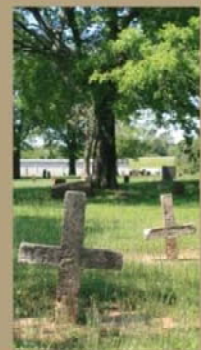




THE AFRICAN AMERICAN EXPERIENCE IN LOUISIANA

Prepared for:
State of Louisiana
Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism
Office of Cultural Development
Division of Historic Preservation



Prepared by:
Laura Ewen Blokker
Southeast Preservation
Greensburg, Louisiana
lblokker@sepreservation.com
May 15, 2012



On the cover: (Clockwise from top left to center) Slave quarters, Evergreen Plantation, Wallace, St. John the Baptist Parish; Antioch Baptist Church, Shreveport, Caddo Parish; Dorseyville School with St. John Baptist Church in background, Dorseyville, Iberville Parish; Star Cemetery, Shreveport, Caddo Parish; S. W. Green House, New Orleans, Orleans Parish; Prince Hall Masonic Temple, Baton Rouge, East Baton Rouge Parish; Freetown, St. James Parish; A. P. Tureaud House, New Orleans, Orleans Parish; J. S. McGehee Lodge # 54, St. Francisville vicinity, West Feliciana Parish; Southern University, Baton Rouge, East Baton Rouge Parish. Photographs of A. P. Tureaud House and S. W. Green House in New Orleans by Charles Leshner. All other photographs by Laura Ewen Blokker.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY/ STATEMENT OF HISTORIC CONTEXT

The purpose of this historic context is to provide a basis for evaluating the historical significance and National Register eligibility of resources throughout the state of Louisiana related to the African American experience. The African American experience is an integral part of Louisiana's broader history, but because it has not always been treated as such and the significance of the historic resources related to it has not been well-understood, it is necessary to devote individual attention to this important subject. The time period considered in this context is 1709 – 1965. The beginning point is established by the year in which Africans first came to Louisiana. Records indicate that the first several Louisiana residents of African descent were brought to the colony as slaves in 1709.¹ This context concludes with the year 1965 even though the National Register of Historic Places generally only considers properties of fifty years of age or greater as eligible resources. This year was selected both in order to include events of the Civil Rights movement that render resources of exceptional significance and so that the context will not become immediately out of date.

Louisiana's history of French and Spanish colonization has set it apart from other places in the United States in many ways, not excluding its African American experience. The French and Spanish laws which dictated the rights and allowable treatment of people of African descent set the foundation for the unique experience of African Americans in Louisiana. It is known that there were free people of African descent in Louisiana as early as 1722 and in the antebellum years, Louisiana came to have one of the largest populations of Free People of Color in the United States and the largest in the lower South.

Throughout the three centuries since people of African descent first arrived in Louisiana, they have made no small contributions to the state. From the early introduction of the African technologies of rice and indigo cultivation, and metalworking that helped the struggling colony survive; to the preservation and creolization of African musical, linguistic, and culinary traditions that distinguish so much of what is celebrated about Louisiana today; to military acts that determined the political fate of the land; to artistic and literary creations; to the invention of the multiple-effect evaporator for sugar refining; to the fine building craftsmanship that holds together and enlivens the state's architecture; to the election of the first African-American governor in the U. S.; to the first integration of public schools in the nineteenth century South; to bringing the case of *Plessy v. Ferguson* to the supreme court; to the first large scale bus boycott of the Civil Rights Movement; to the invention of the sugarcane-planting machine, African Americans have achieved much in Louisiana and been recognized for too little. The Harlem Renaissance poet, writer, activist, and Louisiana native, Alice Dunbar-Nelson wrote,

There is no State in the Union, hardly any spot of like size on the globe, where the man of color has lived so intensely, made so much progress, been of such historical importance and yet about whom so comparatively little is known. His history is like the Mardi Gras

¹ Gwendolyn Midlo Hall, "Death and Revolt," in *The African American Experience in Louisiana: Part A, From Africa to the Civil War*, ed. Charles Vincent (Lafayette: University of Southwestern, LA, 1999), 12-13, first published as chapter 3 in *Africans in Colonial Louisiana: The Development of Afro-Creole Culture in Eighteenth Century* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1992), 56-95.

of the city of New Orleans, beautiful and mysterious and wonderful, but with a serious thought underlying it all. May it be better known to the world someday.²

It would be very difficult to overstate the profound impact African Americans have had on the cultural and historical development of Louisiana over the past three hundred years, and yet many buildings, structures, objects, and sites associated with the African American experience were traditionally overlooked as resources of historic significance. As historic preservation has matured in its many forms – including scholarly discipline, governmental programs, and grassroots initiative – our perception of the places that are significant to our understanding of who we are and where we have been as a nation has greatly expanded. Over the past few decades, historic preservationists and historians have looked critically at the state of work in their respective fields and found great voids in the representation of our national story. Through these decades a great deal of good work has been done to fill this hole, but there is much to be done still. One of the greatest lacunas is African American history. As noted by Carole Merritt, African-American family historian and the author of *Historic Black Resources: A Handbook for the Identification, Documentation, and Evaluation of Historic African-American Properties in Georgia*,

That the study and teaching of American history has largely neglected the African-American experience distorts for all Americans their sense of self. . . . Contrary to common belief, the record of black life in this country is abundant and rich. Various documents capture many aspects of the black community and how it developed within the broad patterns of American history. . . . As the black community reassesses its past, material culture has the special promise of providing new information, posing new questions, and suggesting new interpretations of the African American experience.³

This document attempts to provide as broad of a foundation for the evaluation of properties related to the African American experience in Louisiana as possible within the limits of its scope and purpose. A Historic Context is not an exhaustive, complete history, but rather an overview which creates a setting for understanding our tangible heritage. Therefore, this document will necessarily exclude many details of this expansive topic and readers are encouraged to refer to sources cited in the footnotes and the bibliography for further reading on the African American experience in Louisiana. This text relies heavily on the collection of scholarly papers presented in *The Louisiana Purchase Bicentennial Series in Louisiana History, volume XI, The African American Experience in Louisiana: Parts A-C*, edited by Charles Vincent, but is supplemented by many other resources.

The “Background History and Development” narrative is followed by a “Property Types” section that explores the various built resources and landscapes that demonstrate potential significance to the theme of the African American Experience in Louisiana. Buildings and landscapes connect us to our past, allowing us to inhabit, if only briefly, the spaces of history. They also offer many ways of gaining new information about our past. There are many very

² Alice Dunbar-Nelson, “People of Color in Louisiana: Part II,” *The Journal of Negro History* 2, no. 1 (January 1977), 78.

³ Carole Merritt, “The Power of History: Interpreting Black Material Culture,” in *The State of Afro-American History: Past, Present, and Future*, ed. Darlene Clark Hine (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1989), 21-219.

vernacular places that may not be immediately recognizable as historically significant based on their appearance, but have stories that endow them with great significance. There are also many properties that hold much of their potential significance beneath the ground in the form of archaeological remains. This section organizes properties into different types in order to facilitate the identification of their place within the context established by the “Background History and Development” narrative. Suggested National Register of Historic Places registration requirements are provided for each type. The last three sections of the document identify the geographic parameters of the context, the identification and evaluation methods of properties, and major bibliographical references.

BACKGROUND HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT

Birth of a Creole Culture: People of African Descent in French and Spanish Colonial Louisiana, 1699-1802

French Colonial settlement of Louisiana began in 1699 with the expedition of Iberville and Bienville. Although there is evidence that Iberville had interest in acquiring African slaves for the colony as early as that year, records indicate that he had no success in this until 1709 and then could only secure a small number. The 1708 census of Louisiana includes no persons of African descent and the 1712 census, just ten.⁴ The colonists attempted to use Native Americans as enslaved laborers, but these efforts were met with great resistance and proved unproductive. In 1719 the first of many slave ships from Africa arrived in Louisiana. Estimates of the numbers of slaves who arrived in Louisiana throughout the years vary widely, but the more recent scholarship, which takes into account the mortality during the horrific middle passage and enumerates the people who actually disembarked and lived on in Louisiana, helps us to envision the rapidly growing African population of colonial Louisiana. The first two slave ships of 1719 together landed approximately 450 enslaved Africans. With ships bringing between 87 and 464 people each, by 1743, approximately 5,951 Africans had arrived in Louisiana.⁵ However, the survival rate among the enslaved Africans once in Louisiana was not good in the first years. By 1721, the census recorded only 680 Africans of the estimated 2000 who had been brought into the colony by that point.⁶

In the first decades of the importation of slaves, during which the Company of the Indies had a monopoly over the trade, a majority of enslaved Africans came from Senegambia, a region lying between the Senegal and Gambia rivers of West Africa.⁷ During the second half of the eighteenth century, the origins of enslaved Africans in Louisiana increased greatly. Baptismal records of 1801-1802 from St. Louis Cathedral in New Orleans include Sierra Leone, the Windward Coast, Gold Coast, Bight of Benin, Bight of Biafra, and Central Africa as well as Senegambia and the Americas as places of origins for enslaved persons.⁸ Colonial records indicate the African nation and African culture groups irregularly with varying terms and accuracy, but do present enough information to be sure that the enslaved population of Louisiana by the end of the eighteenth century was comprised of Mandinkas, Fon, Bambara, Fanti, Gambians, Senegalese, Guineans, Yorubas, Igbo, and Angolans among others.⁹ In addition,

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid., 14.

⁶ Daniel H. Usner Jr., "From African Captivity to American Slavery: The Introduction of Black Laborers to Colonial Louisiana," in *The African American Experience in Louisiana: Part A*, ed. Charles Vincent (Lafayette: University of Southwestern, LA, 1999), 45, first published in *Louisiana History*, 20 (1979): 25-48.

⁷ Gwendolyn Midlo Hall, "Senegambia During the French Slave trade to Louisiana," in *The African American Experience in Louisiana: Part A*, ed. Charles Vincent (Lafayette: University of Southwestern, LA, 1999), 7-10, first published in *Africans in Colonial Louisiana: The Development of Afro-Creole Culture in Eighteenth Century* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1992), 28-34.

⁸ Thomas N. Ingersoll, "The Slave Trade and the Ethnic Diversity of Louisiana's Slave Community," in *The African American Experience in Louisiana: Part A*, ed. Charles Vincent (Lafayette: University of Southwestern, LA, 1999), 72, first published in *Louisiana History*, 37 (1996): 133-61.

⁹ Thomas Marc Fiehrer, "The African Presence in Colonial Louisiana: An Essay on the Continuity of Caribbean Culture," in *Louisiana's Black Heritage*, ed. Robert R. MacDonald et al (New Orleans: Louisiana State Museum, 1979), 11.

Louisiana's population of African descent was composed of a large number of Louisiana-born people, or Creoles.¹⁰

A significant natural increase can be inferred from the growth of New Orleans' black population between the years 1766 and 1785, from 3,971 to 10,420.¹¹ This growth cannot be accounted for by the importation of slaves alone and is but one example of Louisiana's burgeoning population of native-born people of African descent in the eighteenth century. A cross-sectional sample of enslaved persons between the years 1771 and 1800 indicates that Creoles comprised approximately two-thirds of the population.¹²

Thus, Louisiana's African population was established with a strongly Senegambian population infused with Bambaras and other African cultural groups. This original population creolized, mixing their African cultures with elements of the French and Spanish colonial society and quickly establishing an African-Creole culture that influenced every aspect of the new colony.¹³ Although this group expanded through natural increase and retained a significant presence in eighteenth century Louisiana, toward the end of the century, increasing slave trading brought new African diversity to Louisiana's black population and maintained the dynamic process of cultural syncretism we know as creolization.¹⁴ "Particularly in the city of New Orleans, but true to a lesser degree of the surrounding area, the air was heavy with the taste and smell of African cookery, the out-of-doors was animated by the sound of African music and by the buoyant sight of Afro-Creole dancing."¹⁵

The enslaved Africans who came to Louisiana were not mere laborers, but people possessing valuable skills and technological knowledge. Captains of the first two slave ships to bring Africans to Louisiana were specifically instructed to purchase people who knew how to cultivate rice – something French colonists were not familiar with.¹⁶ Some Africans also understood the cultivation of indigo, which the colony attempted to produce for profit. Enslaved Africans were carpenters, blacksmiths, masons, cooks, as well as "sophisticated agricultural laborers."¹⁷ Every type of work in the colony was performed by Africans; even the militia benefited from their service. Many Africans were introduced to new skilled trades through

¹⁰ The term Creole is used here as it was in Louisiana during the eighteenth century and antebellum nineteenth century, to refer to someone born in the Americas, most often Louisiana. People born in other colonies were generally called by a name referencing that place of origin. It was common to specify the place of origin of an enslaved person and a Creole identity indicated an enslaved person raised in the culture and customs of Louisiana. Following the Louisiana Purchase, the term also served to distinguish Francophone Louisianans from the newcomer Americans. The word Creole in these senses was not indicative of race. It could be used to refer to people of any race. It was only after the Civil War that the phrase Creoles of Color was popularized as a designation for specific groups of people of mixed-race Louisiana heritage. It is from this usage and the eventual dropping of the words "of Color" that the word Creole came to connote the possession of some African heritage.

¹¹ Ingersoll, in Vincent, 69.

¹² Ibid., 70.

¹³ Gwendolyn Midlo Hall, *Africans in Colonial Louisiana: The Development of Afro-Creole Culture in Eighteenth Century* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1992).

¹⁴ Creolization in this sense means the development in a new setting "of new traditions, aesthetics, and group identities out of combinations of formerly separate peoples and cultures." Nicholas R. Spitzer, "Monde Créole: The Cultural World of French Louisiana Creoles and the Creolization of World Cultures," *Journal of American Folklore* 116 (2003): 58.

¹⁵ Fiehrer, in MacDonald, 25.

¹⁶ Hall, in

¹⁷ Fiehrer, in MacDonald, 13.

apprenticeships with skilled artisans.¹⁸ Apprentices often benefited from learning rudimentary reading and writing in addition to their trade.¹⁹ Girls of African descent had the opportunity to gain an education from the Ursuline nuns who arrived in New Orleans in 1727. In two hour classes from Monday to Saturday, girls of color received training in reading, writing, sewing, the making of fabric, the care of silkworms, and the Catholic religion.²⁰ The education and skill training of Louisiana's black population in the eighteenth century was intimately tied to the establishment of a successful population of Free People of Color.

Though most people of African descent arrived in Louisiana as slaves, many were able to gain their freedom and live as free persons in the colony. Slaves were manumitted for various reasons, including military service, public service, and long and faithful service to their masters. The census of 1721 provides no listing of any free person of color, but in 1722 a Free Man of Color was convicted of stealing, indicating that there were free people of African descent in Louisiana at least as early as that year.²¹ By 1763, there were 82 Free People of Color, all in the New Orleans area, while the first record of Free People of Color in the prairie posts of the Attakapas and Opelousas frontier dates from 1766.²²

Other early records of Free People of Color in New Orleans appear in the form of two legal suits brought by Free People of Color and a marriage. In 1724, Jean Baptiste Raphael and Marie Gaspar were married in the St. Louis Church.²³ That same year, Magaleine Debern filed a suit protesting the capitation tax levied upon people of color and Raphael Bernard sued for the restitution of a loan he had extended to a white man that had not been repaid. Both Debern and Bernard were successful in their suits.²⁴ Just fifteen years after the first record of any Africans in Louisiana and five years after the arrival of the first slave ships, people of African descent were successfully negotiating the colony's legal system. The ability of people of color to file suits in a court of law was one of the many provisions of the *Code Noir*, the French Colonial legislation which meticulously articulated the rights and allowable treatment of people of African descent in the French colonies. Though it has perhaps been given too much credit for both the maltreatment and the freedoms of people of color in colonial Louisiana, it did establish a distinct legal structure that helped to shape the development of the state's African American society.

The *Code Noir* was put into effect in 1724. Among the fifty-four articles of the document appeared the following stipulations: masters were to impart religious instruction to their slaves; only the Roman Catholic religion was to be practiced; intermarriage between whites and blacks was forbidden; concubinage between any free persons and enslaved black persons

¹⁸ Usner, in Vincent, 48; Martin Luther Riley, *The Development of Education in Louisiana Prior to Statehood*. Reprinted from the *Louisiana Historical Quarterly* Vol. 19, No. 3 July 1936., 18, 28; H. E. Sterkx, *The Free Negro in Ante-Bellum Louisiana*, (Rutherford, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1972), 84.

¹⁹ Riley, 18, 28; Sterkx, 84.

²⁰ Clark Robestine, "French Colonial Policy and the Education of Women and Minorities: Louisiana in the Early Eighteenth Century," *History of Education Quarterly* 32, no. 2 (Summer 1992): 199.

²¹ Donald E. Everett, "Free Persons of Color in Colonial Louisiana," *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* 7, no. 1 (Winter 1966): 24; Mary Gehman, *The Free People of Color of New Orleans: An Introduction* (New Orleans: Margaret Media, Inc., 1994), 12.

²² Carl A. Brasseaux, Keith P. Fontenot, and Claude F. Oubre, *Creoles of Color in the Bayou Country*, (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1994), 7.

²³ Sterkx, 15.

²⁴ Everett, 24.

was forbidden and any children resulting from such an affair between a white man and a black woman would be remanded to the local hospital with their mother and prevented forever from being freed, while concubinage between a free black man and black slave woman should be terminated by marriage and she and her children freed; children would follow the condition of their mother, whether slave or free; slaves of different masters were forbidden from congregating at any time of day or night; slaves could report being under fed or clothed and otherwise mistreated to officials and officials were directed to prosecute masters without any cost to the claimants if the accusations were supported; disabled and aged slaves were to be fed and provided for by their masters; slaves were to have no property rights whatsoever and could own nothing even by their own industry, but all that they had would be the full property of their masters; a runaway slave gone for a month should have his ears cut off and be branded on the shoulder, and after the second offence of the same time be hamstrung and branded on the other shoulder, and after a third like offense be put to death; masters were forbidden from applying the rack to slaves on their own authority or from otherwise mutilating them, but were permitted to put them in irons and whip them; enslaved husbands and wives were not to be sold separately and children under the age of fourteen were not to be separated from their parents; masters twenty-five-years of age or older could manumit their slaves with the approval of the Superior Council and any slave made the tutor of their master's children was automatically deemed free; all freed slaves were to display the deepest respect for their former masters; and all freed slaves were to enjoy the full rights, privileges and immunities as other free-born persons.

Although there is evidence that the complaints of some slaves were heard and upheld, and the success of Debern and Bernard in the courtroom demonstrates that Free People of Color were indeed afforded the same rights as white French subjects in certain situations, other evidence suggests that many of the articles of the *Code Noir* were widely ignored without penalty. As Daniel H. Usner, Jr. explains, "Frontier conditions and economic interests . . . militated against the social order that [the *Code Noir*] was supposed to shape from slavery. It was almost impossible to promote religious instruction, sexual separation, and kind treatment along the damp, mosquito infested banks of the Mississippi."²⁵ Masters often acted according to their own whims or convenience and slaves did everything they could to survive and improve their lot within whatever situation they found themselves, while free people tried to assert their full rights as colonial subjects. Census records, wills, and observations of the day demonstrate that in particular, the admonishments against sexual relations between races were flouted with impunity.

In 1762, possession of Louisiana was transferred from Spain to France, but a Spanish governor was not sent to Louisiana until 1769. The colony continued to operate on much the same principals as those outlined by the *Code Noir* under the Spanish regime and a new code of 1789 added further restrictions on Free Persons of Colors. Significantly, however, the Spanish law of *coartación* was enforced beginning in 1769. Under this law an enslaved person could purchase their own freedom for their market value. Others could also purchase the freedom of the slave. Appraisals were performed to determine the fair market value of the slave and the slave could even protest an assessment he or she felt to be too high and request a review.

