade, and garages attached to the main façade.³⁸ Crowley has just under 20 ranch houses (in either form or style) within the existing National Register Historic District.

³⁸ McAlester, pgs. 596-98.



Figure 47 (Top Left). 619 East Hutchinson Avenue, c. 1950.



Figure 48 (Top Right). 418 North Avenue J. c. 1957.

Figure 49 (Bottom Right). 503 South Avenue H, c. 1965.

All are examples of the ranch style in Crowley.



Mid-Century Historic Revivals

While the ranch style was popular for residences, historic revival styles were also being applied to the ranch form. While the ranch form was embraced, some homeowners wanted their new residences to reflect the historic styles such as Colonial Revival, Greek Revival, or the French Creole style. Per “The Past as Inspiration” historic context, historic revival residences from 1945-65 generally fell into five subtypes: minimal traditional houses, ranch houses with traditional details, one story slab-on-grade French Creole houses, custom builder jobs, and architect-designed houses.³⁹ Even after 1965, historic revival styles have continued to be applied to residential and commercial structures through the current day.



Figure 50 (Left). 316 North Avenue J and Figure 51 (Right) 402 East 5th Street were both constructed c. 1965 and are good examples of ranch form houses with historic revival details.

³⁹ “The Past as Inspiration,” pg. 7

Intrusions – Post 1966

Previously, any historic resource constructed after 1931 was considered an intrusion. After the resurvey of the district, it is clear that there are many buildings constructed between 1931 and 1972 (the current 50-year guideline) that can now be considered contributing. Based on the resurvey, intrusions to the district today include severely altered historic buildings, anything constructed after 1966 (see recommendations section), and empty lots that formerly held historic buildings.



Figure 52 (Left) 207 East Mill Street, c. 2008, and Figure 53 (Right) 815 South Avenue H, c. 1995, are both examples of intrusions.



Figure 54 (Left). 126 East Elm Street, left, was constructed c. 1910 as a Queen Anne cottage. It was heavily altered within the last five years with the western side of the house being removed and the siding, doors, and windows replaced. It would now be considered non-contributing to the National Register Historic District.

RESURVEY RECOMMENDATIONS

After surveying over 400 historic resources within the existing National Register Historic District and those just outside the boundaries, there are three main recommendations moving forward:

- **Updating the period of significance for the existing National Register Historic District through 1966**
- **Documenting Additional Historic Resources within the Existing National Register Historic District**
- **Expanding the boundaries of the existing National Register Historic District to include commercial resources along North Parkerson Avenue**
 - **Further intensive survey of West and North Crowley for other potential National Register Historic Districts**
- **Pursuing individual listing for resources in Crowley that are located outside of the existing National Register Historic District**

The following pages will detail each of these recommendations, including justification for updating the period of significance through 1966, potential logical boundary expansions based on National Register Guidance as well as survey results, future survey recommendations, and possible individual listings that are located within the city of Crowley as a whole. These recommended individual listings cover a wide variety of historic resources and help to document the architectural, social, recreational, and political history of Crowley. These recommendations aim to ensure that the whole history of Crowley is investigated and documented.