²⁵ Usner, in Vincent, Part A, 51.

Coartación seems to have been assiduously guaranteed by Spanish officials and produced 1,490 manumissions during the Spanish period. This figure includes 1,330 self-purchases and 160 purchases by friends or family members.²⁶ The fact that slaves were able to take advantage of the law of *coartación* as early as 1769 affirms that the restrictions of property ownership among slaves had not been enforced during French rule. Slaves were able to hire themselves out and to sell various commodities and save the cash profit. Enslaved people residing within or in close proximity to a city had an advantage in earning money to purchase their freedom, while this was more difficult for people in sparsely settled outlying areas. Thomas Marc Fiehrer paints a picture of slaves at work in the colonial city:

From before dawn the muddy streets of the Vieux Carré in New Orleans teemed with sweating slaves who fetched water, brought firewood, rolled wine barrels, and stoked the farriers' anvils. Squads of slaves who hired themselves out, returning a percentage to their owners, filled the narrow corridors of the town, moving furniture and building materials, going to and from daily service in the brickyards, wax factory, powder factory, cotton mill, sugar refinery, ropewalk, munitions factories, brewery, and dozen or so *aguardiente* (cheap rum) distilleries that formed the manufacturing section of the port.²⁷

The provision for self-purchase was not a humanitarian effort of the part of Spain, but rather a policy which had the distinct economic benefit of producing a solid working class that the colonies otherwise lacked. Enslaved people possessing the skill, industry, and thrift to save the sizable sum of their market value could be expected to become productive free citizens. They worked as carpenters, joiners, masons, caulkers, shoemakers, seamstresses, laundresses, retailers, butchers, tavernkeepers, wood dealers, agricultural laborers, managers and overseers, militiamen, merchant marine officers, and other occupations.²⁸ Although it was unusual for Free People of Color to be employed in a professional occupation, a notable example was Santiago Derom, who purchased his freedom in 1783 and became a physician specializing in throat ailments.²⁹ Some free people outside of New Orleans became landowning planters and slaveholders themselves; a fact that reveals the deep complexities and contradictions of life with a racially based system of enslavement. Even within the city, it was not unusual for free blacks to own slaves.

Relationships between white men and enslaved black women have been given much attention in histories of Louisiana and are often pointed to as the origin of free persons of color. While the emancipation of the mixed race children and their mothers by white fathers does account for part of Louisiana's Free People of Color, and was a more common means of manumission in outlying areas like the Attakapas and Opelousas frontier where economic conditions limited self-purchase, it was not the single most important factor in the growth of this

²⁶ Thomas Ingersoll, "Free Blacks in a Slave Society: New Orleans, 1718-1812," in *The African American Experience in Louisiana: Part A*, ed. Charles Vincent (Lafayette: University of Southwestern, LA, 1999), 161, first published in *William and Mary Quarterly*, 48 (1991): 173-200.

²⁷ Fiehrer, in MacDonald et al, 19.

²⁸ Ingersoll, in Vincent; Kimberly S. Hangar, "'Almost All Have Callings': Free Blacks at Work in Spanish New Orleans," in *The African American Experience in Louisiana: Part A*, ed. Charles Vincent (Lafayette: University of Southwestern, LA, 1999), first published in *Colonial Latin American Historical Review*, 3, no. 2 (1994): 141-64; Everett, 40.

²⁹ Hangar, in Vincent, 208-211.

population.³⁰ Emphasis on manumission by white men detracts from the very significant factor of African Louisianans as agents of their own emancipation. Thomas Ingersoll estimates that the outright manumission of enslaved children by their white fathers along with the purchase of freedom for enslaved children by their non-slaveholding white fathers accounts for less than one-fifth of some 2,618 manumissions from 1769 to 1803 in New Orleans. Based on these figures, he concludes that, “The creation of the free black population of New Orleans was dominated by the initiative of blacks, not whites.”³¹ The 1791 census of New Orleans provides a rough idea of the breakdown between enslaved and free people in the city: it lists 2,386 whites, 862 Free People of Color, and 1,789 slaves.³² By 1803, Free People of Color comprised approximately one-seventh of New Orleans population.³³

The end of the eighteenth century arrived on a storm of political upheaval in the Atlantic world. The commencement of the French Revolution in 1789 sent out shockwaves that inspired both ideas of radical rebellion and the fear of such, particularly among France’s colonies. The concept of “*liberté et égalité*” contributed to great agitation in French Saint Domingue, where brutal treatment of the island’s large slave population by an elite white minority had created a situation ripe for an explosive uprising. In 1791, the violent and successful revolt of the enslaved population began what would be known as the Haitian Revolution. Louisiana’s close ties to Saint Domingue made its residents particularly attuned to these events and white slaveholders were extremely fearful that a similar rebellion could happen in Louisiana. As Saint Domingue’s free classes fled the revolution, many of the island’s free whites and free blacks sought refuge in French speaking Louisiana, some bringing their slaves with them.

Although the slave trade in Louisiana had been greatly expanded under the Spanish regime, restrictions were put into place in 1786 and 1790 on the importation of slaves from islands of the West Indies because of perceived troubles with such people. Following the uprising in Saint Domingue, even further restrictions were put into place to protect Louisiana from slaves infected with notions of rebellion.³⁴ At the same time that Louisiana planters were worrying about a slave insurrection, they were shifting their agricultural interests from tobacco and indigo to the much more labor-intensive crops of sugar and cotton and thus becoming more dependent than ever on the free labor of large numbers of slaves.³⁵

In Pointe Coupée, where the enslaved population outnumbered whites 7,000 to 2,000, white planters were particularly vulnerable to an insurrection.³⁶ In 1795, the year following that in which political tensions were further heightened by a decree of the new French government

³⁰ Brasseaux et al, 3.

³¹ Ingersoll, in Vincent, Part A, 164.

³² Census of New Orleans, November 6, 1791, Louisiana Collection, New Orleans Public Library, cited in Kimberly S. Hanger, “Avenues to Freedom Open to New Orleans’ Back Population, 1769-1779,” in *The African American Experience in Louisiana: Part A*, ed. Charles Vincent (Lafayette: University of Southwestern, LA, 1999), 182, first published in *Louisiana History*, 31 (1990): 237-64.

³³ Ingersoll, in Vincent, Part A, 165.

³⁴ Paul F. Lachance, “The Politics of Fear: French Louisianans and the Slave Trade, 1706-1809,” in *The African American Experience in Louisiana: Part A*, ed. Charles Vincent (Lafayette: University of Southwestern, LA, 1999), 124-25, first published in *Plantation Society in the Americas*, 1 (1979): 162-97.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Jack D. Holmes, “The Abortive Slave Revolt at Pointe Coupée, Louisiana, 1795,” in *The African American Experience in Louisiana: Part A*, ed. Charles Vincent (Lafayette: University of Southwestern, LA, 1999), 108, first published in *Louisiana History*, 11 (1970): 341-62.

freeing slaves in all its colonies, the plot of a slave rebellion at Pointe Coupée was discovered. Although the revolt at Pointe Coupée was stopped before anything actually happened, its discovery confirmed planter's worst fears. In response, the government quickly tightened regulations regarding not just slaves, but also Free People of Color.³⁷ Although many free blacks had little to gain and much to lose by association with a slave insurrection, they were assumed to be sympathetic and viewed as possible accomplices and threats to the slavery regime. Support of an all out ban on the importation of slaves also grew out of the fear of a revolt, even as planter's needed more and more laborers for their agricultural pursuits. In 1796, the governor granted a request from the *cabildo* to extend a ban on the slave trade that began two-years prior when Spain declared war on France.³⁸ In October of 1800 Louisiana was quietly returned to France by the treaty of San Ildefonso, but the Spanish government remained in control until December of 1803. A month after the signing of the treaty, the ban of the slave trade was lifted and the importation of Africans resumed with an ongoing restriction on slaves from other colonies.³⁹ Though the French would only rule the colony of Louisiana for three weeks of 1803, they left their mark by reimposing the *Code Noir*.⁴⁰ Thus, when the United States took control of its new territory following the Louisiana Purchase of 1803, it inherited a place actively trading in enslaved Africans with a lengthy set of regulations on the treatment and conduct of its black population.

Diminishing Liberties and Growing Tensions: African Americans in the American Territorial Period and Antebellum Statehood, 1803-1861

The United States did not act immediately to impose any revised laws on its new territory. The first American governor William C. C. Claiborne followed the policy to maintain the status quo until new legislation divided Louisiana into two territories and established laws of the territorial government in 1804. Most audacious and offensive to Louisiana planters of the new laws was a new restriction on the importation any slaves other than those born in the United States or imported prior to 1798. But it was not long before a loophole in the act provisioning for the second grade of territorial government in 1805 enabled Louisianans to once again import slaves born in Africa.⁴¹

Between the renewed spurts of African slave importation, the new influx of Anglo-American slaves, and the numbers of slaves that refugees from Saint Domingue were able to bring with them, Louisiana's slave population increased dramatically in the first decade of the nineteenth century. Thomas Ingersoll asserts that, "The Louisiana Purchase marked a new phase in the development of the black community in New Orleans that gave it a truly remarkable degree of ethnic diversity. Indeed, New Orleans came to have the most diverse black population in the United States."⁴² This assessment has implications not only in understanding the many influences that came together to create New Orleans' black community and the larger Louisiana black community, but also for considering the many challenges that such a diverse group of

³⁷ Holmes, in Vincent, 114; Ingersoll, in Vincent, 166.

³⁸ Lachance, in Vincent, 125.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid, 133.

⁴¹ Ibid., 134.

⁴² Ingersoll, in Vincent, 61.

people must have faced to ally with one another and shape a more cohesive cultural group. Just as white Americans were in the minority as they moved into Louisiana, so too were the African-American slaves who were introduced into a community of francophone Creoles and Africans of many countries.

Louisiana's Free People of Color may have hoped that they would enjoy the full rights and benefits of free citizens under the government of the young democracy, but this was not the case. The fear of slave rebellions was as strong throughout the United States as in Louisiana and increasing numbers of free blacks everywhere were seen as potential accomplices to slave revolts. At the same time the successful free black populations challenged the notion of African inferiority that whites depended upon to justify racially-based enslavement. In many states, new laws were developed to repress this threatening class by limiting opportunities for manumission and wealth-building and generally restricting freedoms.⁴³

When the Americans took control of Louisiana, they found a free colored population which was steadily growing on its own, but was also suddenly augmented by many Free People of Color from Saint Domingue. Particularly disturbing to the American officials was Louisiana's free black militia who paraded during the transfer ceremonies of the Purchase. Although the new government was very uncomfortable with the idea of armed and organized men of color, they realized that it was far more sensible to abide their presence than to attempt to disband them and turn them into a formidable enemy. This strategic decision was not well received by the white elite who, while resentful of the Anglo-American intruders, sought to have the new government place greater restrictions on the black population and reverse the latitude extended by Spanish policies.

In 1806, a new Black Code was put into place that outlined – as the *Code Noir* had before it – precise regulations for and regarding people of African descent in Louisiana. The Spanish system of *coartación* was officially ended and other means for manumission were severely limited. One of the provisions required that slaves must be at least thirty years of age to be manumitted. Other restrictions required that free blacks carry proof of freedom. Perhaps the most crushing element of the new law to any hopes the Free People of Color had had for their rights in the new democracy was a prohibition from voting, or otherwise participating in democratic processes, even from serving on a jury.⁴⁴ Free blacks protested the exclusion, but to no avail. Rather, hostilities towards and restrictions on people of African descent, both enslaved and free, would progress over the next several decades. In spite of this, Free People of Color were able to continue to improve their lives through education, cultural and civic activities, and business ventures and to share in the prosperity that marked the antebellum years of the nineteenth century in Louisiana.

Much of that prosperity depended on the production of sugar and the production of sugar depended on slavery. It was during these years that the system of slavery we are most familiar with today developed. Louisiana entered into statehood in 1812 with the inevitable horror of the backlash of enslavement fresh in its consciousness. In January of 1811 a slave revolt on the German Coast, a stretch of plantations on both sides of the Mississippi River beginning about five miles above New Orleans, began with the wounding of a white plantation owner and the

⁴³ Ingersoll, in Vincent, 170.

⁴⁴ Ingersoll, in Vincent, 169.

slaying of his son. An immediate and disproportionately bloody response crushed the rebellion and left more than sixty black slaves dead.⁴⁵ For extra effect, an additional twenty-one people were convicted of participation in the uprising, shot and decapitated and their heads placed on poles along the German Coast.⁴⁶ Although this was meant to serve as a deterrent to rebellious slaves, it surely must have acted as a reminder to everyone black and white that the certain outcome of slavery was violence.

Slavery was not just enforced by law and military power, but also by the built environment. In the cities and towns and on the plantations, the power dynamics of slave and slave master were shaped and announced by the arrangement of spaces, the quality of construction materials, and the application of ornamentation. The built environment dictated the movements of free and enslaved people and controlled one's ability to watch or be watched. Plantations operated as self-sufficient villages and accordingly possessed many different buildings with dedicated purposes. The focal point of the plantation was of course the planter's house or "big house." These houses varied widely according to the time period in which they were constructed and the origins of the owners, whether Creole or Anglo. While some were grand mansions, not all were exceptionally large by today's standards. Whatever their size or style, they always qualified to be called the "big house," in comparison with the slave quarters which were smaller and typically less well-constructed.

The earliest slave houses were expedient amalgamations of Native American, French, and West African building techniques and were not unlike the dwellings built for white colonists. These simple structures consisted of posts in the ground, or *poteaux en terre*, with the interstices filled by *bousillage*, a mixture of clay and moss supported by an armature of wooden staves. The roofs were covered by palmettos or cypress bark.⁴⁷ As stability of the colony improved, so did the durability of construction methods. The raising of houses on piers or solid brick foundations became preferable to the use of posts in the ground and sills on the ground, which were vulnerable to quick destruction by rot and termites. Piers were not used universally, however, and some houses had dirt floors into the nineteenth century. *Bousillage* continued to be used as a construction technique in Louisiana and when used in slave houses, it provided a much more solid structure with a far better thermal mass than the typical timber frame that was sheathed only in weatherboards. Other methods of construction found in Louisiana slave quarters were brick, bricks-between-posts or *brique-entre-poteaux*, and log. Both poorly chinked log and thinly sheathed frame walls provided poor protection from the Louisiana's torrential rain, and damp cold winters. While brick was more solid, it was considered by some to contribute to a moist and unhealthy environment.⁴⁸ Health was a constant consideration, for

⁴⁵ The name German Coast, or *côte des Allemands*, refers to the many Germans who settled in this area during the eighteenth century.

⁴⁶ James H. Dormon, Jr., "The Persistent Specter: Slave Rebellion in Territorial Louisiana," in *The African American Experience in Louisiana: Part A*, ed. Charles Vincent (Lafayette: University of Southwestern, LA, 1999), 289, first published in *Louisiana History*, 18 (1977): 389-404., first published in *Louisiana History*, 18 (1977): 389-404.

⁴⁷ Jessie Poesch and Barbara SoRelle Bacot, eds., *Louisiana Buildings 1720-1940: The Historic American Buildings Survey* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1997), 126-27.

⁴⁸ Roderick A. McDonald, "Material Culture in Louisiana," in *The African American Experience in Louisiana: Part A*, ed. Charles Vincent (Lafayette: University of Southwestern, LA, 1999), 289, first published in *Louisiana History*, 18 (1977): 665, first published as Chapter 4 in Roderick A. McDonald, *The Economy and Material Culture*

whatever the disposition of the slave owner toward his slaves, he depended upon them for his financial gain and sickness was detrimental to production and profit. Some planters had the interiors and exteriors of their quarters limewashed in efforts to improve hygiene.⁴⁹

By the end of the antebellum period, the form of dwelling that emerged as the most common among slave quarters was the wood-frame, double, side-gable cottage with center chimney. Most often in Louisiana, these cottages had a small, full-width front porch. Window openings were typically void of glass and were covered only by a simple board and batten shutter. The average size of the double houses was between twelve by twenty-four feet and sixteen by thirty-two feet. Double cottages served two enslaved families, while single cottages of similar construction served one family unit. Plantation records indicate that a typical family unit included four to five people. While the two-room, side gable cottage was a prevailing design, it was but one of a myriad of slave dwelling forms that could be found on Louisiana's plantations. At Woodland Plantation in Plaquemines Parish, slaves were housed in two-story brick houses. Myrtle Grove in Plaquemines Parish had thirty-two foot square brick houses divided into four rooms with a center chimney.⁵⁰ At Barbarra plantation in St. Charles Parish, a Creole mode of building was apparent in the hip-roofed, four-room design and *bousillage* construction of a slave quarter.⁵¹

All of these designs were the choice of the planter. By the nineteenth century in Louisiana, slaves did not design their own homes although those slaves with building skills were often enlisted to erect the buildings or perform needed maintenance and may have had some impact upon the final product via this work. Some scholars have contended that the slave quarter cannot be considered a home, but rather a dormitory where exhausted laborers had just enough time to rest between sundown and sunup, but others argue that enslaved people made the quarters their own – a private space apart from the oversight of the planter. The latter find evidence in slave testimonies and material culture remains that enslaved people asserted their own prerogative over the domestic spaces assigned to them. In his study of Louisianan and Jamaican sugar plantations, Roderick A. McDonald concluded that, “slaves assumed extensive command over what happened in and to their houses. Despite amorphous questions concerning property rights, for most practical purposes the slaves largely determined life and living patterns in the quarters and behaved as property owners.”⁵²

Each individual slave cabin was simply one part of the whole which made up the quarters and cannot be understood in isolation. Only the quarters of house servants stood relatively alone within proximity to the big house, while the quarters of field hands were clustered together nearer to the agricultural work of the plantation complex. On smaller farms there may have been only a few slave cabins, but on larger plantations where the numbers of slaves exceeded 100 there were necessarily many slave cabins. Examples of the ratios of cabins to slaves in 1860 are as follows: forty-two to 155 at Nottoway in Iberville Parish, thirty to 124 at St. Emma Plantation in Ascension Parish, nineteen to ninety-five at Linwood in East Feliciana Parish, and thirty-five

of Slaves: Goods and Chattels on the Sugar Plantations of Jamaica and Louisiana (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1993), 122-66.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 669.

⁵⁰ Poesch and Bacot, 131-132.

⁵¹ John Michael Vlach, *Back of the Big House* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 162.

⁵² McDonald, in Vincent, 678.

to 129 at Parlange in Pointe Coupée Parish.⁵³ With such numbers, the quarters on plantations had the appearance and some of the community spirit of autonomous villages. Proximity between cabins varied by plantation just as the size and design of the buildings did. At Ashland-Belle Helene in Ascension Parish the cabins were thirty-two feet apart with each being forty by twenty feet, while at Evergreen Plantation in St. John the Baptist Parish, the cabins are twelve by twenty-four feet and spaced fifty feet apart.⁵⁴ The latter arrangement obviously provides more yard per cabin.

The exterior space was an essential part of the quarters. As architectural historian Dell Upton notes, “The quarter extended beyond its walls. The space around the building was as important as the building itself.”⁵⁵ One of the uses of this space was the production of food. Kitchen gardens were ubiquitous in Louisiana slave quarters and can be seen not merely as a way slaves were able to supplement meager food rations, but as a vehicle for maintaining traditional foodways. Small livestock, poultry, and pets were also a part of quarter yards. Many activities such as washing and cooking were performed outdoors, and most importantly the outdoors offered communal space for social activities. It has been observed that in traditional African villages, the majority of daily activities take place outside while small houses are reserved mostly for sleeping, and the extensive use of exterior space in quarters may demonstrate one of the ways in which enslaved people of African descent retained cultural patterns and impacted their landscape. The swept yard, which is also identified as a traditional African element, was a common feature of quarters and served to remove waste and trash while prohibiting the growth of vegetation and thereby deterring vermin and snakes.⁵⁶ Quarters were not commonly equipped with privies, and outdoor locations served this necessity. Water collection was another necessary activity in the yard and at one plantation in Rapides Parish, it was described that the slaves were collecting water in all manner vessels both before and after a communal well was dug.⁵⁷

The degree to which the enslaved population had freedom to use and manipulate their outdoor space of course varied from plantation to plantation like all factors. A typical arrangement placed the overseer’s house in a position that gave it a view of activities in the quarters. Like all other plantation buildings, overseer’s houses come in a wide variety of shapes and sizes, but they generally were a physical manifestation of the overseer’s place between the owner and slave in the hierarchy of power. They were more commodious than slave houses, but smaller than the big house and often placed between the two. Just as there were black slaveowners, there were also black as well as white overseers.

Another type of building likely to be located close to the quarters was the sugarhouse. The closer it was located to the quarters, the less distance workers had to go to attend to the intensive demands of sugar processing. Work in the sugarhouse was grueling and dangerous. Though some sugarhouses were built of wood, brick was the preferable building material for

⁵³ Karen Kingsley, *Buildings of Louisiana* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 220, 225, 449, 414; Scholarship on slaveholdings at smaller farms is virtually nonexistent and is an area that requires attention.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 186, 228-29.

⁵⁵ Dell Upton, “White and Black Landscapes in Eighteenth-Century Virginia,” in *Cabin, Quarter, Plantation*, eds. Clifton Ellis and Rebecca Ginsburg (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 127.

⁵⁶ Garrett Fesler, “Excavating the Spaces and Interpreting the Places of Enslaved Africans and Their Descendants,” in *Cabin, Quarter, Plantation*, eds. Clifton Ellis and Rebecca Ginsburg (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 31.

⁵⁷ Joseph Carlyle Sitterson, “Lewis Thompson, A Carolinian and His Louisiana Plantation, 1848-1888: A Study in Absentee Ownership,” *North Carolina Historical Review*.

them because the fire required to cook the cane posed a constant fire risk. These buildings could be as much as three hundred feet long to accommodate boilers, engines, rollers and evaporators and the smoke and steam they exuded is said to have given them the appearance of New England factories.⁵⁸ Risk of injury to workers was somewhat reduced by the multiple-effect evaporation system patented by Free Man of Color, Nibert Rillieux in 1843. By 1850, it is estimated there were 1,495 sugarhouses in Louisiana, 907 of which were powered by steam.⁵⁹

Where cotton, rather than sugar was the dominant cash crop, the cotton gin and press were the center of agricultural processing on the plantation. The processing requirements of cotton were less complicated and dangerous than those of sugar, and the gin house was likewise a less complicated structure. It was typically a large wood frame building, looking much like an ordinary barn, but with a distinctively large roof structure to accommodate the gin.

While field laborers harvested and processed agricultural products, house servants worked in and close-to the big house. Enslaved cooks labored in sweltering kitchens that stood away from the big house to reduce the risk of fire to the latter. Though typically a one room building, kitchens occasionally had a second room for laundry that shared the central chimney and sometimes the second room might provide the cook's living quarters.⁶⁰

In some cases, still other buildings were erected to serve the spiritual and medical needs of the enslaved population. It was not uncommon for larger plantations to have hospitals. These buildings took different forms, but were usually large enough to contain multiple rooms and were sometimes two-stories. Much rarer than hospitals were purpose-built chapels. Religious instruction for enslaved people varied by era and by slave owner. Like other circumstances of enslavement, religion among the enslaved was layered with many meanings for both the enslaved and the slave owner. It had been required by the *Code Noir*, though it likely occurred with little regularity in colonial days. In the nineteenth century, slaves had opportunities to worship in white Catholic and Protestant churches and planters sometimes hired preachers to come to their plantations. In these circumstances, preaching could attempt to indoctrinate the enslaved by espousing the virtues of submissive behavior and condemning rebellion.⁶¹ At the same time, however, the gathering of slaves for any purpose could be very threatening to the enslaver, particularly after slave insurrections. Revolts such as Nat Turner's of 1831 in Virginia had a serious impact on how slave masters viewed religion among the enslaved. The scholar of Louisiana slavery, J. Carlyle Sitterson, felt that slave owners showed "little inclination" after this event to "approve religious activities" and the slave-owning philanthropist, John McDonogh wrote to a reverend in 1835 that he knew of no one actively supporting religion among the enslaved.⁶² But by 1840, the sentiment among the Presbyterian owners of Live Oaks Plantation

⁵⁸ Vlach, 11, 128.

⁵⁹ John Burkhardt Rehder, "Sugar Plantation Settlements of Southern Louisiana: A Cultural Geography," PhD dissertation (Louisiana State University, 1971), 205, 199, cited in Poesch and Bacot, 165.

⁶⁰ Poesch and Bacot, 133.

⁶¹ Thomas J. Durant, Jr., "The Enduring Legacy of an African-American Plantation Church," *The Journal of Negro History* 80, no. 2 (Spring, 1995), 81-95.

⁶² J. Carlyle Sitterson, *Sugar Country: The Cane Sugar Industry in the South, 1753-1950* (Lexington, Ky., 1953), 101 and John McDonogh to Reverend Charles Colcock Jones, January 26, 1835, McDonogh Papers, in Judith Kelleher Schafer, "The Immediate Impact of Nat Turner's Insurrection on New Orleans," in *The African American Experience in Louisiana: Part A*, ed. Charles Vincent (Lafayette: University of Southwestern, LA, 1999), 360, first published in *Louisiana History*, 21 (1980): 361-76.

was apparently different when they had a brick slave chapel erected near the main house. Just as religion among the enslaved held different connotations for slave owners, it also had different meanings for the enslaved. Even though the chapel and the preacher were very much under the control of the planter, the construction of a chapel offered a special opportunity for slaves to have a spiritual space unto themselves.⁶³ The aforementioned were not the only buildings on plantations – there were many dependencies for every purpose – however these were among the most significant in the African American experience on rural plantations.

The urban architecture of slavery was not as conspicuous as its country counterpart and it has not been analyzed as much, but it was an integral aspect of cities and towns dependent upon the labor of slaves. The buying and selling of the enslaved people who provided the labor for both the rural plantations and the urban businesses and households occurred in the towns. During the active influx of slaves in the first half of the nineteenth century, enslaved people had to be held somewhere between their arrival and their purchase and transfer to a new owner. Those places were the slave pens of slave traders, of which Walter Johnson creates a vivid image based on his archival research:

The walls surrounding the pens were so high – fifteen or twenty feet – that one New Orleans slave dealer thought they could keep out the wind. Inside those walls the air must have been thick with overcrowding, smoke and shit and lye, the smells of fifty or a hundred people forced to live in a space the size of a home lot. And the sounds that came over the walls from the street outside must have been muted and mixed – horses' hooves striking the stone-paved street, cart wheels and streetcars, fragments of conversation, laughter, shouting. Along the inside walls were privies, kitchens, dressing rooms, and jails. The jails were sometimes as many as three stories high and built of brick. They looked like the slave quarters that can be seen today in the yards of many New Orleans houses: steep-backed, one room deep, and fronted with railed galleries. In the nineteenth-century slave pens, however, those galleries were lined with barred windows and doors that locked from the outside. Behind the doors were simple rooms with bare pine floors and plain plastered walls; measuring ten or twelve feet across, they were intended for multiple occupancy. On the ground floor of one of the jails or across the yard were offices and a showroom. . . . The real business took place in the showrooms, which were large enough for a hundred slaves to be arrayed around their walls, questioned, and examined. These rooms had finished floors and painted walls, a fireplace, a few chairs, and doors all around – a door from the offices where the traders did their counting and signing, a door from the street where the buyers gathered before the pens opened, and a door from the yard where the slaves waited to be sold.⁶⁴

An even more ironically fine setting was provided for the vulgar business of slave trading in the lobby of the 1840 St. Louis Hotel in New Orleans. On marble floors beneath coffered elegant ceilings supported by massive ionic columns, one of the major slave exchanges was operated.⁶⁵

⁶³ Durant.

⁶⁴ Walter Johnson, *Life Inside the Antebellum Slave Market* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 2-3.

⁶⁵ Malson Heard, *French Quarter Manual: An Architectural Guide to New Orleans' Vieux Carré* (New Orleans: Tulane School of Architecture, 1997), 77.

Habitation spaces for slaves were found throughout the cities. To the rear of urban dwellings such as those in New Orleans' Vieux Carré were two story service buildings that could house any number of functions, such as kitchens and washrooms on the first floor with living space for slave, servants, or young men of the household above. One-story houses in the New Orleans' faubourgs or the smaller towns tended to have one-story service buildings that could serve the same functions.⁶⁶ Households on the more rural outskirts of the city could resemble small versions of plantations without the agricultural production or numerous quarters. Behind his home on Bayou St. John, New Orleans' first elected mayor, James Pitot, had two cabins for six slaves, a kitchen, barn, and stables.⁶⁷ Not all slaves lived with their masters in the cities. In Baton Rouge and New Orleans, despite laws prohibiting slaves from living anywhere without a free person responsible for their oversight, landlords rented to slaves without any attempt to supervise them.⁶⁸ "Living out" was common practice for slaves who hired themselves out for wages.⁶⁹

Outside of daily work in households, foundries, sawmills, and just about every line of work, slaves were able to pursue recreational activities even though there were restrictions on providing liquor to slaves and on slaves of different masters congregating together. Perhaps the best known and most significant site for slave gatherings in an urban setting was Congo Square in New Orleans. This site became open land c. 1804 and a public square in 1812 and was the site of Sunday slave dances throughout the antebellum period.⁷⁰ The movements and music of these dances were distinctly African as attested to by the accounts of visitors to the city. In 1819, a traveler stated, "On sabbath evening, the African slaves meet on the green by the swamp, and rock the city with their Congo dances."⁷¹ By far, the most detailed portrayal of Sunday activities was provided that same year by architect Benjamin Latrobe. Latrobe noted the use of many different instruments – presumably of African origin – which he described in detail and sketched. He also explained that the slaves danced in circles and he heard a language that he believed to be an African dialect. All of this was an incredible retention of African culture by Louisiana's enslaved Africans and African Americans.

While slavery had its own architecture that supported its hierarchy of power and control, there was not a distinctly separate mode of building for Free People of Color. In general, rural and urban Free People of Color lived like their white counterparts, inhabiting houses that were

⁶⁶ Faubourg is a term referring to the neighborhoods outside of the central urban part of the city. Translated essentially as "false city," faubourg is similar in meaning to suburb.

⁶⁷ Kingsley, 89.

⁶⁸ William L. Richter, "Slavery in Baton Rouge, 1820-1860," in *The African American Experience in Louisiana: Part A*, ed. Charles Vincent (Lafayette: University of Southwestern, LA, 1999), 511, first published in *Louisiana History* 10 (1969): 125-45; Virginia Meacham Gould, "'If I Can't Have My Rights, I Can Have My Pleasures, and If They Won't Give Me Wages, I Can Take Them': Gender and Slave Labor in Antebellum New Orleans," in *The African American Experience in Louisiana: Part A*, ed. Charles Vincent (Lafayette: University of Southwestern, LA, 1999), 351, first published in Patricia Morton, ed., *Discovering Women in Slavery: Emancipating Perspectives on the American Past* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1996), 179-201.

⁶⁹ Gould, in Vincent, 351.

⁷⁰ National Register Nomination for Congo Square, New Orleans, Louisiana, (Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation, and Tourism, Office of Cultural Development, Division of Historic Preservation, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, 1993).

⁷¹ Henry C. Knight, *Letters from the south and west*, by Arthur Singleton (Boston: Richardson and Lord, 1824), cited in Ned Sublette, *The World That Made New Orleans: From Spanish Silver to Congo Square* (Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 2008), 3.

indicative of their individual wealth and social status. While those of meager means undoubtedly occupied poor accommodations, prosperous Free People of Color enjoyed the finest of houses. Between 1810 and 1812, Free Woman of Color, Julie Bonne Foucher had a two-story residence designed for her French Quarter lot by the fashionable architects Arsene La Carriere Latour and Hyacinthe Laclotte.⁷² The Metoyers, the first family of the Cane River's Creole of color community, built substantial plantation homes in the Creole style. The c. 1833 big house of their Yucca Plantation (now Melrose Plantation) is like those of other wealthy Creole planters: it is raised on a full-height brick foundation, features a broad gallery, and is sheltered by an umbrella roof. In 1854, Free Man of Color, George Runk purchased a standout villa in Franklin, the seat of rural St. Mary Parish. The two-story picturesque house is a rare example of A. J. Downing's patternbook architecture in Louisiana and clearly made a statement in its day.

The only architectural form which can be said to have been particularly associated with Free People of Color is the shotgun house of the early nineteenth century in New Orleans.⁷³ It is clear that in the first decades of the nineteenth century, versions of shotgun houses were built by and lived in by free colored refugees from Saint Domingue, where there was a traditional linear house form like the shotgun that has been argued to derive from African designs.⁷⁴ By the 1830s, small linear cottages became associated with the "Quadroon Quarter," an area between Rampart, Esplanade, St. Peter, and Bourbon streets where Free Women of Color lived.⁷⁵

Although there was no mandated segregation of neighborhoods in antebellum Louisiana, it is clear that African Americans did gather together and form communities in both rural and urban areas. The Free People of Color of the Cane River's Isle Brevelle "formed an almost self-contained society" replete with people of all professions, even teachers.⁷⁶ In the Attakapas and Opelousas districts Free People of Color also formed tight-knit communities. A New Orleans paper reported that a visitor to Baronne Street between Perdido and Poydras "could easily imagine him or herself in Africa" because of the number of slaves frequenting African-American churches, ice-cream parlors, restaurants, coffee-houses, and a barber shop.⁷⁷ In 1805, approximately two-thirds of the residents of New Orleans' Burgundy Street were black.⁷⁸ Free People of Color were early residents of New Orleans' Bayou Road and Faubourg Tremé. By the antebellum nineteenth century, a large and prosperous group of Free People of Color owned a sizeable portion of the real estate in this area and in addition to building many houses, also established educational and religious facilities.⁷⁹

⁷² Julie Bonne Fouché House Data Pages, Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, Historic American Buildings Survey or Historic American Engineering Record, HABS LA,36-NEWOR,78-.

⁷³ Jay D. Edwards, "Shotgun: The Most Contested House in America," *Buildings and Landscapes: Journal of the Vernacular Architecture Forum* 16, no. 1 (Spring 2009): 62-96.

⁷⁴ Ibid.; John Michael Vlach, "The Shotgun House: An African Architectural Legacy," in *Common Places: Readings in American Vernacular Architecture*, ed. Dell Upton and John Michael Vlach (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1986), 58-78.

⁷⁵ Edwards, 77-78.

⁷⁶ Gary B. Mills, "In Pursuit of Wealth," in *The African American Experience in Louisiana: Part A*, ed. Charles Vincent (Lafayette: University of Southwestern, LA, 1999), 566, first published as Chapter 5 in Gary B. Mills, *The Forgotten People: Cane River's Creoles of Color* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1977), 103-43.

⁷⁷ Gould, in Vincent, 353.

⁷⁸ Ingersoll, in Vincent, 179.

⁷⁹ Roulhac Toledano and Mary Louise Christovich, *New Orleans Architecture, Volume VI: Faubourg Tremé and the Bayou Road* (Gretna, Louisiana: Pelican Publishing Company, 2003).

The children of well-to-do Free People of Color were educated in the same manner as their white peers; they attended private academies and Catholic schools and studied under private tutors.⁸⁰ Some even continued their education at renowned schools in France. Private academies of this period, white or black, typically operated in residential buildings. Enslaved children and those of poorer Free People of Color were not so fortunate in their educational opportunities. In the first decades of the nineteenth century there was not a public school system in Louisiana. Apprenticeships continued to be a means of education, but in this time of increasing racial limitations enslaved people had a diminishing chance of receiving any education. In 1830, the State of Louisiana officially made it illegal to teach any slave to read or write, although some masters continued to allow their slaves access to learning. The new law represented a significant change in attitudes from the Colonial era towards slaves. This legislation also addressed the ongoing white suspicion of Free People of Color, making it illegal to publish or distribute any material that would excite discontent or insubordination among them or the enslaved population.⁸¹ The 1830s also marks the time when Catholic schools became segregated.⁸² In 1836, while New Orleans officials were organizing a public school system, Free People of Color in the city paid taxes on an estimated \$2,462,470.00 worth of property.⁸³ When the New Orleans public school system opened in 1841 with the benefit of those taxes, it excluded African Americans altogether.

One of the most significant events for the education of African Americans in this period was initiated by an African born woman. In 1832, Marie Justine Cirnaire Couvent, a former slave and a slave owner who was herself illiterate, saw the need for a free school for black children. To fulfill this vision, she bequeathed a piece to property in her New Orleans Faubourg Marigny neighborhood to be used for the operation of a school for colored orphans. Couvent died in 1838, and through the direction of leading Free People of Color, the *Institution Catholique des Orphelins Indigents* was established in 1847 and opened in 1848, operating out of temporary quarters while its building was completed. Although there had been many private academies and parochial schools operating for the benefit of children of color in Louisiana, the *Institution Catholique* was unique because it was organized and controlled completely by African Americans. Despite its appellation, which served to make the school sound more charity and church based – and therefore less threatening to those who opposed the education of African Americans – the school was neither solely for orphans nor run by the Catholic Church. All available information indicates the building completed for the school in 1852 was the first designed and erected solely for the education of African Americans in Louisiana. It has been described as two stories high with the sexes separated by floor.⁸⁴ In the 1847 prospectus for the school, it was recommended that instructors pay attention to the temperature of the classes and to

⁸⁰ Betty Porter, “The History of Negro Education in Louisiana” (masters thesis in History, Louisiana State University, 1938); Elizabeth Clark Neidenbach, “Marie Bernard Couvent: The Couvent School and African American Education in New Orleans” (bachelor’s thesis, Tulane University, 2003); Sterkx.

⁸¹ Heather Andrea Williams, *Self-taught: African American Education in Slavery* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2005).

⁸² Neidenbach, 27.

⁸³ Caryn Cossé Bell, *Revolution, Romanticism, and the Afro-Creole Protest Tradition in Louisiana, 1718-1868* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1997), 81.