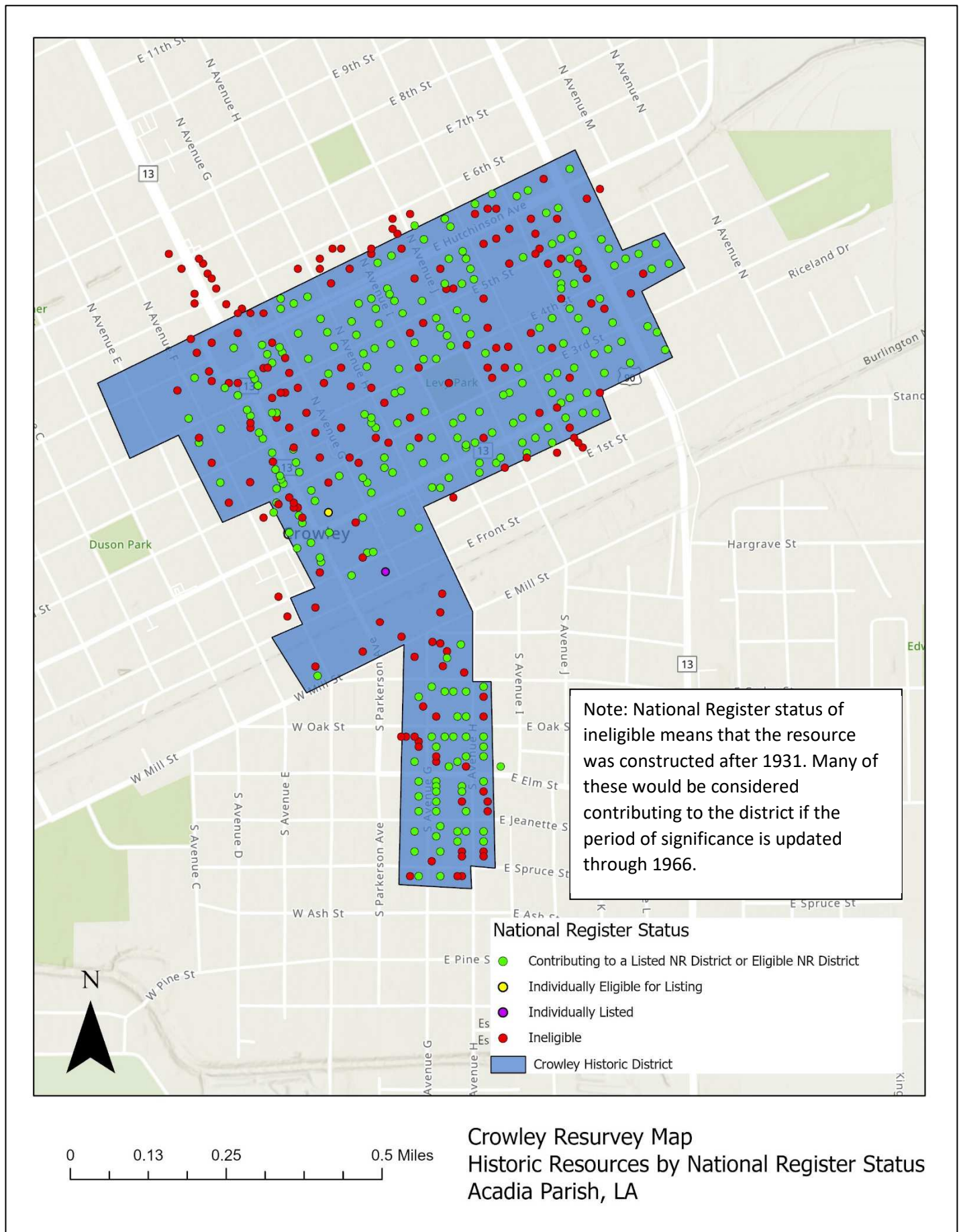
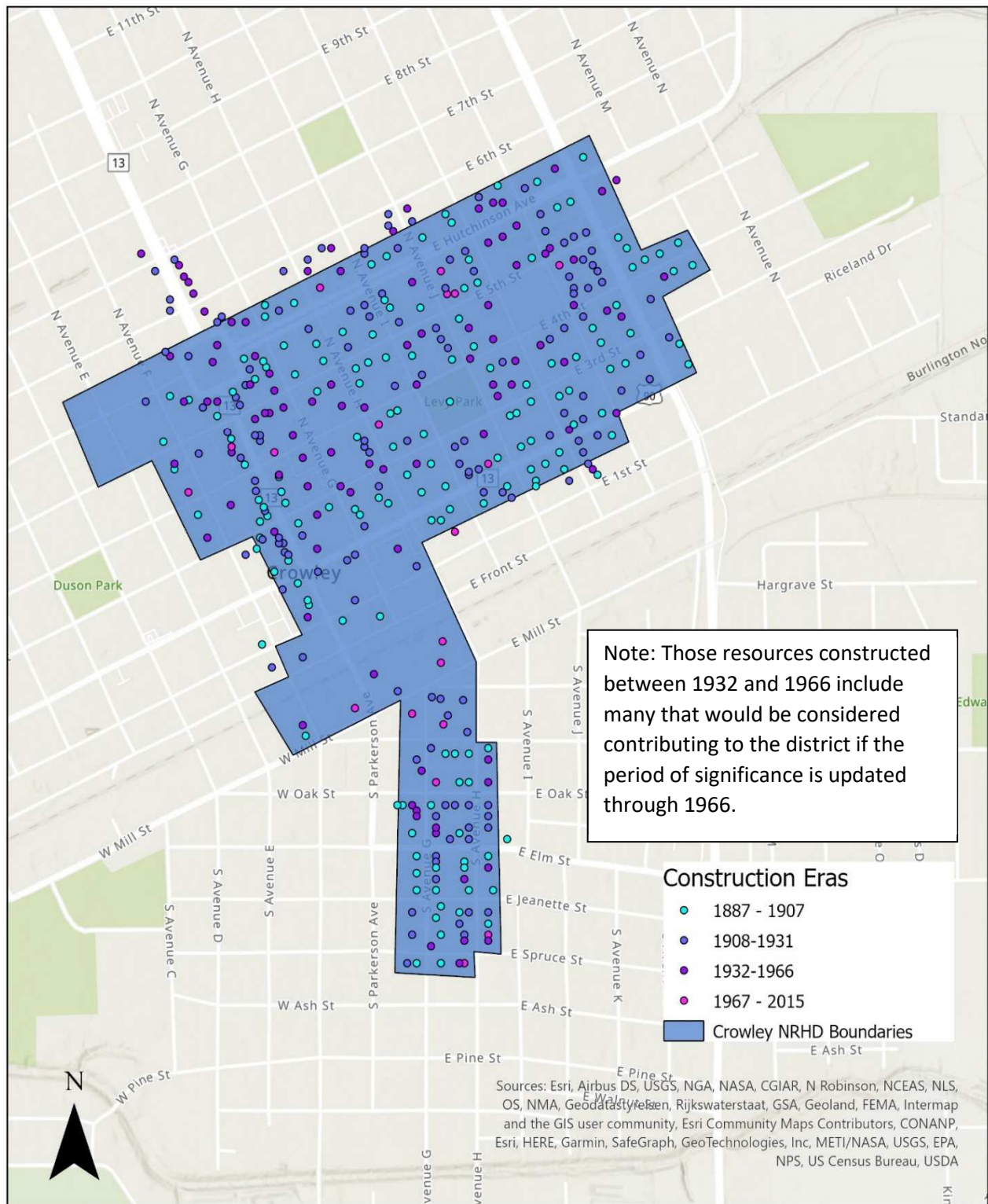


Figure 55. Map showing all surveyed historic resources by their National Register Status as of 2021.



Crowley Resurvey Map
Historic Resources by Construction Date
Acadia Parish, LA

Figure 56. Map showing all surveyed historic resources by their era of construction.

Updating the Period of Significance Through 1966

The results of the resurvey of the existing NRHD reveal that the district remains quite intact and that there are many historic resources previously counted as non-contributing that could be considered contributing if the period of significance is expanded beyond 1931. The current 50-year guideline ends in 1972; however, the survey results and the history of Crowley's development support a more logical end to an updated Period of Significance of 1966, when Interstate 10 (which runs from the west to east coast of the United States) was completed on both sides of Crowley and development began to grow towards the new interstate.

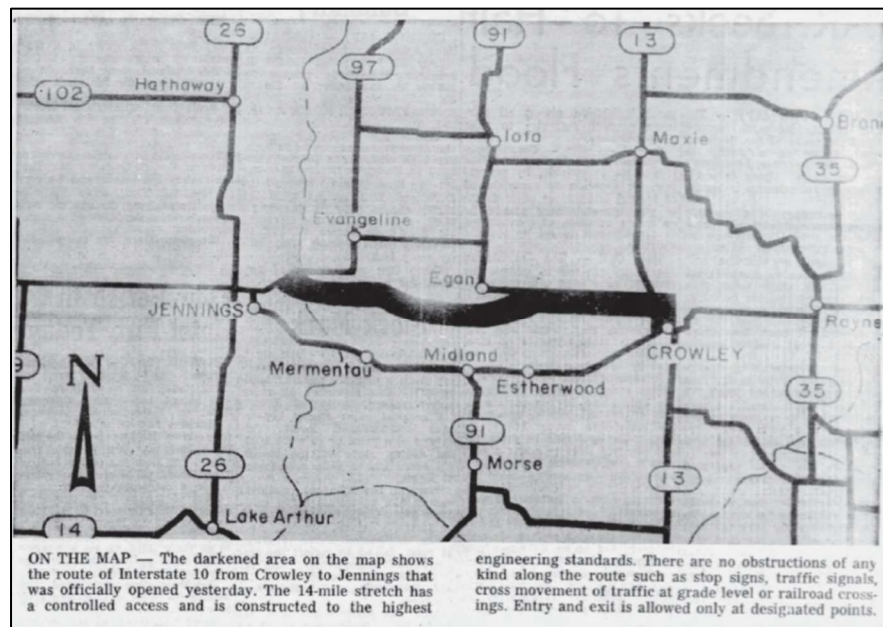


Figure 57. Map showing the Interstate 10 link between Jennings and Crowley, which was opened in March of 1963. Image courtesy of the *Crowley Post-Signal*.

The 15-mile segment connecting Crowley to Jennings on the west was formerly dedicated on March 28, 1963. At that time, it was the longest stretch of superhighway constructed at one time at the cost of \$4,746,000.⁴⁰ Later that same year, the Louisiana Department of Highways announced that proposed road projects in Acadia Parish totaled \$5,728,639.67. The largest bid for road projects related to the Interstate 10 link between Crowley and Rayne to the east.

In July of 1966, this second stretch of Interstate 10 opened. This stretch cost \$5.1 million dollars and gave “travelers a straight interstate shot from beyond the Louisiana-Texas border to a point 15 miles west of Lafayette.”⁴¹ The sections connecting Lafayette across the Atchafalaya Basin were not finished until 1969. Despite this, Crowley's development had already started to shift north towards the interstate. This was also a time that parts of the original town of Crowley saw demolitions of historic resources begin, a phenomenon common across many American cities during this time of rapid growth and expansion of the interstate highway systems. Based on the completion of Interstate 10, and the building counts seen in the

⁴⁰ Crowley Post-Signal, 3/28/1963, pg. 1.

⁴¹ “Crowley-Rayne Road to Open.” Crowley Post-Signal, July 16, 1966. Accessed via newspapers.com. February 16, 2022.

tables on the next page, updating the period of significance for the district through 1966 is a logical terminus.

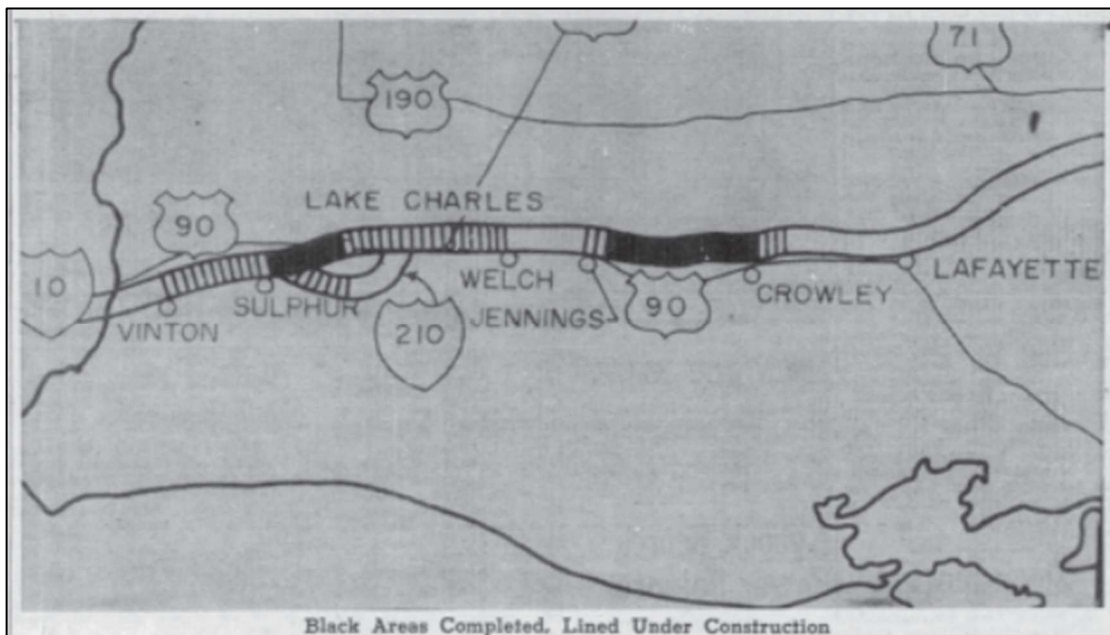


Figure 58. Map showing the Interstate 10 link between Crowley and Rayne, which was completed between 1963 and 1966. Image courtesy of the Crowley Post-Signal.

The below table displays the number of historic resources that are extant and were constructed within the same periods used in the original 1981 National Register nomination. The number of resources constructed between 1887 and 1910 went down by 22 due to loss either by fire, storm damage, or demolition, or because the estimated construction date used in the original nomination was wrong. Sanborn Fire Insurance maps and historic aeriels were used to confirm the previous date or provide an updated construction date range or circa construction date for each building in the district. The number of buildings constructed between 1911 and 1931 increased by four after Sanborn Fire Insurance map research. Lastly, those historic resources constructed between 1931, the current end of the period of significance (POS), and 1966, the proposed new end to the POS, number 108 resources that were formerly considered intrusions (as compared to 111 in 1981). Today, those resources make up almost 28% of the district. After 1966, only 34 resources were constructed in the district, with most of those constructed as residences c. 1975 that replaced demolished older homes.

Table 2. Buildings by Construction Period, Resurvey 2022			
Construction Period	Number of Resources - 1981	Number of Resources - 2022	Percentage of District - 2022
1887-1910	166	144	37.11%
1911-1931	105	101	26.03%
1931-1966	111	108	27.84%
1967-Present (Intrusions)		34	8.76%
Total	382	388	100%

Table 3. Buildings Constructed after 1966 in Crowley National Register Historic District	
Year	Number of Resources Built
1967-70	2
1970-80	15
1980-90	4
1990-2000	3
2000-10	8
2010-present	1
Unknown Construction Dates	1
Total	34 (8.8% of the district)