⁸⁴ Donald E. DeVore and Joseph Logsdon, *Crescent City Schools: Public Education in New Orleans, 1841-1991* (Center for Louisiana Studies, University of Southwestern Louisiana, 1991), 42.

the cleanliness and comfort of the students, which indicates that the learning environment was considered an important aspect of this facility.⁸⁵

The Free People of Color who founded the *Institute Catholique* created a school that was well-enough respected it even received a small subsidy from the state. However, as the 1850s progressed and racial tensions heightened, sentiment against any kind of education for people of color grew. In 1858, the state retracted its funding and a student of the *Institution Catholique* wrote in his school copybook, “the prejudice against the colored population is very strong in this part of the country... the white people have an Institution in every district and they are all well protected, but we who have but a single one, cannot be protected at all.”⁸⁶

While the education opportunities for African Americans in antebellum Louisiana were limited, there was a wider variety in religious choices. From the earliest days of African enslavement in Louisiana, Africans were introduced to the Catholic religion. By the nineteenth century, Louisiana’s Afro-Creoles were strongly Catholic. Catholic churches were not segregated and enslaved African Americans as well as Free People of Color worshipped in the state’s Catholic churches. St. Augustine’s Church in New Orleans’ Faubourg Tremé was built in 1841 for a mixed congregation of Free People of Color, white Creoles, and slaves. Free People of Color composed approximately half of the congregation and St. Augustine’s is significant as having one of the most integrated congregations in the country at the time of its opening.⁸⁷ It was also here that Free Women of Color, Henriette Delille and Juliette Gaudin founded Sisters of the Holy Family, the second religious order for free women of color in the United States. Approved by the archbishop in 1842, the order had as its mission, the education of free and enslaved African Americans.⁸⁸

In his classic study, *Black Religion and Black Radicalism: An Interpretation of the Religious History of African Americans*, Gayraud S. Wilmore wrote, “It is now clear that black religion in North America had roots in Africa and the Caribbean as well as in the Great Awakenings of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.”⁸⁹ This statement holds true for Louisiana if the additional role of the Catholic Church is acknowledged. The spiritual practices rooted in Africa and the Caribbean found a special home among the rituals of Catholicism. This syncretised religion came to be known as Voodoo and was significantly reinforced and expanded by the waves of San Domingan immigrants in the early nineteenth century. It is indicative of the happy coexistence of Catholicism and Voodoo that the legendary Voodoo queen, Marie Laveau attended mass at St. Louis Cathedral and was buried in St. Louis Cemetery No. 2. Like the Sunday gathering at Congo Square, Voodoo offered its practitioners of African descent a way of maintaining a cultural tradition, while also serving as a means of communication and empowerment.⁹⁰

⁸⁵ *Prospectus de L’Institution Catholique des Orphelins Indigents* (New Orleans: Maitre Desarzant, 1847), 6.

⁸⁶ A. F. Frilot to L. Armstrong, Esq., Attakapas, La., May 27, 1858, Copybook I, AANO quoted in Mary Niall Mitchell, “ ‘A Good and Delicious Country’: Free Children of Color and How They Learned to Imagine the Atlantic World in Nineteenth-Century Louisiana,” *History of Education Quarterly* 40, no. 2 (Summer 2000): 137.

⁸⁷ Toledano and Christovich, 142.

⁸⁸ Neidenbch, 17-18

⁸⁹ Gayraud S. Wilmore, *Black Religion and Radicalism: An Interpretation of the Religious History of African Americans*, 2nd ed. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1983; reissued 1993), 3, 15.

⁹⁰ Sublette, 283-84.

While San Domingans added to Louisiana's Catholic population, the influx of Anglo-Americans contributed to the established of protestant churches. Episcopal and Presbyterian churches offered limited participation to African Americans, but other denominations made greater strides in the development of African American congregations.⁹¹ Baptists were among the first to make efforts at establishing African American congregations. The first Baptist church for African Americans in Louisiana was established in 1812 at Bayou Chicot in Evangeline Parish.⁹² The first Baptist church in New Orleans that operated from 1818 to 1820 had a racially mixed population in which African Americans outnumbered whites thirty-two to sixteen.⁹³ In 1826, the first African American Baptist church in the city was founded and in the 1850s three other African American Baptist congregations were organized, though the latter were affiliated with white parent churches.⁹⁴ The activity of Baptists in New Orleans may be due at least in part to the fact that some saw the city as a barbaric and unchristian place in particular need of religious guidance. In 1853, a Baptist preacher commented that "he doubted the validity of sending missionaries to Shanghai when New Orleans was at hand."⁹⁵

The Methodist Episcopal Church was the other protestant denomination to devote serious attention to serving African Americans. Their congregations were strictly segregated, so separate chapels were built for African Americans. By 1860, there were three such chapels in New Orleans with 1,174 congregants, most of whom were slaves.⁹⁶ Wesley is considered the mother of these congregations. It was founded in a stable on Baronne and Gravier streets by a group of black and white New Orleans abolitionists in 1838. Six years later the Wesley congregation moved into a new brick building at Perdido and Lasalle, which had been constructed with the labor of enslaved African Americans working in their off hours.⁹⁷ In 1850, an Alexandria newspaper mentioned the appointment of a minister to the "Alexandria Colored, Mission" Methodist Episcopal Church, but no records of the church survive.⁹⁸

Separate from the Methodist Episcopal Church was the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Only four African Methodist Episcopal (AME) churches were founded in the south prior to the Civil War: two in North Carolina, one in Mobile, Alabama, and one in New Orleans.⁹⁹ St. James AME Church was organized in 1844 by a group of Free Men of Color who were dissatisfied with their treatment at Wesley Methodist Episcopal Church.¹⁰⁰ It was legally

⁹¹ Robert C. Reinders, "The Churches and the Negro in New Orleans, 1850-1860," in *The African American Experience in Louisiana: Part A*, ed. Charles Vincent (Lafayette: University of Southwestern, LA, 1999), 410, first published in *Phylon: The Atlanta University Review of Race and Culture* 22 (1961): 241-48.

⁹² Henry H. Mitchell, *Black Church Beginnings: The Long-Hidden Realities of the First Years* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2004), 95, 190.

⁹³ Reinders, in Vincent, 411.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 414.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 410.

⁹⁷ Zoie Clift, "New Orleans' Mother Church," *Preservation in Print* 38, no. 3 (April, 2011), 30.

⁹⁸ Terry L. Seip, "Slaves and Free Negroes in Alexandria, 1850-1860," in *The African American Experience in Louisiana: Part A*, ed. Charles Vincent (Lafayette: University of Southwestern, LA, 1999), 552, first published in *Louisiana History* 10 (1969): 147-65.

⁹⁹ Mitchell, 99.

¹⁰⁰ National Register Nomination for St. James AME Church, New Orleans, Louisiana, (Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation, and Tourism, Office of Cultural Development, Division of Historic Preservation, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, 1982).

chartered in 1848 and its building was completed in 1851.¹⁰¹ In the meantime, however, an 1850 city ordinance declared all African American religious bodies or secret associations like lodges illegal and made null and void previously approved organizations. Then in 1858, the city required that all African American churches were to be under the supervision of a white church and police authorities closed non-complying churches.¹⁰² The AME Church sued the city of New Orleans in 1860 and their case succeeded in District Court, but the State Supreme Court upheld the ordinance and it seems that congregants were forced to worship in secret during the ever oppressive final years before the Civil War.¹⁰³

While an autonomous African American religious organization may have been seen as threatening, in other sectors of daily life, segregation of the races was increasingly sought by a segment of the white society. At this time, segregation was mainly arbitrated by city law rather than state law and, as with other subjects, there is more readily available information about New Orleans than other smaller cities and rural areas. It is likely, though, that New Orleans' segregation policies and the prevailing attitudes behind them are representative of those in a wider part of the state. In 1816, the custom of segregated seating in theaters and public exhibition halls in New Orleans was made law. Streetcars were segregated by company policy from the beginning of their use in the 1820s. Cars designated for African American passengers were marked with stars and "star" came into use as a term to refer to other segregated facilities.¹⁰⁴ In 1833, anger over the segregation of the streetcars erupted into an armed attack on a white streetcar by men who had been refused the right to board the car.¹⁰⁵

Despite such segregation policies, interaction between whites and blacks was regular and unavoidable in this highly mixed society. By 1830, New Orleans' black population was 28,595 – approximately half of which was free – while there were an estimated 21,221 whites.¹⁰⁶ Much to the consternation of some members of society, particularly white women, there was one activity that was intentionally integrated in a limited fashion. This was the dances that came to be infamously known as the quadroon balls. These were dances for Free Women of Color and white men. While integrated dances enjoyed by slaves, Free People of Color, and whites of both sexes had been popular since the eighteenth century, the first record of a quadroon ball is in 1805.¹⁰⁷ The quadroon balls were an immediate success and the numbers of places hosting them increased exponentially. They were reputed to be unsurpassed in their elegance, splendor, and gaiety, but they also came to have a reputation as venues for depravity. While many white balls also presented opportunities for behavior of questionable morality, the quadroon balls provoked the ire of white ladies left without dancing partners at their own balls. They petitioned for an end

¹⁰¹ Reinders, in Vincent, 411; Ibid.

¹⁰² Sterkx, 267; Reinders, in Vincent, 411.

¹⁰³ Reinders, in Vincent, 411-412.

¹⁰⁴ Roger A. Fischer, "Racial Segregation in Antebellum New Orleans," in *The African American Experience in Louisiana: Part A*, ed. Charles Vincent (Lafayette: University of Southwestern, LA, 1999), 328, first published in *American Historical Review*, 74 (1969): 926-37.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 335.

¹⁰⁶ Judith Kelleher Schafer, "The immediate Impact of Nat Turner's Insurrection on New Orleans," in *The African American Experience in Louisiana: Part A*, ed. Charles Vincent (Lafayette: University of Southwestern, LA, 1999), 358, first published in *Louisiana History*, 21 (1980): 361-76.

¹⁰⁷ Henry A. Kmen, "The Quadroon Balls," in *The African American Experience in Louisiana: Part A*, ed. Charles Vincent (Lafayette: University of Southwestern, LA, 1999), 420, first published as Chapter 2 in Henry A. Kmen, *Music in New Orleans* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1966), 42-55.

to these revelries. In 1828, the city ceded to the pressures to eliminate the quadroon balls and forbid white men from attending the balls of women of color. While the prohibition remained on paper, it was not enforced and New Orleanians continued to enjoy the balls and many other types of interracial recreation before the city adopted further segregation ordinances in the 1850s.¹⁰⁸

Moves to increase segregation in the 1850s were a part of attempts by pro-slavery whites to draw color lines that would validate the fantasy of the racial inferiority of African Americans they relied upon to justify slavery. As abolitionist winds from the North blew stronger, whites in Louisiana sought every means possible to repress African Americans and took particular aim at Free People of Color, who by their mere existence negated arguments claiming blacks were incapable of functioning as productive free citizens. The presence of slaveholding Free People of Color was particularly troublesome for the race-based justification for slavery. It was such a problem for some St. Landry Parish residents that in 1859, they petitioned the state to ban the practice of slaveholding by Free People of Color, stating that it was “repugnant to the laws of good society, good government, Nature and Nature’s God.”¹⁰⁹ Clearly, when these white people looked at black people enslaving other black people, they recognized slavery for exactly what it was and that was something they could not accept.

In some places, the animosity towards Free People of Color which “crystallize[ed] in the 1850s” turned violent.¹¹⁰ At the close of the decade armed gangs began a reign of terror in southwest Louisiana.¹¹¹ While Free People of Color from the prairies fled to New Orleans to escape the violence, others there and elsewhere in the state looked abroad for relief from persecution. A small contingent of Free People of Color from Louisiana, many from St. Landry Parish, established small farming communities in Mexico or attempted to make new lives in Haiti.¹¹² Meanwhile, the movement to send free African Americans to Liberia was largely unsuccessful in Louisiana.¹¹³ On the eve of the Civil War, people of African descent were more restricted and demeaned than they had ever been in their century-and-a-half in Louisiana and their future conditions in this land looked exceedingly uncertain.

Uneasy Alliances and the Attainment of Freedom: The African American Experience During The Civil War, 1861-1864

With the secession of Louisiana from the United States, African Americans in the state entered a period somewhere between limbo and purgatory. While the conflict with the North held a distant glimmer of freedom for the enslaved, Louisiana was now at war, ever the more on guard and determined to maintain its system of slavery. Parish patrols were expanded or created anew. These patrols regularly made rounds through plantation slave quarters looking for anything out of line. New laws written by parish police juries listed prohibited activities which included going out without a pass, assembling outside the plantation, having balls or dances on the plantation unless supervised, gambling or watching gambling, loitering, drinking, possessing

¹⁰⁸ Fischer, in Vincent, 334-35.

¹⁰⁹ Brasseaux and Fontenot, 84.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 81.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 82.

¹¹² Ibid., 81-84; Mary Niall Mitchell, 123-44; Sterkx, 295-297.

¹¹³ Sterkx, 291-297.

a horse, tanning leather or making shoes, and owning a boat, dog, or weapon of any kind.¹¹⁴ It's clear that these laws were spurred by anticipation that slaves would rebel during the war and rebel they did. The enslaved population found many ways to undermine the institution of slavery from subtle sabotage to outright defection. For Free People of Color, the best course of action was murkier: options lay between trying to maintain social standing by allying with Confederates, trying to affect social change by siding with the Union, or quiet self-preservation and avoidance of both elements. As a population, they took all approaches, and in fact, some individuals themselves tried all three.

Louisiana's Free People of Color had a distinguished military history dating back to the 1720s. With each change of government, from France to Spain to the U.S., free colored militias had faithfully served and defended the state of Louisiana. In that tradition, it was only logical that they should offer their services to the Confederate government, aside from the other potential motives of personal safety, social acceptance, and actual allegiance to the cause. By early 1862, more than 3,000 Free Men of Color had joined militias.¹¹⁵ Militias of Free Men of Color from New Orleans, the lower Teche region, and Isle Brevelle in Natchitoches Parish all declared allegiance to the Confederacy and awaited orders which never came. Each of these groups however, pursued different courses of action after rejection by the Confederate army.

When Union forces took New Orleans and Confederate soldiers withdrew, the First Native Guards – as the free black militia of the city was known – stayed. After all, they had not been given orders by the Confederacy, and staying in place was consistent with the behavior other Home Guards. The First Native Guards waited quietly to see what the Union would do, and eventually, when Union forces under the command of General Butler were desperate for more troops to hold New Orleans, they claimed they had been coerced into Confederate service and joined the Union ranks.¹¹⁶ Circumstances and attitudes were different among the men of Isle Brevelle. Though never called to duty, the Isle Brevelle Guards trained regularly for two and a half years, never faltering in their allegiance, and endured the consequences when Union troops arrived. Having just suffered the death of their captain and unable to find a replacement – who according to Confederate standards had to be white – they were disorganized and unable to defend themselves. The Union army, recognizing on which side they stood, destroyed or confiscated their food, crops, livestock, household goods, and arms.¹¹⁷ For the free men of the Attakapas and Opelousas districts, insult was added to injury when, not only were those who had enlisted not called for service, but the Confederate army attempted to conscript them into forced labor in northern Louisiana. Faced with impressments, most chose to join the Bois Mallet band, the largest group of southwestern Louisiana's paramilitary conscription evaders, known as Jayhawkers.¹¹⁸ It was not until 1865, when the group's commander was assassinated by

¹¹⁴ C. Peter Ripley, "Confederate Slavery," in *The African American Experience in Louisiana: Part B*, ed. Charles Vincent (Lafayette: University of Southwestern, LA, 2000), 7, first published as Chapter 1 in C. Peter Ripley, *Slaves and Freedmen in Civil War Louisiana* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1976), 5-24.

¹¹⁵ Mary F. Berry, "Negro Troops in Blue and Gray," in *The African American Experience in Louisiana: Part B*, ed. Charles Vincent (Lafayette: University of Southwestern, LA, 2000), 22, first published in *Louisiana History* 8 (1967): 165-90.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 23-25.

¹¹⁷ Gary B. Mills, "Patriotism Frustrated: The Native Guards of Confederate Natchitoches," in *The African American Experience in Louisiana: Part B*, ed. Charles Vincent (Lafayette: University of Southwestern, LA, 2000), 85-88, first published in *Louisiana History* 18 (1977): 437-51.

¹¹⁸ Brasseaux and Fontenot, 85-86.

Confederates that the second in command accepted a Union commission and they were transformed into the Mallet Free Scouts.¹¹⁹

The Free Men of Color who did end up serving with the Union army received little respect from white Northern soldiers who were loath to treat them as equals let alone salute a black officer.¹²⁰ If the reception of the white Northerners was cold, the reaction of many white Southerners was virulently hostile. The free colored regiments had to endure onslaughts of ugly insults from the residents of areas through which they passed, and worst of all they faced the possibility of falling into enemy hands. An incident in which twenty-two African American prisoners of war were executed while in transit with the Confederate army demonstrated the grave risks of service for these men.¹²¹ After months of performing non-combat duties like repairing railroads, foraging, and preparing cane fields for the next crop, on May 27th, 1863 the Louisiana Native Guards finally faced the Confederate enemy in the field. The charge of the Native Guards on this day at Port Hudson, Louisiana was the first such use of African American troops by the Union army. The troops were saddled with a general lacking in good conduct and reasoning, who determined that he would throw the African American men at the enemy to prove themselves for, as he wrote his mother, he regarded their participation as “an experiment.”¹²² In a futile charge, the Native Guards indeed proved that they would fight against all odds. Although their assault was unsuccessful because of the impossibility of advancing through the terrible terrain on the enemy’s well-buffered position, their bravery was unquestionable. With many exaggerated details, Union papers lauded the performance of the Native Guards and declared the use of African American troops a great success.

The charge at Port Hudson afforded black troops minor acceptance in the Union army, but black officers continued to be subject to resentment. In 1863, moves were made to eliminate all of the African American officers from the Native Guard.¹²³ Acknowledging the inevitable, some officers decided to step down before being removed. One such officer, Capt. Arnold Bertonneau, poignantly summarized the situation in his resignation letter, saying, “When I joined the army I thought that I was fighting for the same cause, wishing only the success of my country would suffice to alter a prejudice which had long existed. But I regret to say that five months experience has proved the contrary.”¹²⁴ A leader emerged among the officers; P. B. S. Pinchback voiced the officer’s concerns to the department commander, but by mid-September, as the only remaining black officer at Fort Pike, he too decided to resign. His resignation did not terminate his dedication to seeking justice and rights for African American soldiers however, and he was soon arguing that the drafting of Africans Americans was recognition of their citizenship

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Berry, in Vincent, 29.

¹²¹ James G. Hollandsworth, “Unsuited for the Duty,” in *The African American Experience in Louisiana: Part B*, ed. Charles Vincent (Lafayette: University of Southwestern, LA, 2000), 72, first published as Chapter 7 in James G. Hollandsworth, Jr. *The Louisiana Native Guards: The Black Military Experience During the Civil War* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1995), 70-83.

¹²² James G. Hollandsworth, “I Regard it as an Experiment,” in *The African American Experience in Louisiana: Part B*, ed. Charles Vincent (Lafayette: University of Southwestern, LA, 2000), 65, first published as Chapter 5 in James G. Hollandsworth, Jr., *The Louisiana Native Guards: The Black Military Experience During the Civil War* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1995), 48-58.

¹²³ Hollandsworth, “Unsuited for This Duty,” in Vincent, 73-74.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 74.

which should go hand and hand with the right to vote. This, like many aspects of the African American experience during the Civil War, was a seed of Reconstruction concerns.

While African Americans in the military were engaging in battle both physical and political, enslaved African Americans were encountering their own ironies in the Civil War and endeavoring to change the course of their future. When the war commenced, the demand for slaves actually grew. In addition to the ongoing agricultural and industrial work of private individuals and companies, there was now the government work of constructing the infrastructure of war which required many laborers. The state and the Confederacy impressed slaves to build forts and help with all manner of military support activities. Conditions were actually far worse for enslaved people in this situation than on plantations where owners were invested in their slaves' well-being. At Fort Beauregard in Harrisonburg, the housing for enslaved laborers was described as sixty to seventy feet long with just a single door for ventilation.¹²⁵

The Confederate army was not alone in using slaves as laborers for its military objectives. As part of the Vicksburg campaign of 1862, Union forces endeavored to dig a canal that would divert the water of the Mississippi River away from Vicksburg. This enormous undertaking required great numbers of laborers that the army didn't have, but that nearby cotton plantations did. With promises of freedom the Union army recruited some 1200 slaves to work on the canal.¹²⁶ Conditions on the project were terrible; disease and death ran rampant and unbeknownst to the enslaved workers, there was an unwritten caveat that freedom would be theirs only if the project succeeded. When the futile undertaking was deemed a failure, the slaves were either returned to their owners by the soldiers or given meager rations and instructions to return on their own.¹²⁷ It must have seemed to these enslaved people that they were now caught in a war in which both sides were their enemies and there were no allies to be found.