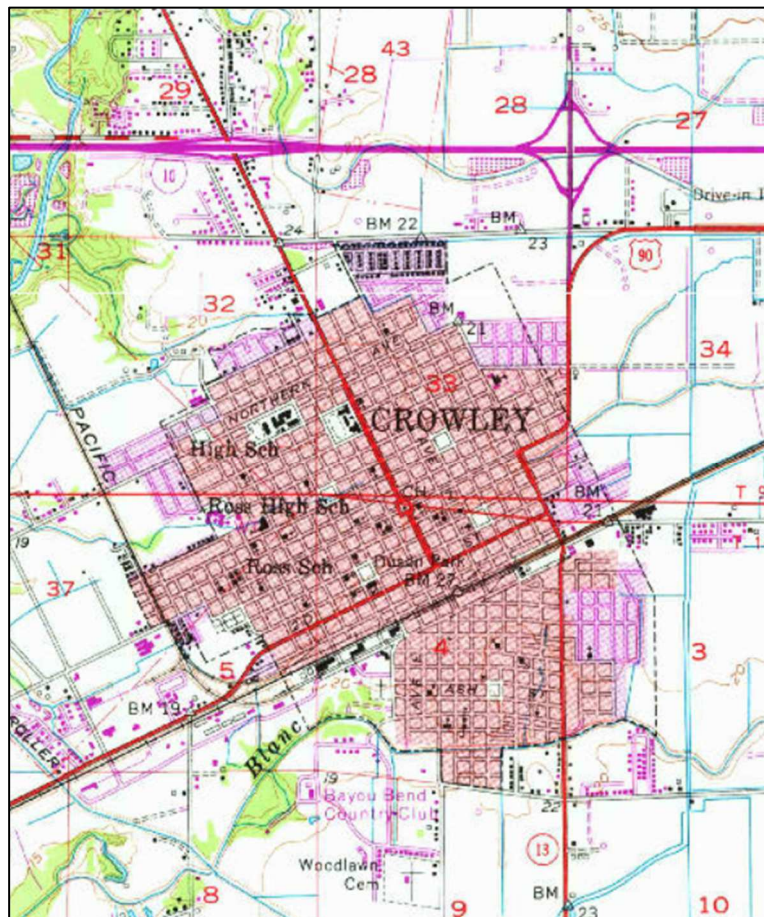
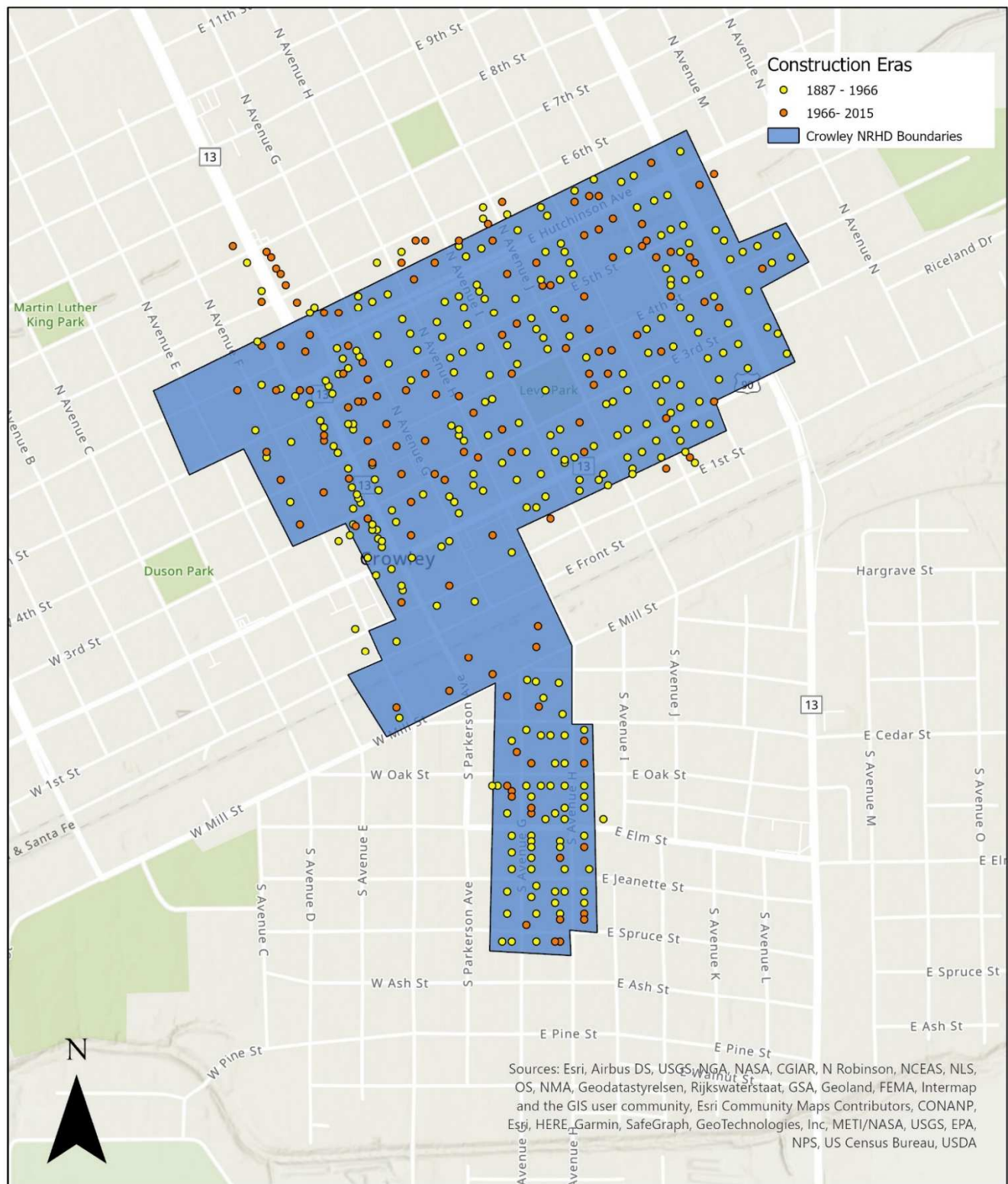


Figure 59. 1971 USGS Topographic Map of Crowley. Image courtesy of Historic Aerials by NETRonline.

The topographic map above from 1971 shows how Crowley grew between 1955 and 1971. The fuchsia-colored lines indicated elements constructed after 1955, including the two stretches of Interstate 10. The expansion of the city's boundaries can be seen on all sides as well, with targeted growth between the original city boundaries and the interstate to the north.



Crowley Resurvey Map Resources Built Before and After 1966 Acadia Parish, LA

Figure 60. Map showing historic resources grouped by those constructed prior to 1966 and those after 1966.

Documenting Additional Historic Resources within Existing NRHD

The original NRHD inventory only included buildings as contributing or non-contributing. It did not include sites, such as Levy Park, or objects, such as the concrete street sign posts. It is recommended that when the period of significance for the district is updated, that the resource count is also updated to reflect resources other than just buildings. Per National Register Bulletin 15, "The National Register of Historic Places includes significant properties, classified as buildings, sites, districts, structures, or objects."⁴² Furthermore, districts themselves can contain buildings, structures, sites, objects, and open spaces – both contributing and non-contributing. Levy Park is certainly an integral part of the existing district and should be considered contributing moving forward.⁴³

Nine concrete street posts (see map on pg. 44) were documented during the resurvey. It is key to note that there are likely other concrete post signs in the existing district that may have been missed as well as within the city of Crowley as a whole. If any additional posts, located within the existing NRHD, are noted as missing, they should be counted as contributing to an updated National Register nomination. Per news articles from 1949 and 1950 in the Crowley Post-Signal, the small obelisk shaped concrete street sign posts were in the works starting in March of 1949. At that time, the city council was viewing displays of concrete street markers from a visiting salesman. By September of 1950, the street signs were expected to go up soon: "The city is making an effort to construct their own in the form of concrete posts. The subject has been studied by both the past and present city administrations."⁴⁴ At that time, the city was experimenting with using rice chaff in the mixture, but it does not appear that that mixture ended up being what was used. An editorial from December 5, 1950, stated: "By now many of the citizens must have seen the new street markers going up at the various intersections in Crowley. The concrete posts, painted white, have the street designation imprinted in the post in red letters, and are plainly visible both in the day and night."⁴⁵ As the posts currently date to 1950, they are not considered contributing to the NRHD, nor are they even mentioned in the original nomination. When the period of significance for the district is expanded through 1966, these concrete street sign posts should be considered contributing objects to the district. Given that many have been lost over time due to a variety of reasons, those that remain should be documented. Each street sign sits on corners and has one street imprinted on the east and west sides and the opposite street on the north and south sides. For example, the post at the northeast corner of North Avenue I and East 4th Street (01-00555), has "4th Street" imprinted on the east and west sides and "Avenue I" on the north and south sides. The posts were originally painted white with the lettering stamped into the post and painted red. Most have lost their original paint, but some retain remnants of either or both colors.

The original 1981 NRHD nomination doesn't mention detached garages or outbuildings. It is recommended that when the period of significance is updated, the resource count is also updated to account for detached garages. There are many residences, ranging from small bungalows to large multi-story houses that have detached garages. Where noticed, these were mentioned in the updated and new Louisiana Historic Resource Inventory (LHRI) forms. Per guidance from the Louisiana Division of Historic Preservation's National Register coordinator and the National Park Service, recent National Register nominations (new and updates) are counting larger outbuildings, such as garages, if they're visible from

⁴² National Register Bulletin 15, pg. 4

⁴³ The gazebo in Levy Park is non-contributing as it is a reconstruction. The park itself is historic and should be counted as a contributing site.

⁴⁴ "An Editorial: Another Improvement." Crowley *Daily Signal*, December 5, 1950, pg. 4. Accessed via www.newspapers.com.

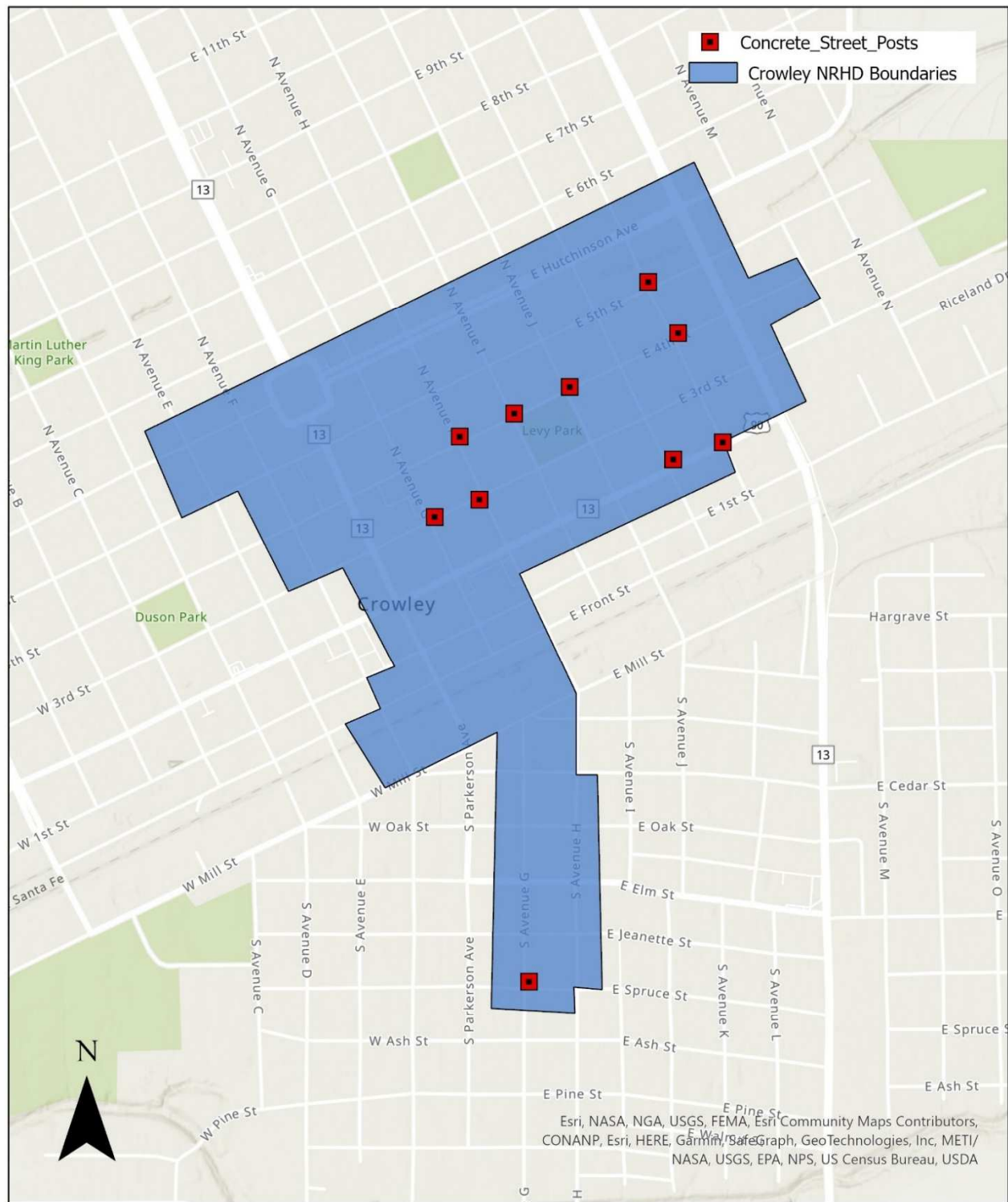
⁴⁵ Ibid.

the street and if they contribute to the significance of the district. In a recent nomination for the Teddy Avenue Residential Historic District in Slidell, the following was used to describe outbuildings:

“Large-scale ancillary buildings like garages are described below with the associated primary dwelling, included in the inventory count, and depicted on Figure 3. Small ancillary buildings like sheds are described but excluded from the count. Documentation of the district was conducted from the public right-of-way, and some ancillary buildings were not visible or sufficiently visible for a contributing or non-contributing assignment. The inventory may be updated in the future to include these buildings.”⁴⁶

It is recommended that the same approach be taken when updating the resource count for the Crowley NRHD.