When the Federal army arrived in southern Louisiana in 1862, by an act of Congress, slavery was to be maintained in areas of Union control, while slaves in Confederate areas were declared free. In other words, the much anticipated liberators were not that at all according to the law. In reality however, Union occupation had a definite freeing affect on the actions of slaves, even if they continued to work on the same plantations. In some instances, enslaved workers operated much like labor unions, effectively using slow-downs and strikes to achieve their demands. One of the most remarkable examples of this occurred at Magnolia Plantation in Plaquemines Parish, where a slowdown during the busy cane harvest season was followed by a strike of all of the enslaved women. An attempt by a Union officer to restore the labor order was ignored and all of the men joined in the strike and directed their time instead to the erection of a gallows in the quarters. The owner of the plantation finally guaranteed the laborers that they would be compensated once the crop was sold and they returned to work.¹²⁸ In the face of such organized and intimidating actions by slaves many planters realized that the institution of slavery

¹²⁵ Ripley, in Vincent, 10.

¹²⁶ William F. Messner, "The Vicksburg Campaign of 1862: A Case Study in the Federal Utilization of Black Labor," in *The African American Experience in Louisiana: Part B*, ed. Charles Vincent (Lafayette: University of Southwestern, LA, 2000), 57, first published in *Louisiana History*, 16 (1975): 371-81.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 58.

¹²⁸ Ripley, in Vincent, 16.

was “forever destroyed and worthless, no matter what Mr. Lincoln or anyone else may say on the subject.”¹²⁹

Meanwhile in the Confederate controlled interior of the state, enslaved people saw the Union lines as an attainable destination for freedom. The vast numbers of slaves who ran away from their enslavers as soon as Union lines neared indicates that the low number of attempts by Louisiana slaves to escape before the war is no indication of any satisfaction with their condition, nor connection with their captor; rather it indicates the simple realization that freedom was geographically too far away to be viable. This was particularly true for anyone trying to escape as a family unit, which was how a majority of rural slaves in Louisiana lived. The incidences of runaways exploded during the war. A couple of months after the Union invasion of New Orleans, 450 slaves had made it to Camp Parapet outside the city and by the end of the summer there were more than one thousand.¹³⁰ In September, the Union’s General Butler complained that “they were coming in by hundreds nay thousands almost daily,” and in December of 1862, almost two hundred escaped slaves entered the Union lines daily.¹³¹ Campaigns through the interior of the state were magnets for runaways and those like the Teche and Red River returned with thousands of freed people. The 1863 “Teche Expedition” was described as stretching for at least five miles upon its return with an entourage of confiscated goods and livestock, soldiers and some 8000 slaves.¹³² By and large, these masses of refugees were seen as a menacing nuisance by the Union army. The troops didn’t know what to do with them and feared that without discipline they would rise up in violent racial riot.

At first, Union forces attempted to deal with runaways by returning them to their owners and preventing them from running away in the first place. It became obvious that this would not be an effective long-term solution and instead, the Gulf Department of the Union developed a different way to utilize and organize liberated slaves. U.S. government programs for freed people had their origins in the thinking of Union Brigadier General John Wolcott Phelps, a foe of General Butler’s. While Phelps didn’t believe in the equality of African Americans and whites and favored the exportation of freed people to Africa, he did realistically understand that something would have to be done to help the formerly enslaved transition into free lives. He proposed the organization of black military units and the institution of education programs for freed people.¹³³ After zealous resistance, Butler implemented the use of African American militias to augment his depleted forces and to provide the strict discipline freed men were perceived to require to prevent violent anarchy. Soon after, Butler also implemented a wage-labor program in which African Americans were to be guaranteed wages to work on plantations. The government did little to back up the guaranty of pay, however, and many freed people found themselves not only without pay, but lacking even the customary food and clothing rations they once received as slaves. Also, without government oversight, although corporal punishment was banned, plantation managers could use restrictions and enforcement measures that made it

¹²⁹ *New York Times*, November 3, 1862, cited in Messner, in Vincent, Part B, 47.

¹³⁰ Messner, in Vincent, 40.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 46; Charles Vincent, “Black Louisianians During the Civil War and Reconstruction: Aspects of Their Struggles and Achievements,” in *Louisiana’s Black Heritage*, ed. Robert R. MacDonald et al (New Orleans: Louisiana State Museum, 1979), 86.

¹³² Ripley, in Vincent, 15.

¹³³ Messner, in Vincent, Part B, 43.

difficult to distinguish between the so called free labor and enslavement.¹³⁴ With a minor redress of inequities, Butler's successor, General Banks, maintained a focus on compelling African Americans to labor in submission to whites. In spite of the wage-labor program's failings to African Americans, it was deemed a great success by the federal government and Northern interests who declared it had proved that a profit could be made using free labor. The government did not make land or credit available to any potential independent black farmers.¹³⁵ The Gulf Department felt that "independent thoughts and actions", or "economic and political autonomy" to be threatening to the reconstruction process.¹³⁶ So, with a feeling of *fait accompli* federal authorities approached post-war Reconstruction with no inclination to "move beyond the wartime experiences of the army in expanding upon the meaning of freedom for the former slave."¹³⁷

Some real progress was made in providing education for former slaves before the end of the war. In March of 1864, seven or eight free schools for African Americans were in operation in New Orleans and by the end of that year there were ninety-five freedmen's schools across the state.¹³⁸ The Freedmen's Bureau provided instruction for adults as well as children. These schools operated in just about any available building, from former white schools, to churches, to houses, to plantation outbuildings. Often the facilities were substandard, as attested to by complaints from teachers who described schools without floors, without glass in the windows, with little daylight and hardly any protection from rain. One Freedmen's school which occupied a fine building was the large school established in one of the Greek Revival medical buildings of the University of Louisiana in New Orleans. In addition to the Freedmen's Bureau, other entities provided for the education of African American children in Louisiana. The American Missionary Association was heavily involved in the education of African Americans in the south, both through the provision of teachers to Freedmen's schools and the operation of their own institutions. By May 1864, an African American New Orleanian named Margaret Adams was already busy writing to the AMA objecting to the removal of a beloved teacher from one school. While carefully expressing an appreciation for the AMA's work, her letters articulate a larger issue of the day, the frustration of the African American community at its lack of control over the direction of its children's schooling.¹³⁹

Navigating a Changed Nation: African Americans and Reconstruction, 1865-1877

In Louisiana, the federal endeavor to reorganize southern political and economic systems and bring states back into the Union began in 1862. This wartime Reconstruction under the

¹³⁴ John W. Blassingame, "Land Labor and Capital," in *The African American Experience in Louisiana: Part B*, ed. Charles Vincent (Lafayette: University of Southwestern, LA, 2000), 144-145, first published as Chapter 3 in John W. Blassingame, *Black New Orleans, 1860-1880* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1973), 49-77.

¹³⁵ Messner, in Vincent, Part B, 48, 54.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 49.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 50.

¹³⁸ Devore and Logsdon, 57; Howard Ashley White, "'Redeeming of the People From Ignorance,'" in *The African American Experience in Louisiana: Part B*, ed. Charles Vincent (Lafayette: University of Southwestern, LA, 2000), 293, first published as chapter 8 in Howard Ashley White, *The Freedmen's Bureau in Louisiana* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1970), 166-200.

¹³⁹ Heather Andrea Williams, *Self-taught: African American Education in Slavery and Freedom* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 83-87.

direction of Lincoln was followed by Johnson's Presidential Reconstruction after the war, until 1867 when congressional Reconstruction, also known as Radical Reconstruction, took effect. During the period following the war until the end of Reconstruction, African Americans in Louisiana made tremendous strides in attaining equal rights as citizens, but this was counterbalanced by the growth of a violent racist movement to suppress African American participation in politics.

The active participation of African Americans in the post war politics of Louisiana was greatly boosted by the well-educated population of antebellum Free People of Color and the participation of so many African American men in the army.¹⁴⁰ It was not difficult for African Americans to make the connection between their service to the government and their place as citizens deserving of equal rights. As Captain James H. Ingraham succinctly phrased it in 1865, "We must ask for our rights as men. If we are not citizens why make soldiers of us."¹⁴¹ This message appeared in the New Orleans *Tribune*, an African American newspaper that served as a vehicle for the dissemination of political ideas and the building of a common political will. The *Tribune* was the successor to the *L'Union* newspaper started by Free Men of Color in 1862.

Following the close of the war and the institution of President Johnson's Reconstruction policy, racist whites sought to reestablish some semblance of the former social hierarchy by creating the Louisiana Black Code of 1865 that restricted the movement and activities of African Americans by requiring the carrying of passes by laborers leaving plantations and imposed curfews, among other things. At the same time, African American and white Radical Republicans were attempting to establish universal suffrage. The opposing groups clashed with deadly consequences in 1866. When Republicans reconvened the Louisiana Constitutional Convention at the Mechanics Institute in New Orleans, a mob of white policemen attacked the African American crowd. Tallies of the number killed and wounded vary, but at least thirty people, mostly African American, were killed.

With the new Reconstruction Acts passed by the Republican congress in March of 1867, Louisiana's Radical Republicans gained the support of the Federal government and were poised to make important progress towards racial equity. Ahead of any actions by politicians or lawmakers, African American residents of New Orleans jumped on the task of desegregation in April to May of 1867. The strict segregation of most New Orleans streetcars, which had been in effect since the cars started running in the 1820s, had long been a sore point for the city's African Americans. Free People of Color in the antebellum period who had enjoyed a certain degree of social privileges, were very put off by the derisive relegation to specially marked cars and the inconvenience of waiting for those cars. Demands to end the segregation of the streetcars met with temporary success in 1862 and 1865, but both times orders to integrate were quickly reversed. Finally, beginning on April 28, 1867, African Americans forced the issue. Perhaps inspired by the sense of change promised by the Reconstruction Acts passed the previous month, African Americans began boarding forbidden white streetcars. The first incident, which resulted in an arrest, dropped charges, and a subsequent countersuit, was followed by a weeklong series of illegal boardings. A few of these were peaceful battles of wills, but many involved physical assaults on both sides. The protest culminated on May 5th in a

¹⁴⁰ For a thorough treatment of this subject, see Caryn Cossé Bell, *Revolution, Romanticism, and the Afro-Creole Protest Tradition in Louisiana, 1718-1868* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1997).

¹⁴¹ New Orleans *Tribune*, January 12, 14, 1865, cited in Charles Vincent, in MacDonald, 89.

near riot with groups of African Americans heckling white cars and forcing their way on. Finally, with a large crowd gathered at Congo Square and the very real threat of racial violence resulting in mass fatalities like the previous year, the mayor stepped in and managed to disperse the protestors by promising that officials would promptly reassess the streetcar segregation policy. After considering their options, streetcar executives concluded that the only feasible course of action in the wake of this civic disorder was immediate desegregation.¹⁴²

The 1867 Reconstruction Acts provided black males age twenty-one and older with the right to vote and banned supporters of the Confederacy from voting. In the following election on September 27, 1867, which was for delegates to the state constitutional convention, African American registered voters outnumbered whites.¹⁴³ In the election of 1868 and following years, many African Americans were elected to state and local offices. Some of the better known among these were the statewide office holders: Antoine Dubuclet, State Treasurer from 1868-1878; Oscar J. Dunn, the first elected African American Lieutenant Governor in the United States, 1868 until his death in 1871; P. B. S. Pinchback, the first African American Governor in the United States, 1872 to 1873; and C. C. Antoine, Lieutenant Governor from 1872 to 1876. During the Reconstruction years, there were a total of ninety-nine African American representatives and nine senators in the state legislature.¹⁴⁴

Suffrage and the election of black officials were obviously huge victories for African Americans, but they were really steps on the path to the ultimate goals of universal education and complete equality in all regards without any segregation. These key issues were addressed in the new Louisiana state constitution which was ratified in 1868 and upheld until the end of Reconstruction. Article 13 was a Bill of Rights promising equality in all public places with no discrimination of account of race and Article 135 required public education for all children regardless of race or former conditions and prohibited separate schools. The special importance of these two articles is suggested by a period poster depicting a seated Oscar Dunn, surrounded by portraits of African American members of the convention and assembly with Articles 13 and 135 on scrolls flanking Dunn. Although the constitution became the law of the land, enforcement was another matter. Racist whites were determined to do anything necessary to prevent the equal treatment of African Americans and a seething reserve of violence erupted periodically that demonstrated the law's limitations in protecting lives, let alone rights. This was particularly true in rural areas, but even in New Orleans, streetcar desegregation was followed by little progress with desegregation of theaters, restaurants, saloons, and other public places.¹⁴⁵

Equal education for all was a monumental hurdle with distinct challenges. The education of African Americans was very threatening to racist whites. During the New Orleans massacre of 1866, rioters had burned down four black churches in which schools operated, demolished a church in which a school was about to open and attempted to burn other buildings used as schoolhouses.¹⁴⁶ Public education was a lofty objective even for white residents of Louisiana,

¹⁴² Roger A. Fischer, "A Pioneer Protest: The New Orleans Street-Car Controversy of 1867," in *The African American Experience in Louisiana: Part B*, ed. Charles Vincent (Lafayette: University of Southwestern, LA, 2000), 328-336, first published in the *Journal of Negro History* 53 (1968): 219-33.

¹⁴³ Vincent, in McDonald, 94.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 96.

¹⁴⁵ Fischer, in Vincent, Part B, 335.

¹⁴⁶ Williams, 124 citing John W. Alvord, *Third Semi-Annual Report on Schools for Freedmen, January 1, 1867* (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1868), 22, reprinted in Alvord, *Semi-Annual Reports*.

aside from the issue of integrated schools. Louisiana had made no real progress in organizing public education until the 1830s and that was mainly in New Orleans. The concept of paying taxes to support the education of other people's children was objectionable to Louisiana's wealthier citizens who provided private instruction for their own offspring. Of course this was especially true when it came to the idea of educating black children. The matter of taxes nearly caused the collapse of the Freedmen's Bureau school system in 1866. Residents' and lawmakers' aversion to the tax levied by General Banks in 1864 for the bureau's work garnered suspension of the assessment at the end of 1865 and schools were forced to close in February of 1866.¹⁴⁷ Alternative funds had to be found to run the schools and the proposition of taxing African Americans directly gained some support, but the *Tribune* pointed out that such a plan was taxation without representation. A program of partial taxation of African American's and tuition for the schools was adopted with terrible results. The income wasn't enough to provide for classrooms and teachers and the number of Freedmen's Bureau schools, teachers, and pupils plummeted by more than fifty percent in just six months. In July, less than 4,000 students remained of the 19,000 that had started the year in the bureau schools.¹⁴⁸ At the same time, private schools with low tuitions multiplied, but the level of education they provided was questionable.¹⁴⁹

Elimination of supporting taxes and resulting lack of funding left only twenty-one Freedmen's Bureaus schools serving 908 students open in New Orleans by the fall of 1867.¹⁵⁰ Just ahead of the fall constitutional convention and the new edict on public education, the Freedman's Bureau, which was uninterested in getting mixed up in the politics of integration, transferred their remaining New Orleans schools to the city's public system. The city school board also opened ten black schools as part of its effort to keep schools segregated, but all were in "substandard facilities" and black leaders were unimpressed.¹⁵¹ The *Republican* estimated that the projected number of students to be served by the public schools was some 15,000 short of the true need.¹⁵² The *Tribune* declared "Separation is not equality. The very assignment of certain schools to certain children on the ground of color, is a distinction violative of the first principles of equality."¹⁵³

While the New Orleans public school system was hovering on the precipice of integration, other entities in the city and around the state were busy filling the great need for more schools for African Americans. The Catholic Church remained a leader in education in the state, but it was not as quick as the American Missionary Association and other faith based organizations, like the Methodist Freedmen's Aid Society and the Free Mission Baptists, to realize the need for African American education in Louisiana. Those groups established many schools with small contributions from the Freedmen's Bureau.¹⁵⁴ By 1866, though, Catholics

¹⁴⁷ White, in Vincent, Part B, 296-97.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 298.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Devore and Logsdon, 66; Howard A. White, *The Freedmen's Bureau in Louisiana* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1970), 17-22, 166-200.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 68. citing school board minutes of 1867, printed in New Orleans *Daily Crescent*, September 15, 1867 and responded to in New Orleans *Republican*, September 21, 1867.

¹⁵² White, in Vincent, Part B, 299.

¹⁵³ U. S. Department of the Interior. "Racial Desegregation in Public Education in the United States" Theme Study (August 2000), 15

¹⁵⁴ White, in Vincent, Part B, 304.

began actively opening schools and providing high quality education for African American children. Like the public schools of New Orleans, these were strictly separated by sex. In Natchitoches Parish in 1866, the Ladies of the Sacred Heart opened a day school for African American girls “Catholic or not” in a frame building on their convent grounds.¹⁵⁵ St. Joseph’s school for colored boys was founded in 1867 in Convent, Louisiana. St. Mary’s School for girls in New Orleans also opened its doors in 1867. This school had antebellum origins with the founding of the religious order Sisters of the Holy Family by Free Women of Color at St. Augustine’s Catholic Church. St. Mary’s School started in a building on Chartres Street in the French Quarter.

In 1868, the Freedmen’s Bureau began motions to transfer all of its schools in Louisiana to private organizations, but Northern aid societies showed little interest in assuming the responsibility.¹⁵⁶ As a result, bureau schools closed in every parish and by 1869, the year after ratification of the new constitution that required public education for all, there were public schools for only five thousand of ninety thousand African American school-age children, and only twelve schools outside of New Orleans for ninety-four thousand white school-age children.¹⁵⁷ These numbers suggest the magnitude of effort and resources that would have been required to meet the constitution’s decree. Meanwhile, the endeavor to integrate the public schools that did exist was underway in New Orleans.

The state’s Superintendent, Thomas W. Conway was determined to make a success of desegregation in New Orleans, but city school officials felt differently and promptly sought out any and every legal means possible to avoid integration. They succeeded in causing a considerable delay in the process. It was not until December 1870, after a “bewildering succession of suits and injunctions” finally made their way through the courts, that desegregation was ordered.¹⁵⁸ Desegregation began within a month and was accomplished simply by allowing African American students into any school to which they applied. Although there was some inevitable resistance, all indications are that it proceeded rather peaceably. There was no attempt to create a balanced mix in every school, but eventually at least twenty-one or one-third of the city’s schools were desegregated.¹⁵⁹ There were only three high schools in the city and significantly, two of these were desegregated, demonstrating that African-American students pursued and received secondary public education at this time. It is uncertain how many private academies for African-American children remained in operation during Reconstruction.

Prior to the Civil War, and even prior to the establishment of the public school system, a slaveholder named John McDonogh had written into his will a bequest leaving half of his estate for the education of both the white and the free black children of New Orleans. McDonogh died in 1850 and a legal dispute over the terms of his will ensued such that the funds were not provided to the city until 1858. In 1861, four new schools for white children were built from the endowment. Only in 1874 was a surplus in the McDonogh Fund discovered and another

¹⁵⁵ Susan E. Dollar, *The Freedmen’s Bureau Schools of Natchitoches Parish Louisiana 1865-1868* (Natchitoches, LA: Northwestern State University Press, 1998), 37.