⁴⁶National Register of Historic Places, Teddy Avenue Residential Historic District, Slidell, St. Tammany Parish, Louisiana, Reference # 100006725.



Crowley Resurvey Map
Concrete Street Posts
Acadia Parish, LA

Figure 61. Map showing the locations of c. 1950 concrete street sign posts in the existing National Register Historic District.

Expanding the Boundaries of the Existing National Register Historic District

The Crowley National Register Historic District was listed in 1981. At this time, district boundaries often ended up looking a bit jagged and would often go around properties that were not yet historic or cut through portions of blocks. Today, National Register districts aim to keep these boundaries more regular and cutting out only portions that are clearly non-contributing.

From the National Register Bulletin "Defining Boundaries for National Register Properties," it is recommended to:

- Select boundaries to encompass but not exceed the extent of the significant resources and land areas comprising the property.
- Include all historic features of the property, but do not include buffer zones or acreage not directly contributing to the significance of the property.
- Exclude peripheral areas that no longer retain integrity due to alterations in physical conditions or setting caused by human forces, such as development, or natural forces, such as erosion.
- Include small areas that are disturbed or lack significance when they are completely surrounded by eligible resources. "Donut holes" are not allowed.

In 1981, the focus on creating the Crowley National Register Historic District was on documenting the original commercial district along North Parkerson and the two oldest residential neighborhoods of Crowley – the "historic district" and South Crowley. What is interesting, however, is that the residential section of Crowley located just north of E. Hutchinson Avenue also includes some very old residential structures. While it is not known how the final boundaries were selected at that time, moving forward, there can be some clear goals for investigating more National Register Historic Districts in Crowley. In communication with the National Park Service, guidance was offered in reference to either updating the existing district, in both period of significance and boundaries, or in creating new districts. The driver of either of this is survey. The survey work for the existing district has stated above that the period of significance should logically be expanded through 1966. Further survey work should be done to the east of North Parkerson and north of East Hutchinson to evaluate if there is a residential district in that area of Crowley. Additionally, more intensive survey of West Crowley is warranted as well as this area of town has a long history within the African American community and likely could produce its own historic district of residential and commercial structures. When doing survey, the historic resources that remain will dictate if a new district or multiple districts are extant. It is also suggested that more intensive survey be done to the mill area as there is likely an industrial district there. Boundaries for these potential new districts can overlap and this is one reason why it isn't suggested to expand the boundaries of the existing National Register Historic District to include more residential buildings at this time. Survey work in those areas could reveal that these buildings should actually be included in their own residential district (i.e. West Crowley).

After future intensive survey work is done in these areas, these newer districts will be more coherent and thematically related than the original district may be. This is not an uncommon issue; many older National Register Historic Districts did not have extensive boundaries because of the 50-year guideline and because the focus was on the oldest resources in cities and towns. Newer districts aim to avoid having a hodge-podge of old resources and instead more cohesively tell the story of a town.

Keeping all these factors in mind, it is recommended to expand the existing National Register District to include a few commercial buildings along North Parkerson Avenue as there is not a secondary distinctive historic commercial corridor in Crowley. As the map on page 46 shows, the recommended boundary

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Potential Individual National Register Listings in Crowley

With the assistance of Claire Doré, with the Acadia Parish library, a windshield survey was done in areas both within the existing NRHD as well as within the rest of the city of Crowley. Desktop research was also done to identify any potential individual listings, and these were shared with Ms. Doré for review and confirmation. Based on the research and windshield survey, the following resources have been identified as potentially eligible for individual listing on the National Register. It is key to note that further research would need to be done to confirm if these resources are eligible as well as to determine if the resources retain enough integrity on both the exterior and interior to be NRHP-eligible. At this time, only the exterior of each resource was visible.

Educational Facilities

South Crowley Elementary School

South Crowley lots were first sold in 1897 and it was only natural that the area would need a school for the neighborhood's children. In 1904, land was leased in South Crowley from W. W. Duson for an elementary school. The permanent school building was completed in 1907. In the 1930s, the campus was expanded with a four-room school building and gymnasium. In the 1950s and 1970s, the additional existing buildings were added to the campus.⁴⁷ The original 1907 school building was demolished in 1967.⁴⁸ Today, the campus retains one of the 1930s era buildings in addition to the 1950s and 1970s buildings. These remaining buildings should be further evaluated under Criterion A: Education for their role within South Crowley and Crowley as a whole.



Figure 63 (Left). One of the 1930s era school buildings left at the South Crowley Elementary School. Figure 64 (Right). 1950s era school building at the left of the photo and 1970s era school building at the right of the photo.

Hawson Memorial Elementary (Crowley Kindergarten School)

The building today known as Crowley Kindergarten School was built as Hawson Memorial Elementary in 1938 through the Public Works Administration (PWA). The school served the elementary age students in North Crowley and a building located to its northeast housed the high school (this building was demolished for construction of the existing Acadia Parish Library in 1974). Following desegregation in 1970, the school housed only two grades. In 1973, the 3rd-12th grades were reorganized, and Hawson became the Crowley Kindergarten School. This school should be further evaluated for its significance

⁴⁷ History of Acadia Parish Public Schools, 1887-1987, pg. 112.

⁴⁸ Images of America, Crowley, pg. 31.

under Criterion A: Education as well as Criterion C: Architecture as it is a good example of Colonial Revival architecture.



Figure 65. Crowley Kindergarten School, originally Hawson Elementary, was constructed in 1938 and is potentially eligible under Criteria A and C.

Crowley Junior High School

The building that serves as Crowley Junior High School today was built in 1939-41 by the Works Progress Administration as the fourth campus for Crowley High School.⁴⁹ The school served as the high school until 1973 when the current Crowley High School was completed. At that time, the school became the junior high. The campus includes the 1939-41 main building; a 1954 addition; a 1951 girls' gymnasium that has a cafeteria, band room, and classroom; a 1963 boys' gymnasium; and Gardiner Memorial Stadium. In addition to the junior high, the campus also houses the parish's vocational-technical school. Crowley Junior High School should be further evaluated for its significance under Criterion A: Education as well as Criterion C: Architecture as a prime example of Art Deco architecture.



Figure 66 (Left). Crowley Junior High's main building, constructed between 1939-41. Figure 67 (Right). Crowley Junior High's gymnasium building.

⁴⁹ History of Acadia Parish Schools, pg. 54

Ross High School

Henry Clay Ross came to Crowley in 1899 as the teacher and principal of the one room school for Crowley's black students, then known as the Crowley Industrial Training Institute. By 1907, the student population had outgrown the one room building and a two-story frame building was constructed. In 1931, a new brick building was constructed and by the late 1930s, the 1907 frame structure had been demolished. The 1931 structure served all black students through 1954 when a new high school was constructed on Western Avenue; the school was named Ross High School in memory of its first principal, Henry Ross⁵⁰. In 1963, the elementary grades were moved from Ross High to the new Ross Elementary School. With desegregation in 1970, Ross High School was consolidated with Crowley High School.⁵¹ Today, the building serves as Ross Head Start. Ross High School should be further evaluated for its significance under Criterion A as the only African American public secondary school in Crowley prior to desegregation.



Figure 68. Ross High School was constructed in 1931 and is potentially eligible under Criterion A.

North Crowley Elementary School (Crowley Middle School)

Constructed in 1964 as Crowley Middle School, this school housed the white sixth graders from North Crowley and white seventh and eighth graders from the entire city of Crowley. Following desegregation in 1970-73, 5th and 6th grade students were moved into Crowley Middle School.⁵² The campus was designed in a typical mid-century finger plan with classroom wings projecting off the main school block. The main entry is detailed with maroon marble as an homage to what was then Crowley High School, which also has maroon marble detailing. North Crowley Elementary School should be further evaluated for its significance under Criterion C: Architecture, as an example of a mid-century modern finger plan school.

⁵⁰ For more information Henry Ross and his daughter, Jeannette Ross May, and her husband, David May, see the National Register nomination for the David and Jeannette Ross May House.

⁵¹ History of Acadia Parish Schools, pg. 120.

⁵² Ibid, pg. 60



Figure 69. North Crowley Elementary School, originally Crowley Middle School, may be NRHP-eligible under Criterion C.

Ross Elementary School

Ross Elementary School was built in 1963 and housed the first through eighth grades for black students in West Crowley. David May, son-in-law of Henry Ross, was the first principal of the school. With desegregation in 1970, Ross Elementary housed black and white students from Crowley and rural areas nearby in the first and second grades.⁵³ Like the other mid-century schools in Crowley, the campus has a main central block with three classroom wings in a finger style plan. The building is clad in blonde brick and features bands of metal awning windows typical of mid-century schools. It also has flat roofs on all buildings and covered walkways connecting the classroom wings. Ross Elementary School should be further evaluated for its significance under Criterion C: Architecture, as an example of a mid-century modern finger plan school. It also may be eligible under Criterion A: Ethnic History for its role in African American education prior to desegregation.



Figure 70. Ross Elementary School may be NRHP-eligible under Criteria C and A.

Other African American Resources

Peoples' Investment Company

Founded in 1902, a group of black citizens noticed that there was a need for homes for their fellow black citizens in the growing city of Crowley. Their mission was "to teach and help people and to reap a reasonable return from the funds invested." Funds collected from amongst its members were used to

⁵³ History of Acadia Parish Schools, pg. 111

make short term loans for the purpose of buying, building, and renovating homes. Sometimes borrowers would use funds for education as well.⁵⁴ Some of the earliest members of the Peoples' Investment Company included the well-known Henry C. Ross, Levy Stagg, Floyd Handy, J.A. Spann, G.W. Chapman, V. Vallien, Jr., Alfred F. Carbin, Alexander Oliver, A.R. Chargois, N. E. A. Jones, James Harrison, Daniel Rhone, and M. Thomas. The Peoples' Investment Company helped many local black citizens to attain housing as Crowley grew as well as supporting the education of its community. The building that first house the Peoples' Investment Company is located at 709 West 5th Street and should be further evaluated for its significance under Criterion A: Ethnic Heritage for its role in helping the African American community of Crowley to grow and help its fellow citizens.



Figure 71. The Peoples' Investment Company may be NRHP-eligible under Criterion A: Ethnic Heritage

In addition to the schools mentioned above and the Peoples' Investment Company, further research needs to be done into the history of African Americans in Crowley. Black citizens of Crowley have a history dating back to the founding of the city and any historic resources related to their contributions to their community as well as the community at large deserve to be documented and recognized. These include churches, residences of significant African Americans, and businesses. Documenting these resources will help to tell the full story of the history of Crowley.

Mid-Century Modern Resources

Trinity Episcopal Church

Located at 1306 Hoffpauir Ave, Trinity Episcopal Church held its first service in May of 1893. By April of 1900, the first building housing the congregation was finished.⁵⁵ In 1967, Acadia Savings and Loan Association bought the church lot, located on the northeast corner of Parkerson Avenue and Court

⁵⁴ "Peoples Investment Company, Inc. One Hundred Year Celebration 1902-2002." Unpublished booklet about the history of the organization written by members.

⁵⁵ J. Dean Maurer "Modest Mission of 1893 is Now Trinity Episcopal, Crowley", Crowley Daily Signal, 50th Anniversary Edition.

Circle, and the congregation moved to Hoffpauir Avenue. The existing church seen today was constructed by 1969.⁵⁶ The building is a prime example of a mid-century modern church building and features a steeply pitched roof with wide overhangs and a prominent front entry with simple doors and large central stained-glass window. Trinity Episcopal Church should be further evaluated for its potential significance under Criterion C: Architecture.



Figure 72. Trinity Episcopal Church may be NRHP-eligible under Criterion C: Architecture as an example of mid-century modern architecture.

Morning Star Baptist Church

Morning Star Baptist Church was the first congregation for African Americans in Crowley and was organized in 1889. The original church was constructed in 1892 on Third Street on land donated by W. W. Duson.⁵⁷ Completed in November 1960, the current church building is located at 519 West Third Street and was described at the time as what “may be the most modern and unique in entire state.”⁵⁸ The building features two large A-frame roofs – one over the main sanctuary building and the other over an ancillary building set back from the main sanctuary. The buttresses that make up the framing of the building, particularly on the main church building, are exposed, which was a common design feature of the International style. The main façade has no openings and is composed of red brick and cream-colored panels above that allow light to shine into the church. There is also a blue star at the gable peak

⁵⁶ Images of America, pg. 23.

⁵⁷ Images of America, pg. 23.

⁵⁸ “Morning Star Missionary Baptist Church May be Most Modern and Unique in Entire State.” *Crowley Post-Signal*, November 19, 1960, page 3.

that also allows light to shine into the sanctuary. Morning Star Baptist Church should be further evaluated under Criterion C: Architecture as a prime example of a mid-century church.



Figure 73. Morning Star Baptist Church may be NRHP-eligible under Criterion C: Architecture as a fantastic example of mid-century modern architecture.