¹⁵⁶ White, in Vincent, Part B, 303.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ Louis R. Harlan, “Desegregation in New Orleans Public Schools During Reconstruction,” in *The African American Experience in Louisiana: Part B*, ed. Charles Vincent (Lafayette: University of Southwestern, LA, 2000), 317, first published in *American Historical Review* 67 (1962): 663-75.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

campaign of building begun, which this time included one school for African American children. It is curious that at a time when New Orleans schools were supposed to be integrated that new schools were being constructed with racial designations. The exact circumstances of this are unclear, but the timing coincides with riots against mixed schools in New Orleans organized by the White League and the exclusion of schools from the Civil Rights Act of 1875. McDonogh No. 6 was designed by the well-respected New Orleans architect William Freret and completed in 1875. It was the first of Freret's many designs for the public schools and the first building of this quality constructed specifically for African American children in Louisiana with public funding.

For the most part, integrated schools were confined to New Orleans. It seems that all parties involved, even the enthusiastic integrationist, Superintendent Conway, conceded that forcing racial mixing in rural schools would only result in a lack of schools. With segregated schools tacitly accepted, there was a substantial improvement in public education during Reconstruction as more schools were opened to more children.¹⁶⁰ In 1871, Jefferson Parish reported four public schools for African Americans and one public school for whites operating on one bank of the Mississippi, while Iberville Parish reported eight public schools for African Americans and five for whites.¹⁶¹ Rare examples of integrated schools in rural locations included one on the plantation of a Colonel Laforest in Lafourche Parish and one at Bayou Mangoin in the Atchafalaya marsh that served fifteen African Americans and eleven whites.¹⁶²

The education of African Americans during Reconstruction was further enhanced by the establishment of universities. The American Missionary Association founded Straight University in New Orleans in 1869 as well as Baton Rouge College, which served as a normal school. New Orleans University was founded in 1869 as the Union Normal School of New Orleans and in 1883 moved into a permanent location on St. Charles Avenue. Leland University was founded in 1870 with the support of the Freedmen's Bureau and the American Baptist Home Mission Society. In 1873 the first of its St. Charles Avenue buildings was completed.¹⁶³ Enrollment in these universities was open to all though their student bodies were predominantly African American.

Of course politics and education were not the only areas of change during Reconstruction. The economy and labor patterns were also subject to deep changes as the result of war and emancipation. A system of free wage labor got its initial start during the war under the direction of General Butler followed by General Banks. As both plantation owners or overseers and freed people negotiated the most advantageous terms for free labor, three basic systems emerged: wage labor, tenancy, and sharecropping. In the first system, laborers earned set wages for their work, typically on a monthly basis. Basic living essentials such as food, clothing, shelter, and a plot of land for growing food and raising livestock might be provided

¹⁶⁰ Roger Fischer, "Country Parish School, 1868-1877," in *The African American Experience in Louisiana: Part B*, ed. Charles Vincent (Lafayette: University of Southwestern, LA, 2000), 350, first published as Chapter 5 in Roger A. Fischer, *The Segregation Struggle in Louisiana, 1862-77* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1974).

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 340.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 345.

¹⁶³ Edwin Whitfield Fay, *The History of Education in Louisiana* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1898), 161-68.

according to the terms of the contract. In this case, monthly wages were lowered commensurate with the provisions. This is the system of labor that came to dominate the sugar region.

Where cotton was king, tenancy and sharecropping prevailed. Sharecroppers were provided with the land, tools, and seed by the landowner with an expectation that they produce a certain amount of crop. The whole family – husband, wife, and children – worked the crop together. They would not actually get paid until that crop was harvested and sold. With no source of regular income, they had to purchase their own food and clothing, etc. on credit extended by the landowner at the plantation store. These stores featured exorbitant prices and high interest that made it nearly inevitable the crop would not cover the expenses the farmer accrued during the year and kept the sharecropper in a cycle of constant debt. By many accounts, sharecropping was just a new term for slavery and although no one would suggest sacrificing freedom for the alternative, the conditions of sharecropping could in some ways be worse.

In between the wage laborer and the sharecropper was the tenant. Tenants provided their own tools, work animals, seed, etc. and paid part of the crop in rent to the land owner. Like sharecroppers, tenants had to work through the year without cash wages and survive on credit. The wage laborer, tenant farmer, and sharecropper were all landless farmers, but the labor systems they toiled under shaped different living conditions and opportunities. Wage labor offered the greatest independence and potential for saving money and making a better life for oneself, while sharecropping rendered farmers the most dependent and unable to achieve any change in their condition.

There was some attempt by African Americans who had been free before the war to use their wealth to secure lands for working by freed people under fairer terms. Such a scheme was not merely philanthropic, but presented an investment opportunity for the financiers. The cause was organized as the New Orleans Freedmen's Aid Association and by August 1865 the association had rented several plantations and provided the animals, seeds, and tools for freed people to begin producing crops. But the effort was soon ended by the return of confiscated and abandoned lands to their owners.¹⁶⁴

The dream of owning land remained an impossibility for most freed people. At the end of the war, it was hoped the large plantations would be broken up into smaller farms, but this did not come to pass. The acreage possessed by single individuals and entities actually increased. The legendary forty acres and mule was not to be. The quick return of abandoned and confiscated lands to prewar owners left little public land available to rent to freed people in forty acres parcels as intended by Congress in 1865. In mid-1866 Congress restricted all remaining public lands to homesteading by loyal whites or freed people. Advertisements in the *Tribune* suggested families settle in groups of at least ten to establish communities, but bureaucracy and violence limited the success of freed persons in homesteading.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁴ John W. Blassingame, "Land, Labor, and Capital," in *The African American Experience in Louisiana: Part B*, ed. Charles Vincent (Lafayette: University of Southwestern, LA, 2000), 142, first published as Chapter 3 in John W. Blassingame, *Black New Orleans, 1860-1800* (Chicago: University of Illinois, 1973).

¹⁶⁵ Claude F. Oubre, "'Forty Acres and a Mule': Louisiana and the Southern Homestead Act," in *The African American Experience in Louisiana: Part B*, ed. Charles Vincent (Lafayette: University of Southwestern, LA, 2000), 249-50, first published in *Louisiana History*, 17 (1976): 143-57.

The population formerly known as Free People of Color fared much like their white neighbors in the retention of land and wealth in the postwar years. Some prospered while others were ruined, but all eventually felt some effect of economic disasters and the natural catastrophes that ruined Louisiana crops year after year during Reconstruction. While some Free People of Color, like the Metoyers of Natchitoches Parish, had their property destroyed by Union soldiers, many families in the prairie parishes managed to protect their holdings behind Jayhawker lines.¹⁶⁶ Those who came out of the war with their wealth intact took advantage of low prices to expand their real estate.¹⁶⁷ This led to overextension and finally debt, from which most could not recover. According to one study, the landholdings of former Free People of Color almost vanished by the end of the 1870s.¹⁶⁸

In the cities, African Americans worked at many jobs. They were plasterers, painters, bricklayers, carpenters, shoemakers, coopers, butchers, wheelwrights, printers, fishermen, tanners, blacksmiths, barbers, cabinetmakers, draymen, steamboatmen, bakers, cigarmakers, longshoremen, waiters, letter carriers, screwmen, porters, and business owners.¹⁶⁹ Not only were African Americans established in many lines of work during Reconstruction, but they began to form labor organizations during this time. Census records indicate that African Americans would continue in the occupations they secured during Reconstruction into the twentieth century.¹⁷⁰ While the land and labor patterns established during Reconstruction endured with little change for decades to come, the political gains of the period set the stage for the reversals of subsequent years and the struggle for racial equity that would continue for another century.

Intertwined with the transformation of Reconstruction was the development of a violent undercurrent of racism that would outlast the period and the century. Outnumbered, racist white voters turned to intimidation as the only means to assert their political will. One of the early organized forms of this contingent in Louisiana was the Knights of the White Camelia, organized in May 1867 following the institution of congressional Reconstruction. During the 1868 election, this group executed an effective campaign of terror to sway votes to the Democrats.¹⁷¹ Between 1866 and 1875, some 3,500 people in Louisiana, mostly African Americans were estimated to have been victims of violence.¹⁷² Perhaps the epicenter of violence in the state was “Bloody Caddo” Parish. Here, violence came as retribution for any perceived infraction of a white supremacist racial order; even renting land.¹⁷³ From May to August of 1865, there were at least sixty assaults on African Americans in the parish, including five murders, and in 1868, an

¹⁶⁶ Brasseaux and Fontenot, 87.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ Loren Schweninger, “Antebellum Free Persons of Color in Postbellum Louisiana,” in *The African American Experience in Louisiana: Part B*, ed. Charles Vincent (Lafayette: University of Southwestern, LA, 2000), 365, first published in *Louisiana History*, 30 (1989): 345-64.

¹⁶⁹ Blassingame, in Vincent, Part B, 148-150.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 141, 150.

¹⁷¹ James G. Dauphine, “Louisiana’s White Terrorists: a Benighting Legacy,” in *The African American Experience in Louisiana: Part B*, ed. Charles Vincent (Lafayette: University of Southwestern, LA, 2000), 224, first published in *Louisiana History* 30 (1989): 173-90.

¹⁷² Robert E. Moran, “Local Black Elected Officials in Ascension Parish (1868-1878),” in *The African American Experience in Louisiana: Part B*, ed. Charles Vincent (Lafayette: University of Southwestern, LA, 2000), 198, first published in *Louisiana History* 28 (1986): 273-80.

¹⁷³ Gilles Vandal, “The policy of Violence in Caddo Parish, 1865-1884,” in *The African American Experience in Louisiana: Part B*, ed. Charles Vincent (Lafayette: University of Southwestern, LA, 2000), 212.

estimated thirty-four whites and 154 African Americans were killed in Caddo.¹⁷⁴ Aside from the New Orleans Riot of 1866, other major race riots were the Colfax Riot of 1873, and the Coushatta Massacre of 1874. Rioting also erupted in St. Landry Parish in September 1868 and in New Orleans in October 1868. During the latter, mobs trashed and robbed black homes, businesses, and other establishments, stealing voter registration papers along the way.¹⁷⁵ One of seven fatalities was the ten-year-old son of state senator C. C. Antoine. The boy is believed to have been trampled by a frightened crowd running from gun fire.¹⁷⁶ In 1874, the aggressive anti-Republican and anti-African-American activities of secret societies emerged from the shadows with the formation of the White League. Even when African Americans were not personally threatened with violence, they could suffer from the League's intimidation tactics in other ways. Following the 1874 election, members of the White League persuaded planters in Iberville Parish to dismiss workers who had voted Republican from their plantations, leaving some 160 African American families destitute.¹⁷⁷ That same year the White League also waged a campaign of violence against school integration in New Orleans.¹⁷⁸ Under these conditions, African Americans displayed extraordinary bravery and resolve by continuing to vote and challenge all acts of discrimination. With every vote and every act of defiance, like riding a restricted street car, they took the first steps toward achieving civil rights in Louisiana.

The Battle for Equality: Post-Reconstruction, Jim Crow, and the Civil Rights Movement

In 1966, a member of the Congress for Racial Equality (CORE) interviewed Civil Rights activists in rural Louisiana. A seemingly straightforward opening question of her interviews, "When did you first become involved in the movement?," often provoked confusion. A. Z. Young of Bogalusa answered the question and provided the reason it may not have made sense with one simple statement: "I've been involved in the movement all my life."¹⁷⁹ This may seem illogical considering that this was 1966, that Mr. Young was in his forties, and that the Civil Rights movement is popularly considered to have begun in the 1950s, but in fact it points to a very logical truth. The Civil Rights movement was not a new phenomenon that was birthed spontaneously in the mid-twentieth century. It can be better understood as the apex of the struggle for full and complete equal rights that had been quietly ongoing since Reconstruction and grew more active from the 1930s onward. The four main themes that appear throughout the decades of this struggle – economic independence, education, political participation, and safety from violence – can all be traced back to the nineteenth century.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 210, 215.

¹⁷⁵ Melinda Meek Hennessey, "Race and Violence in Reconstruction New Orleans," in *The African American Experience in Louisiana: Part B*, ed. Charles Vincent (Lafayette: University of Southwestern, LA, 2000), 243-44, first published in *Louisiana History* 20 (1979): 77-91.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 240-41.

¹⁷⁷ Gilles Vandeal, "Politics and the Violence in Bourbon Louisiana: The Loreauville Riot of 1884 as a Case Study," in *The African American Experience in Louisiana: Part B*, ed. Charles Vincent (Lafayette: University of Southwestern, LA, 2000), 386.

¹⁷⁸ Harlan, in Vincent, Part B, 320-21.

¹⁷⁹ Great De Jong, *A Different Day: African American Struggles for Justice in Rural Louisiana, 1900-1970* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 1-2.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 4.

Congressional Reconstruction officially ended in 1877 with the election of Rutherford B. Hayes as president and the subsequent removal of Federal troops from Louisiana. This opened the door for Democrats known as “Redeemers” or “Bourbons” to take control of the state government. As the name implies, “Redeemers” sought to “redeem” the state from the changes of Reconstruction and any semblance of racial equality that had been achieved. Likewise, the term “Bourbon,” after the Bourbon Kings of France, refers to the reactionary stance of some Democrats. The transition was more subtle than some might have expected: it was a moderate Democrat, Francis Nichols, who had been elected governor in 1876 and though Democrats, including some Redeemers, did gain more positions in the state government in the election of 1878, Republicans continued to be elected as well.¹⁸¹ Even with the ratification of a new state constitution in 1879 that enabled some separation of public facilities, there was not a radical reversal of the provisions of the 1868 constitution. Nevertheless, to African Americans who had been struggling against violent repression throughout Reconstruction, the removal of Federal support from the state must have had ominous implications.

This certainly must have been so for residents of Caddo, Madison, and Bossier parishes who began holding meeting to discuss emigration from the state in 1877. The concept of the Exodus sprang forth from a former slave and soldier named Henry Adams in Caddo Parish around 1869. For most of the years between then and 1877, he and a committee of other African American men researched the condition of black agricultural workers in the south, which he sensed to be little improved from slavery. They then came up with possible ways to address the plight of African Americans in the south, including appealing to the president and congress for redress, but when the events of 1877 signaled that no assistance would come from the Federal government, the committee looked to their other avenues of relief. In 1879 to 1880, thousands of African Americans fled the violence and crippling sharecropping system of Louisiana’s Delta parishes for the hope of a brighter future in Kansas.¹⁸² John H. Scott of East Carroll Parish recalled his grandfather saying, “Those was some terrible times after the last Federal troops pulled out. I believe it was 1877. . . . Colored folks was so scared of those crazy white men [the white supremacist Bulldozers] that they was lined up at the river trying to ketch a boat goin’ north.”¹⁸³ This personal memory is confirmed by many accounts of the day: the situation in northern Louisiana had become untenable. Forced out of public offices, burned out of schools, cheated out of a decent living, and hunted down, African Americans took a final evasive action – they left Louisiana.

Fortunately, circumstances weren’t as dire in the rest of the state, but they weren’t good either. The election of 1878 was accompanied by a great deal of racial violence.¹⁸⁴ By this time, the aggressive intimidation policy of racist Democrats had evolved to forcing African Americans to vote Democratic rather than deterring them from voting.¹⁸⁵ Although African Americans

¹⁸¹ Henry C. Dethloff and Robert R. Jones, “Race Relations in Louisiana, 1877-98,” in *The African American Experience in Louisiana: Part B*, ed. Charles Vincent (Lafayette: University of Southwestern, LA, 2000), 504, first published in *Louisiana History* 9 (1968): 301-23.

¹⁸² Joe Louis Caldwell, “Any Place But Here: Kansas Fever in Northeast Louisiana,” in *The African American Experience in Louisiana: Part B*, ed. Charles Vincent (Lafayette: University of Southwestern, LA, 2000), 419-21, first published in the *North Louisiana Historical Association Journal* 21 (1990): 51-70.

¹⁸³ John H. Scott with Cleo Scott Brown, *Witness to the Truth: My Struggle for Human Rights in Louisiana* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2003), 19.

¹⁸⁴ Vandal, in Vincent, Part B, 206.

¹⁸⁵ Vandal, in Vincent, Part B, 386.

continued to vote in Louisiana until the end of the nineteenth century, the campaigns of intimidation and violence had a serious impact on the electoral process. African Americans continued to serve in the Legislature until 1900, but after 1878, African Americans held fewer local and state offices.¹⁸⁶ The new constitution, while not immediately eliminating civil rights legislation of the 1868 constitution, did initiate the gears of reversal. The most obvious parts of the new constitution were its removal of the state capital from New Orleans to Baton Rouge and shortening of the moderate Nicholl's term. The new constitution also permitted separate facilities and schools and allowed for the establishment of Southern University for the education of African Americans.¹⁸⁷ The article of the constitution requiring equal access to all public facilities had never been fully enforced so its impact was negligible, but it had been symbolically significant.

The first action by the State of Louisiana to legislate segregation occurred in 1890. It was then that the state passed a law requiring separate accommodations for black and white patrons on railroad cars. This law set in motion the rule of Jim Crow by prompting the seminal lawsuit, *Plessy v. Ferguson*. A group of New Orleanians organized under the name *Comité des Citoyens* reacted with immediate objection to the new law and formed a calculated course of action to challenge the new law. Homer Plessy, a light-skinned man, of one-eighth African descent, was chosen to board a white railroad car in 1892 in direct defiance of the law. Plessy's arrest for the action was protested as a violation of his rights under the thirteenth and fourteenth amendments in the case of *Homer Adolph Plessy v. the State of Louisiana*, but Plessy lost. Plessy and the *Comité* pressed on and appealed the case to the State Supreme Court and finally to the United States Supreme Court. While the case was proceeding through the courts, in 1894, the state went ahead and passed a law requiring separate accommodations in railroad depots as well.¹⁸⁸ The court's decision, handed down in 1896, found no difference between the cars and concluded that the state had imposed no designation of inferiority on Plessy and had therefore not violated his rights. This established the precedent for the legality of "separate but equal" facilities that would girdle African American life in Louisiana and the United States through the middle of the next century.

Two years after the Plessy decision, Louisiana enacted yet another constitution that marked the close of the brief era of legislated civil equality for African Americans in Louisiana.¹⁸⁹ The new 1898 constitution effectively strangled African Americans' right to vote and required separate schools for whites and blacks.¹⁹⁰ In 1900, there were just 5,320 registered African American voters whereas just a decade prior there had been 127,923.¹⁹¹ In 1902, a state bill passed that required separation of races within streetcars by screens. The custom of African Americans sitting in the rear with whites in the front had already been established, but this

¹⁸⁶ Charles Vincent, "Aspects of the Family and Public Life of Antoine Dubuclet: Louisiana's Black State Treasurer, 1868-1878," in *The African American Experience in Louisiana: Part B*, ed. Charles Vincent (Lafayette: University of Southwestern, LA, 2000), 191, first published in the *Journal of Negro History* 66 (1981): 26-36; Moran, in Vincent, Part B, 203.

¹⁸⁷ Harlan, in Vincent, Part B, 321; Dale A. Somers, "Black and White in New Orleans," in *The African American Experience in Louisiana: Part B*, ed. Charles Vincent (Lafayette: University of Southwestern, LA, 2000), 523, first published in the *Journal of Southern History* 40 (1974), 19-42.

¹⁸⁸ Dethloff and Jones, in Vincent, Part B, 509.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 510.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*; Harlan, in Vincent, Part B, 321.

¹⁹¹ Dethloff and Jones, in Vincent, Part B, 509.

legislation proposed by rural representatives was an emblematic reversal of the first victory of civil rights protest in New Orleans.¹⁹²

While politicians were busy rewriting laws and courts were deciding their validity, many other elements were shaping the daily life of African Americans in Louisiana. Churches, fraternal organizations, and benevolent societies were key social institutions, contributing to community cohesiveness and independence by facilitating mutual aid, collaboration, and support within communities. They also offered opportunities for cultural as well as spiritual enrichment and expression. In the late postbellum era, churches were among the first institutions founded by freed slaves. The Baptist church grew in popularity among African Americans as did, to a smaller extent the Congregational, Methodist, and Presbyterian churches. By 1880, the Methodist Episcopal Church and the African Methodist Episcopal Church claimed the most African American congregants in New Orleans.¹⁹³

Although Catholicism remained the religion of many of Louisiana's African Americans, the church lost an estimated 20,000 members between the end of the war and 1890.¹⁹⁴ Possible reasons for this drastic decline in membership may be the association of the church with the prior regime of slavery and the postbellum culture of racism.¹⁹⁵ Catholic churches that had previously offered unrestricted seating, began designating pews specifically for African Americans in the late nineteenth century and racial conflicts began to occur during services. As a remedy, the Catholic Church started creating separate parishes for African Americans, beginning with St. Katherine's in New Orleans in 1895.¹⁹⁶ A second African-American parish was formed in New Orleans in 1909 by relocating white members of Mater Dolorosa Church to a new facility and keeping black members in the old building, which became St. Dominic's.¹⁹⁷ While African Americans may have enjoyed having separate congregations of their own creation in protestant AME or Baptist churches, such new imposition of segregation by the Catholic Church must have reeked of the discrimination being experienced in public areas of daily life. African Americans who remained devoted to their Catholic religion found ways to connect the liturgy with a vision of the equality of all of humanity, even while human powers in the church allowed Jim Crow to shape its built environment.

While churches were inarguably a center of black life in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, benevolent societies had African American memberships second only to the churches.¹⁹⁸ Between Emancipation and 1880, over 200 African American benevolent or fraternal organizations were recorded in New Orleans; while the 1912 and 1913 directories of black businesses in the city list 150 benevolent societies. Just following the Civil War the mortality rates of African Americans was disconcertingly high. An irony of emancipation was

¹⁹² Fischer, in Vincent, Part B, 336.

¹⁹³ Reinders, in Vincent, Part A, 413.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁹⁶ Justin Poché, "Separate but Sinful: The Desegregation of Louisiana Catholicism, 1938-1962," in *Louisiana Beyond Black and White: New Interpretations of Twentieth-Century Race and Race Relations* ed. Michael S. Martin (Lafayette: University of Louisiana at Lafayette Press, 2011), 37-38.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ Claude F. Jacobs, "Benevolent Societies of New Orleans Blacks During the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries," in *The African American Experience in Louisiana: Part C*, ed. Charles Vincent (Lafayette: University of Louisiana at Lafayette, 2002), 7, first published in *Louisiana History* 29 (1988): 21-33.

suddenly being free with no wealth in an atmosphere of constant disease and inaccessible medical care. Benevolent societies, which had been established in Louisiana well before the Civil War, in the postbellum years exploded in popularity among both blacks and whites as a means to secure medical care and a funeral and internment. In this period, there were of course no insurance or government welfare programs that would cover these types of costs, so working class people were often without the means to cover expenses in times of medical emergencies or death. Benevolent societies largely functioned as insurance for these matters by charging membership fees and providing benefits for illnesses, wakes and internments. But they were also social organizations.

The membership of societies typically focused on a certain demographic or area of interest, and they often promoted a program of moral and industrious living. As the name of the Do Right Benevolent Society of Geismar, Louisiana indicates, “right living” was something, along with hard work and self reliance, that was encouraged by many benevolent societies. For freed people who had not had prior experience in such things, running societies provided useful experience with administrative tasks, bookkeeping, and organizational skills. Finally, society halls also served as important venues for jazz performances during the emergence of this original American art form. Societies that could do so had their own buildings for society purposes and these buildings typically included halls where music could be played. Oral histories collected from jazz musicians recall many performances at halls of organizations such as the Perseverance Benevolent Mutual Aid Association, the Bulls’ Aid and Pleasure Club, the Society of Inseperable Friends, *La Société Bienfaisance Mutuelle “L’Equité,”* and *La des Jeunes Amis*.¹⁹⁹ The argument has been made that fraternal organization did not merely provide venues for jazz, but were indeed greatly responsible for the growth of this influential African American art.²⁰⁰ The banquets and funerals of these organizations provided constant employment for brass bands and opportunities for improvisation.

Akin to the benevolent societies were Masonic organizations. They were not formed specifically to provide the same medical and death benefits as the former, but they provided the advantages of social fraternity and networking and too promoted moral behavior and mutual support. Two prominent African American Masonic groups were the Colored Knights of Pythias and Prince Hall. In the twentieth century, the temples of these groups provided elegant venues for entertainment when segregation restricted African Americans from other ballrooms and auditoriums. Some multi-storied temple buildings in the bigger cities were designed with roof top gardens that hosted legendary jazz musicians and other entertainers. Less grand, but equally important were many small-town Masonic lodges. These buildings sheltered many community activities, from schools to civil rights work like voter registration training.²⁰¹

There is yet another important African American fraternal organization that is not benevolent, but rather rooted in Catholicism. The Knights of Peter Claver, headquartered in

¹⁹⁹ Ann Woodruff, “Society Halls in New Orleans: A Survey of Jazz Landmarks, Part I,” *The Jazz Archivist* 20 (2007): 11-28; Ann Woodruff, “Society Halls in New Orleans: A Survey of Jazz Landmarks, Part II,” *The Jazz Archivist* 21 (2008): 19-36.

²⁰⁰ Marshall W. Stearns, “Jazz Begins,” in *The African American Experience in Louisiana: Part C*, ed. Charles Vincent (Lafayette: University of Louisiana at Lafayette, 2002), 136-37, first published in Marshall W. Stearns, *The Story of Jazz* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956).

²⁰¹ Bob Adelman, “Birth of a Voter: Louisiana Parish Registers 1st Negro Voter in 61 Years,” *Ebony*, February 1964.

New Orleans, claims the distinction of being the largest and oldest continually extant, predominantly African-American lay organization. As with other fraternal groups, the collective organized nature of the Knights of Peter Claver was a factor in empowering members to assert their civil rights concerns as a group. In the 1930s and following decades, the Knights were outspoken proponents of racial inclusiveness in the Catholic Church. Members like civil rights attorney A. P. Tureaud saw a clear connection between Catholic principles of unity and the argument for legal and social racial equity.²⁰² Other Catholic groups, as well, worked for civil rights from this stance.

Religion, civil rights, and labor concerns often overlapped. Far from being unrelated, these pursuits and the factions that supported them enjoyed commonality in the theme of brotherly and sisterly equality. From the cane fields, to the docks, to the sawmills, African Americans actively sought fairer labor conditions from the late nineteenth century throughout the early twentieth century. As early as 1890 and 1897, African American workers in the cane fields made organized labor demands by striking.²⁰³ Longshoremen and dock workers were among the early highly organized workers of the cities. In New Orleans, dockworkers not only established strong African American unions in the late nineteenth century, but overcame racial tensions to establish biracial cooperation in 1880-1894 and 1901-1923.²⁰⁴ The ability of a common labor cause to create a mutually supportive relationship between blacks and whites that was uncommon to the era could also be seen in the lumber industry from its earliest days in the 1880s. From approximately 1880 to 1930, Louisiana experienced a lumber boom and African Americans gained a great number of jobs in this industry from the start. This was true across the south and before World War II no other industry employed more African Americans.²⁰⁵ The fact that Africans Americans worked in the industry from the beginning and that there were large numbers of jobs filled by whites and blacks in the same skill level put African Americans on a more equal footing with white coworkers that enabled cooperation. White laborers were in fact dependent upon their black coworkers to achieve any success in unions.

Bogalusa is a prime example of a Louisiana lumber town in many ways and it demonstrates several aspects of the African American experience in the lumber industry and the correlation between labor organization and the civil rights movement. Bogalusa was established in 1906 by the Great Southern Lumber Company and the mill began production in 1908. By 1914, the town's population was 10,000, with some 1,700 to 3,500 workers employed by the company during World War I. Approximately sixty percent of the workforce and the town's population as a whole was African American.²⁰⁶ It was designed as a model lumber town and indeed boasted far better homes and facilities than its contemporaries. Like other lumber towns, these were strictly segregated. In addition to separate housing, churches, schools, and parks,

²⁰² Poché, in Martin, 39.

²⁰³ William Ivy Hair, "Black Protest and White Power," in *The African American Experience in Louisiana: Part C*, ed. Charles Vincent (Lafayette: University of Louisiana at Lafayette, 2002), 401, first published as Chapter 8 in William Ivy Hair, *Bourbonism and Agrarian Protest: Louisiana Politics, 1877-1900* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1969), 1700-97.

²⁰⁴ Stephen H. Norwood, "Bogalusa Burning: The War Against Biracial Unionism in the Deep South, 1919," in *The African American Experience in Louisiana: Part C*, ed. Charles Vincent (Lafayette: University of Louisiana at Lafayette, 2002), 62, first published in the *Journal of Southern History* 63 (1997): 591-628.

²⁰⁵ William P. Jones, *The Tribe of Black Ulysses: African American Lumber Workers in the Jim Crow South* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2005), 1.

²⁰⁶ Kingsley, 415; Norwood, in Vincent, Part C, 64.

Bogalusa even established separate YWCAs and YMCAs, which no other lumber company in the state is reported to have done.²⁰⁷ Although white and black men went to work together every day, when they came home, each went unto his own world.

It must, then, have been an especially striking sight on a fall day in 1919, when the black head of an African American union walked down the main street of town flanked by two white union men bearing shot guns to protect him. It provoked a quick and violent response that resulted in the massacre of both white union men and two others by a company security posse. This incident was not the first time white union men took up arms to defend their black comrades in Bogalusa. In June, some one hundred white union men with rifles and shotguns – some of them veterans in full dress uniforms – had come to the black neighborhood to escort men to their union meeting after the company had threatened to send gunmen to break it up. This was an extraordinary case of white southerners taking up arms for rather than against African Americans and it would have a lasting effect on the African American community. The murders of the union men were effective in crushing biracial union organizing in Bogalusa for good, but they could not reverse the empowerment that union participation and the well-deserved respect of fellow hardworking men had given to the African American workers. The potential of that empowerment was not lost on lumber company executives, one of whom remarked in objection to black unions that the organization of African Americans would be a return to Reconstruction.²⁰⁸

A shift in Bogalusa's industry from lumber to paper and other events solidified racial separation and racism and excluded African Americans from consequential union participation.²⁰⁹ By late 1964 – after the passage of the Civil Rights Act – the town was home to an extremely aggressive Ku Klux Klan chapter. In 1965, forty-six years after the 1919 massacre, Bogalusa was once more the site of historic events in racial relations that again involved union men, army veterans, and the armed defense of African American residents; but under very different circumstances. This time the union men were A. Z. Young and Robert Hicks. Both were former presidents of the “colored” United Papermakers and Paperworkers local 189A and Young was a World War II veteran (and the man who would later state the he'd been in the Civil Rights movement all his life). One supporter noted that the pair's “union experience equipped them well to voice those fundamental economic grievances that do not surface in every civil rights battle but could hardly be suppressed in Bogalusa.”²¹⁰ The organization which they led as president and vice president, the Bogalusa Civic and Voters League (BCVL), has been called by a leading scholar of Louisiana's Civil Rights movement “perhaps the most dynamic local movement in the entire South.”²¹¹

The armed defenders of Bogalusa's African Americans were the Deacons of Defense, a surreptitious organization formed by army veterans in Jonesboro, that quickly jumped southeast to Bogalusa. In both places, it was brazen KKK terrorism with the complicity of police that convinced African American citizens of the need to protect themselves with firearms. It was in

²⁰⁷ Norwood, in Vincent, Part C, 64.

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 71.

²⁰⁹ Jones, 178.

²¹⁰ Jones, 178.

²¹¹ Adam Fairclough, *Race and Democracy: The Civil Rights Struggle in Louisiana, 1915-1972* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1995), xx.

Bogalusa that the Deacons gained national attention under the charismatic leadership of Charles Sims. It was six months after the passage of the Civil Rights Act, when Bogalusa was still held in segregation by the Klan, that the BCVL was reinvigorated under the leadership of Young and Hicks and the Deacons were formed as a protective agency. While the BCVL worked on a Civil Rights agenda, the Deacons, in support of non-violent protest and negotiation, swore to use their arms for self-defense and the defense of civil rights activists against any attacker. Together, the BCVL and the Deacons composed a formidable front against racial barriers that was “arguably the most militant in the South.”²¹²

The Klan had their first run in with the Deacons in July of 1965, when on a regular jaunt terrorizing an African American Bogalusa neighborhood, they began shooting at houses, and much to their surprise, received a return round of gun fire.²¹³ African Americans had done what they weren’t supposed to do in the racial hierarchy the Klan imagined; they responded to violence with violence and it sent the terrorists fleeing from the neighborhood that night, affecting the Deacons’ goal of protecting black lives. It would take many negotiations, protests, and intervention from the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), the FBI, the Justice Department, and even Vice President Humphrey before the Klan was at all quelled and serious progress was made towards implementation of the Civil Rights Act in Bogalusa. Though it seemed like a long battle with small victories, the unwavering resolve of the BCVL and the previously unimaginable reality of an armed African American defense organization drew national attention and was a turning point in the pursuit of civil rights in Louisiana. The BCVL forced a level of negotiation between government officials and African American leaders that contributed to Governor John McKeithen’s subsequent creation of the “Commission on Human Relations, Rights, and Responsibilities.” Aside from the eventual integration of Bogalusa, the BCVL’s greatest impact was a return to the union roots of its leaders.²¹⁴ Negotiations and a complaint of discrimination in federal court ended discriminatory promotion practices at the paper mill and finally set African Americans back on almost the same foot as whites in the industrial workforce of Bogalusa.

Another event in Louisiana’s Civil Rights movement that garnered coverage in the national news was the Baton Rouge Bus Boycott of 1953. Several factors in Baton Rouge set the stage for this significant event. Baton Rouge had a relatively large African American middle class and an African American votership that was active before the Voting Rights Act and composed ten percent of the registered voters in 1953. As in other southern cities, African Americans composed a very high proportion of the public bus riders; about seventy percent. In spite of this fact, African Americans were restricted to limited seating in the back of the bus. This created a situation in which African Americans who worked hard all day at jobs outside of their neighborhoods, particularly women who worked as domestics in white neighborhoods, would have to stand on the bus all the way home while seats in the white section sat vacant. One rider summed up life during bus segregation as a period when she never knew a chair.²¹⁵

²¹² Ibid., 345.

²¹³ Christopher B. Strain, “‘We Walked Like Men’: The Deacons for Defense and Justice,” in *The African American Experience in Louisiana: Part C*, ed. Charles Vincent (Lafayette: University of Louisiana at Lafayette, 2002), 365, first published in *Louisiana History* 38 (1997): 43-62.

²¹⁴ Fairclough, 345, 378.

²¹⁵ *Signpost to Freedom: The 1953 Baton Rouge Bus Boycott*, Louisiana Public Broadcasting, February, 2012.

Into this situation entered the Reverend T. J. Jemison. A native of Selma, Alabama, Jemison observed the situation of black bus riders when he moved to Baton Rouge. With other community leaders, Jemison presented an idea to the City Council that would improve seating opportunities for African Americans while maintaining the status quo of segregation.²¹⁶ The council embraced the logical suggestion that black riders be allowed to fill up empty seats on the bus from the rear with Ordinance 222. Unfortunately the drivers were not well informed of the new procedures, nor did they embrace them when instructed to comply with the ordinance. An altercation ensued between one driver and a rider who asserted her right to sit out of exhaustion, while other riders made a show of solidarity by sitting as well. Drivers went on strike in protest of the new rules and gained the support of segregationist state attorney general Fred LeBlanc who declared the Ordinance to be in conflict with state law on June 19th.²¹⁷ The drivers thought they were victorious, but Jemison and members of the United Defense League (UDL) had other ideas.

That night Reverend Jemison secured a spot on a local radio show and called for a boycott of the buses and announced a meeting on the subject to be held at Mt. Zion Baptist Church. So that riders could boycott the buses without sacrificing their employment, Jemison and the UDL established a free ride system in which people with cars drove the bus routes to pick up riders. Some whites even contributed rides. Collections were made for gas money and some gas stations offered wholesale prices for gas. The success of the boycott was immediate; each day cost the bus company \$1,600. At the height of the boycott, Jemison estimated there were sixty-five to seventy vehicles providing free rides, and attendance of the next boycott rally was so great it had to be held at McKinley High School.²¹⁸ In the midst of this enthusiasm many felt disappointed when Jemison agreed to a compromise that would revise Ordinance 222 to reserve two short seats in the front for whites and two long seats in the back for blacks. Though the local victory was small, the Baton Rouge Bus Boycott had a great impact on the greater Civil Rights movement. It was the first large scale bus boycott in the nation and it set the precedent for the later Montgomery Bus Boycott.

Such events were just pieces of Louisiana's multifaceted Civil Rights movement, which also included the epic struggle for education equalization and school integration that began in the 1940s. In the 1930s, groups of all kinds began to realize the potential power of their organized nature in the fight for civil rights. Largely neglected or given a bad deal by New Deal programs, African American communities looked inward for help during the depression era to their own relief-oriented organizations and established new associations. This mobilization corresponds with growing activism for civil rights during this period.²¹⁹ In the late 1940s, civil rights activism was given another infusion of determination when African American veterans returned from service in World War II. Like veterans before them, they were acutely aware that they were treated like citizens in the expectation that they risk their lives for the country and should

²¹⁶ Dean Sinclair, "Equal in All Places: The Civil Rights Struggle in Baton Rouge, 1953-1963," in *The African American Experience in Louisiana: Part C*, ed. Charles Vincent (Lafayette: University of Louisiana at Lafayette, 2002), 440, first published in *Louisiana History* 39 (1998): 347-66.

²¹⁷ Fairclough, 159.

²¹⁸ Sinclair, in Vincent, Part C, 445.

²¹⁹ Douglas L. Smith, "Black Communities Mobilize," in *The African American Experience in Louisiana: Part C*, ed. Charles Vincent (Lafayette: University of Louisiana at Lafayette, 2002), 154, first published as Chapter 12 in Douglas L. Smith, *The New Deal in the Urban South* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1988), 232-59.

be extended all the full rights of citizenship. Between 1946 and 1956, the number of registered African American voters in Louisiana rose from approximately 7,000 to 161,000.²²⁰

Following the resegregation of New Orleans schools in 1878 and the accompanying overtones of racism that had pervaded daily life, public educational opportunities for African American children in Louisiana were deplorable. Much schooling for African Americans, especially in rural areas, continued to take place in churches or in crude and poorly lit buildings. In some cases rudimentary instruction was provided in the home. At the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century many white Louisianans, particularly in rural areas, also received a poor education in inadequate facilities, but typically benefited from more funding, if only slightly. In the cities, when modern brick schools became standard for white students, frame buildings continued to be constructed for African American students. Examples abound of disputes over school buildings and misallocation of funds meant for African American schools to white schools in the early twentieth century.