In addition to mid-century modern churches, Crowley also has a few examples of mid-century modern residential architecture, primarily near the former golf course. One such example includes the house at 602 West 17th Street. It is a prime example of the mid-century ranch house featuring a low sloping roof with integrated carport. It was built using prefabricated pieces that could be assembled on site. Further research into the history of this residence should be done to completely evaluate its significance under Criterion C: Architecture.



Figure 74. 602 West 17th Street may be NRHP-eligible under Criterion C: Architecture as a prime example of mid-century modern residential architecture.

204 North Parkerson Avenue

Constructed between 1971 and 1981, this two-story commercial building is a prime example of the Brutalist architectural style. Even with a possible extension of the period of significance for the National Register Historic District, this building would still be considered non-contributing as it was constructed after 1966. It features three symmetrical sides with central balconies at the second floor. The building is clad in brown concrete and has a wide overhang supported by square columns on all sides. The only elevation that isn't identical to the others is the rear elevation, which has a one-story drive thru. As the only noted example of Brutalism in Crowley, this building should be further evaluated for its significance under Criterion C: Architecture.



Figure 75. 204 North Parkerson Avenue may be NRHP-eligible under Criterion C: Architecture as a prime example of Brutalist architecture.

Mid-Century Resources within Existing National Register Historic District, Currently Non-Contributing

There are three historic resources within the existing National Register Historic District that are currently non-contributing because they were constructed after the period of significance. Updating the period of significance through 1966 would change the status of these three resources.

The Evangeline Bank, located at 425 North Avenue G, was constructed by 1961, and is clad in light brown brick, and features large expanses of glass and aluminum storefront systems as well as an overhanging second story block. The Crowley Central Fire Station, at 563 NW Court Circle, was constructed from 1948-49, in the International Style. It has a prominent tower at the far-right side of the building denoting the entrance and bands of windows above the truck bays. Lastly, the Acadia Parish Courthouse, at 500 North Parkerson Avenue, was constructed in 1950-51 as a late example of the Art Deco style. It features marble and limestone cladding, distinct bays on the North Parkerson façade featuring marble ornamentation and awning windows, and a central clock tower. All three of these resources are likely individually eligible on their own under Criterion C: Architecture, if the period of significance is not updated.



Figure 76 (Top Left): Evangeline Bank and Trust

Figure 77 (Top Right). Central Fire Station

Figure 78 (Bottom Left). Acadia Parish Courthouse

All three of these resources will be considered contributing if the period of significance for the National Register Historic District is expanded through 1966. If it isn't, these need to be evaluated for their significance under Criterion C: Architecture (the courthouse is also eligible under Criterion A: Government and Politics).

Huval's Boot and Shoe Repair

Located at 901 North Parkerson Avenue, Huval's Boot and Shoe Repair was originally built as the Moore-Stossell Motor Co. (a Studebaker dealership) in 1953-54. The building was constructed out of a composite material made of rice, the staple of Crowley's economy. Further research needs to be done into the use of this material, which was short lived, but still likely holds significance within the context of Crowley. This building may be eligible for listing under Criterion C: Architecture, particularly once more research is done into the material used to build it.



Figure 79. Huval's Boot and Shoe Repair, originally Moore-Stossell Motor Co. was constructed in 1953-54 and is constructed of a composite rice material.

Supreme Rice Mill

The Supreme Rice Mill, the backbone of Crowley's economy, is today one mill. Historically though, it was several mills, up to 12 at one time. This area should be further evaluated for its significance as an industrial district. In addition to the mill itself, the rest of South Crowley may be eligible as its own district in relation to the mill as the residences were built to house mill workers. As stated in the discussion above concerning boundary expansions for National Register Historic Districts, boundaries can overlap. If it is determined that an industrial mill district exists, the residences and businesses located in South Crowley that supported the mill and mill workers, could have boundaries that include more of these resources than are currently located in the Crowley National Register Historic District.



Figure 80. The Supreme Rice Mill, and associated buildings in South Crowley, may be NRHP-eligible under Criterion A: Commerce, Economics, Exploration/Settlement, or Industry.

Duson's Real Estate Office

The Duson Real Estate Office, now located at 418 North Ave B was the first permanent building in Crowley. It was moved from Rayne and predates 1888. Originally relocated on 1st Street, the building was moved to 2nd Street in 1900, and finally moved to its present location when W.W. Duson sold it to Etienne Jordan, who had worked for Duson for many years.

This building should be evaluated for individual listing under Criterion A: Exploration/Settlement as it served as W. W. Duson's real estate office from the very beginning of Crowley.



Figure 81. The W. W. Duson Real Estate Office may be NRHP-eligible under Criterion A: Exploration/Settlement.

Recreational Resources

Miller Park

Built in 1948, Miller Park served as the home of the Crowley Millers, a semi pro baseball team. The Millers played in South Louisiana's Teche League and the professional Gulf Coast and Evangeline Leagues from 1948-57. Hurricane Audrey in 1957 damaged many of the baseball parks in South Louisiana and because of this, the league folded in 1958. At that time, the City of Crowley recreation department purchased the park. It was renovated in 1998 with the main work focusing on replacing the grass with turf. The grandstand and dugouts are original to 1948. Miller Park should be further researched and evaluated for its significance under Criterion A: Entertainment and Recreation.



Figure 82. Miller Park may be NRHP-eligible under Criterion A: Entertainment and Recreation.

CONCLUSION

After resurveying 492 historic resources within the existing Crowley National Register Historic District (NRHD), including those abutting the district boundaries, it is clear that the district is in need of an update, as is common with district listed over 30 years ago. Crowley's NRHD retains a high degree of historic resources from the original period of significance while also having a good stock of buildings constructed from 1932-66 which retain integrity as well. Based on this survey report, it is recommended to take the following steps:

- i. Update the existing National Register nomination by updating the period of significance through 1966. While updating the district, it is recommended to include resources outside of buildings including Levy Park, the concrete street post signs, and substantial outbuildings such as detached garages.
- ii. Proposed a boundary expansion along North Parkerson Avenue to the National Register Coordinator at the State Historic Preservation Office.

These are the immediate recommendations for the existing National Register Historic District in Crowley. In future years, it is also recommended that other areas in the City of Crowley should be intensively surveyed including West Crowley, North Crowley, and the residential area north of E. Hutchinson Avenue. Lastly, there are several individual resources in Crowley that should be further researched and explored for individual listing on the National Register as detailed on pages 47-57.

From its first days as a town born from the southwestern Louisiana prairies, Crowley has had a unique and interesting history. That continues to this day with a rich culture represented by its people and its historic resources as documented by this survey.

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