A bitter battle ensued over the construction of a new school for black students in New Orleans in 1922. The Joseph Craig School building, which white protesters considered “a monument really,” too good for black children, was eventually transferred to white use and a different Craig school built in another neighborhood.²²¹ In 1926, McDonough No. 6, the beautiful brick school designed for African American students by James Freret in 1875, was reassigned to white students. Even the Rosenwald Fund which did so much for the construction of African American schools across the south and contributed to the building of 393 schools in Louisiana alone, could not always effect change in this climate. During the 1928-1929 fiscal year, Rosenwald allocated funds for a school in St. James Parish, but the parish school board never provided the money to the community and was eventually required to return it to the Rosenwald Fund. In this case, the community was able to overcome the lack of outside funding, taking the Rosenwald plan they had acquired and using their own resources to complete this building, which became known as the Central Agricultural School.²²²

After much struggle, African Americans in New Orleans received their first high school in 1917, housed in an old white school building. In 1930, the Rosenwald Fund attempted to give money towards the construction of a long petitioned for vocational high school, but the Orleans Parish School board claimed it did not have the required matching funds and instead built a cheap wood frame elementary school on the site that had been set aside for the vocational school.²²³ It was finally Federal funding from the Public Works Administration that made the vocational high school named after Booker T. Washington a reality in 1942. Some modern brick schools came a little earlier for African Americans in Baton Rouge. The first modern brick public school for African Americans in the state was erected in Baton Rouge with an appropriation approved in 1913 and by 1922, the city was building its third such school. In 1927, the modern brick McKinley High School was constructed in Baton Rouge.

While public and quasi-public schools are an important part of the picture of African American education, private schools cannot be forgotten. Catholic and protestant schools

²²⁰ Fairclough, 106.

²²¹ Devore and Logsdon, 200-203.

²²² Kathe Hambrick Jackson, interview by author, Donaldsonville, LA, September 30, 2011.

²²³ *Ibid.*, 198.

provided some of the best facilities, teachers, and learning materials available to African American students. Catholic schools that opened during this period include St. Catherine of Sienna, originally called the St. Augustine School, established in 1885 by the Sisters of the Holy Family in Ascension Parish; Holy Rosary Institute of 1913 in Lafayette Parish; Holy Ghost School, opened in Avoyelles Parish in 1917; and Our Lady of Assumption School of 1934 in Lafayette Parish.

An example of the lasting involvement of the American Missionary Association (AMA) in Louisiana schools is the Gilbert Academy. The school's first incarnation was as an orphanage for African American children in a New Orleans mansion during the Civil War. In 1867, the Orphans Home Society moved to an abandoned plantation in St. Mary Parish. There it evolved into LaTeche Seminary, which opened in 1875, and later became the Gilbert Academy and Agricultural College. In the 1880s substantial buildings were constructed for the school: girl's and boy's dormitories, a dining hall, a kitchen and bakery, and a two-story chapel building containing a library, reading room, and five recitation rooms. Gilbert inherited New Orleans University's campus on St. Charles Avenue in 1935 when this university merged with Straight into Dillard.

The main building of New Orleans University's campus was completed in 1898. With a generous L-shaped plan, this imposing four-and-a-half-story brick building accommodated six school rooms, a chapel, offices, cloakrooms, bathrooms, a dining room, and dormitory rooms.²²⁴ At a time when there were so many battles over the quality of buildings provided for African Americans within the public school system and such a lack of high schools, the operation of a private high school in this impressive campus is significant. It apparently provoked displeasure from some whites who had supported Dillard with the aim of removing African Americans from the elite St. Charles Avenue location of New Orleans University.²²⁵ Gilbert provided a top quality education and produced such distinguished alumni as civil rights attorney, Lolis Elie and UN ambassador Andrew Young, among many others. At one point, Gilbert was the only school in the state to hold an "A" rating from the Southern Association of Secondary Schools.²²⁶ However in 1949, the American Missionary Association ceased its funding of the school and sold the property to the Archdiocese of New Orleans. The Archdiocese demolished the campus buildings and erected the all white boys high school, De La Salle. Peck Hall, a dormitory built in 1911 at the rear of the campus escaped demolition and was the last vestige of this important school until the City Council approved its demolition in 2007.

By the 1940s, the inequality of every aspect of public education provided to African Americans versus that for whites was undeniable. It was at this time that the NAACP began a campaign of equalization suits against school boards. Although the ultimate goal of the NAACP and civil rights activists was integration of schools, most acknowledged the reality that that would be a long time coming and efforts would be best focused on requiring equality in black public education. It was also hoped when school boards were financially unable to provide for two equal systems, that integration would become the only alternative. In Louisiana, attorney A.

²²⁴ Edwin Whitfield Fay, *The History of Education in Louisiana* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1898), 168.

²²⁵ Smith, in Vincent, Part C, 157.

²²⁶ Keith Weldon Medley, "Gilbert Academy's Legacy of Distinction," *New Orleans Tribune*, 1985, <http://www.writers.net/writers/books/24626> (accessed August 13, 2011).

P. Tureaud began filing suits for the equalization of teachers' salaries in the 1940s. Tureaud worked on many aspects of civil rights from voter registration to investigation of a lynching, but it was education that would consume a great deal of his forty-five year career.

After winning a number of salary equalization suits, Tureaud began working on other aspects of education. In the 1940s, the physical plant of public education in New Orleans included many schools built before the Civil War and during Reconstruction. Overall, the classroom space was insufficient and African American schools were excessively overcrowded. By 1946, local NAACP leaders Turead and Daniel Byrd were petitioning the school board to bring facilities for African Americans up to an equal standard. The superintendent at the time well understood the critical need for a massive school construction program and an immediate increase in facilities for African Americans, but his plans were repeatedly obstructed. By the end of the 1940s, not only was there no support for constructing new schools for African Americans, but parents were pursuing legal avenues to block conversion of white schools to African American use; consequently in 1948, the NAACP filed a suit for the equalization of Orleans Parish schools.

By 1951, the Orleans Parish School Board (OPSB) had still not accomplished equalization and Turead and other leaders shifted their demands and pushed for integration. The board refused, reasoning that such a move would be illegal and damaging to race relations in the city. In 1952, Tureaud filed *Earl Benjamin Bush et al. v. Orleans Parish School Board* for the integration of New Orleans schools. A suit was also filed for the integration of St. Helena Parish schools, but in the mean time, suits from other states were coming before the Supreme Court. Five became consolidated as *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka Kansas*. The pivotal decision handed down by the court declared *Plessy v. Ferguson* and the separate but equal doctrine unconstitutional and required the desegregation of schools. It was hoped that this decision would lead to a speedy resolution to the Orleans and St. Helena Parish cases and integration would proceed, but this was not to be.²²⁷ Just as they had in 1869, Louisiana lawmakers dug in their heels and tried every possible legal tactic to forestall integration.²²⁸ Meanwhile, other residents resorted to protests and intimidation to try to prevent integration. In spite of repeated court orders to desegregate, the State of Louisiana and the Orleans Parish School Board managed to keep schools segregated until 1960. Finally, on November 14, 1960, four African American girls entered the previously all white William Frantz and McDonough 19 schools in New Orleans and the integration of Louisiana's schools was under way. The event attracted national attention and the singular moment of Ruby Bridges walking bravely between federal marshals through an ugly crowd was immortalized in Norman Rockwell's painting *The Problem We All Live With*.

While all of the debate over integration was occurring through the course of the decade, new schools were being built throughout the state. The 1950s ushered in a new era in public school construction for New Orleans. In a 1952 assessment of the school buildings, school board architect Charles Colbert concluded not only that the overall condition of the city's school buildings was deplorable, but that there was a great imbalance between those built for whites and those for blacks. This led to the construction of thirty new schools between 1952 and 1960. Design competitions produced modern designs for the schools that were radical departures from

²²⁷ Fairclough, 167.

²²⁸ Devore and Logsdon, 235-241.

their predecessors.²²⁹ Two months before the *Brown* decision was announced, the African American Thomy Lafon School was featured in *LIFE* magazine as one of the country's well-equipped elementary schools. The following year, while New Orleans was embroiled in the struggle over integration, the design for Phyllis Wheatley Elementary School for African American students was completed in the historic Tremé neighborhood. One must wonder what was on the mind of school officials, students, and parents as these shining new buildings were erected. They were the most innovative modern designs leading architects had to offer and unlike anything that had ever been built for African American students in Louisiana, but they stood contrary to the dream and new reality of integration. By 2011, both were in a deteriorated condition and were demolished. Schools of this period symbolize both the final coming of age of modern educational facilities for African Americans and the turbulent last days of segregation.

Bright notes amidst the ugly quagmire of school desegregation in Louisiana occurred at some of the state's institutes of higher learning. During the 1954-55 school year, Southwestern Louisiana Institute (now University of Louisiana at Lafayette) became the first all-white institution of higher learning in the South to integrate.²³⁰ McNeese State College (now University) and Southeastern Louisiana College (now University) followed and the three became the first institutions of higher learning to desegregate in the Deep South. Louisiana's primary and secondary schools would not become comprehensively desegregated until 1970.

The history of African Americans in Louisiana is rich and compelling, full of contradictions and ironies, and details that don't fit into pat explanations. The related historic resources likewise sometimes defy easy definitions or categorization, though the following property types section attempts both. While the preceding overview lends the context in which the significance of related historic resources can be better understood, the resources themselves add the contours and shadows that further enrich this story.

²²⁹ Ibid., 338.

²³⁰ Brasseaux and Fontenot, 120.

ASSOCIATED PROPERTY TYPES

As the preceding Background History and Development demonstrates, the African American Experience in Louisiana is a dense and complicated topic and there are therefore many associated property types that bear significance to it. The below property types are organized primarily according to their use. Properties that had multiple historic uses have been placed in the use category for which they are most significant. The final category is districts, which includes sites comprised of multiple properties and may be of mixed use. Within each use category are multiple subcategories that more specifically identify the nature and time period of buildings and sites that fall into these umbrella categories. This method of organization was designed to facilitate the identification of a property's significance in relation to the context of the background history provided above. This list of associated property types is intended to be suggestive, not restrictive. Every attempt was made to list and describe every type of property that might be associated with this context, but should a property type not covered on this list be discovered to have significance to this context, its absence from this section by no means precludes its eligibility. It should be noted also, that this section speaks primarily of buildings, districts, and some sites because those were the properties of significance identified during this project, but structures and objects are also potentially eligible properties.

Although the properties associated with this context are numerous, not every property connected with African Americans or the African American experience possesses the kind of distinctive significance in association with this context that would qualify it for National Register nomination. It is possible for a property to have had a long association with African Americans without having a demonstrable significance in African American history. The evaluation of any property for the National Register must include a careful consideration of its essential significance to our local, state, or national history. The specific area of significance for which a property associated with this context would be nominated is "Ethnic Heritage: Black." This category is defined by the National Register as, "The history of persons having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa."²³¹ Properties nominated for this area of significance would need to demonstrate a specific role in the themes or events of the African American experience. The above background history provides an overview of that experience to aid in the identification of pertinent themes and events. In some instances an African American property might be more aptly nominated for its significance in another area such as "Agriculture" or "Architecture." In such cases, however, it remains important to record the property's African American associations, and "Ethnic Heritage: Black" may be a secondary area of significance. When nominating properties for "Ethnic Heritage," it is also necessary to identify the specific aspect of the history to which this significance relates by selecting a subcategory such as "Education" or "Health/Medicine." Many, but not all of the below property type designations relate to such subcategories. Function should not be confused with area of significance. For further guidance on selecting areas of significance and other topics related to National Register nomination see the National Register Bulletin *How to Complete the National Register Registration Form* (accessible online at <http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/publications/bulletins/nrb16a/>) and advice from the Louisiana

²³¹ National Register Bulletin 16A, *How to Complete the National Register Registration Form* (Washington, D.C., Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1977), 40.

State Historic Preservation Office at

<http://www.crt.state.la.us/hp/nationalregister/nationalregister101.aspx>.

Each property type below is accompanied by a discussion of actual properties and registration requirements. The individual properties discussed are provided as representative examples of these types within the state; they do not constitute a comprehensive inventory of all such properties. Properties mentioned that are not already listed on the National Register were selected for their value as a basis for discussion. Inclusion in this document does not guarantee that a given property is eligible for the National Register. Such determinations can only be made through the nomination process. More information about any National Register listed property may be found in its nomination, accessible online in the Louisiana National Register Database at <http://www.crt.state.la.us/hp/nationalregister/nhl/searchby.asp>.

In addition to age and significance, a key element in the National Register eligibility of a property is its integrity. In regards to the National Register, integrity refers to the retention of aspects that enable the property to “convey its significance.” The National Register recognizes seven aspects of integrity: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. Because the below described properties are primarily significant under National Register Criterion A for their association with the historical events of the African American Experience in Louisiana, documentation of their role in these events is of great importance, while their physical appearance is less so. In terms of the areas of integrity identified by the National Register, the “association,” “feeling,” “setting” and “location” of African American historic properties in Louisiana is most important, while that of their “design,” “materials”, and “workmanship” is usually less so. In general, a property will possess enough integrity in regards to this context if it can meet the basic litmus test of being easily recognizable to someone who was familiar with it during its historic period of significance. Integrity is discussed specifically in the below examples, when the type requires specific considerations beyond the umbrella qualification of the previous two sentences. For more information regarding integrity and the National Register, see “Evaluating Integrity,” by Patricia L. Duncan, National Register Coordinator, Division of Historic Preservation, available online at http://www.crt.state.la.us/hp/nationalregister/nationalregister101/101_-_Evaluating_Integrity.pdf.

As noted in the introduction, many properties associated with the African American experience were overlooked in the beginning years of historic preservation because the buildings were lacking in distinctive architectural stylistic features and had experienced alterations. There is now a growing recognition that those very characteristics are important pieces of information about the historic patterns with which the properties are associated. The Multiple Property Documentation Form for the “African American Historic Resources of Prince George’s County, Maryland states:

Historic resources associated with African Americans can challenge customary notions of integrity. These resources, which are most often nominated for their associative significance (Criterion A or B), have commonly experienced considerable alteration to their physical fabric. Because of legal restrictions on where African Americans could settle and what spaces they could access, those buildings they did control were often continually adapted and reworked to serve shifting needs. The longer a resource has been associated with African Americans, the greater the likelihood of its physical alteration . . .

. . . Changes that reflect income levels, community values, and individual aesthetic preferences show how buildings and communities evolved. None of these changes should be disconcerting when viewed through the larger lens of understanding the impact of segregation on African American life.²³²

For many resources of the African American Experience in Louisiana “location” remains an important part of their eligibility because of the archaeological potential of the site itself to yield important information about the broader aspects of the African American experience with which the building is associated. Locational placement also speaks to historical patterns of geographical segregation. The importance of the integrity of “setting” varies by property. For some, the integrity of the setting contributes to the integrity of feeling and helps to reinforce the property’s context and significance; for other properties, the fact that the setting has been irreversibly changed should not be an impediment to eligibility as long as the building maintains significant integrity on its own. Specific considerations of integrity for individual property types are discussed in more detail below.

A. Residential

There is probably a greater diversity in residential properties than in any other single type. No matter the time period or the conditions of the individual, every African American in Louisiana resided somewhere, while not everyone always had access to a church or school, or many other types of facilities. At present, the great variety of living arrangements experienced by African Americans in Louisiana is not well-represented on the National Register. There are nine National Register listed residential properties in Louisiana for which “Ethnic Heritage: Black” was selected as an area significance. These are five twentieth century houses associated with significant persons; three antebellum nineteenth century plantation homes; and one home believed to be the eighteenth century residence of notable Free Woman of Color, Marie Thérèse Coincoin.²³³

This array of listings reflects the fact that houses are most often nominated under Criteria B for their association with a significant individual, or under Criterion C for their distinctive architectural characteristics. It is less common for a residential property to be “associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history” as Criterion A requires. Nevertheless, our domestic lives are never wholly separate from the broad social patterns of our times and to neglect to interpret residences as connected to the events of history is to greatly limit our understanding of the past. It would be difficult for us to ever really comprehend the events of history if we could not witness the places where the participants laid their heads at night and the conditions that shaped their lives and actions. In addition, housing conditions are often directly affected by important broad patterns of our history. Just one

²³² Betty Bird, National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form for the African American Historic Resources of Prince George’s County, Maryland. (2003), 49-50.

²³³ Recent archaeological and architectural research indicates that the building of this last property actually postdates Marie Thérèse’s occupation of this property and it therefore is not discussed further in this document. National Park Service, “Maison de Marie Thérèse – Cane River National Heritage Area: A National Register of Historic Places Travel Itinerary,” National Park Service, <http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/travel/caneriver/mai.htm> (accessed February 8, 2012).

example of this is the way that segregation and exclusionary housing policies influenced the domestic situations of African Americans.²³⁴

African American residential properties of the late nineteenth century in Louisiana are completely absent from the National Register, while in addition to the handful of homes of significant individuals, the twentieth century is only represented by a housing project (which was nominated for its significance in the area of “Social History” only, not “Ethnic Heritage”). This is a woefully inadequate representation of an extremely difficult and dynamic period for African Americans in Louisiana. While growing attention to the architecture of rural slavery as demonstrated by scholarly studies and National Register listings of assorted plantation buildings is laudable, it is important that we devote serious attention to the housing of tenancy, sharecropping, and other trends of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It should be possible to effectively argue Criterion A significance for important individual residential properties by thoroughly illustrating the correlation between them and the patterns of social history related to the African American experience. In some cases, such an argument may be strengthened by claiming significance under Criterion C for architecture in tandem. Although many modest vernacular dwellings are commonly thought of as lacking architectural significance, rudimentary construction techniques, rough materials, and simple designs can be very telling architectural features. The following “Residential” subsections provide examples of individual housing types and possible areas of significance for which they may be eligible for National Register listing.²³⁵ Residential properties that may be individually unremarkable, can gain significance in groupings. See the final property type section, “Districts,” for more discussion of this.

1. Slave quarters

a) Urban

As described on page 16 of the historical overview, urban living arrangements for enslaved people were quite varied and have been understudied. The buildings that are primarily identified as urban slave quarters are the multiple-story service buildings behind urban houses. Much more research needs to be done to understand the way in which such buildings were used by enslaved people and to identify other domestic spaces occupied by slaves. Documentation of the use of the building for and by enslaved people is an important aspect of the eligibility of urban slave quarters. It should not and cannot be assumed that every service building housed slaves.

²³⁴ Carole Merritt, *Historic Black Resources: A Handbook for the Identification, Documentation, and Evaluation of Historic African-American Properties in Georgia*, ed. Carolyn S. Brooks (Historic Preservation Section, Georgia Department of Natural resources, 1984), 22; Bird, 60. Bird notes that, “exclusion and segregation extend the associative values attached to domestic architecture within the African American community well beyond the domestic realm associated with this typology in the white community.”

²³⁵ For more discussion of African-American residential properties and National Register eligibility, see Bird, F60-63; Merritt, 12-25; and Elizabeth Calvit, National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form for the African American Historic Resources of Alexandria, Virginia, (1994), updated by Francine Bromberg and Barbara B. Ballentine (2001), F19-20

Examples of residential spaces for enslaved people in New Orleans can be seen at the Hermann-Grima and Gallier house museums. The quarters for enslaved people at the Hermann-Grima House is a three-story, free-standing building, while that at the Gallier House is a two story wing attached to the main house (Figures 1 & 2). These are instructive examples because research has actually been conducted at these museums to understand who the enslaved people who inhabited these spaces were and what conditions accompanied their existence here.²³⁶ The ages and names of enslaved people and the number occupying a property at one time help to shape a narrative about the African American experience in relation to such buildings. Other illuminating details come from inventories of furnishings and acts of purchases and sales of enslaved people. The latter enable us to picture how permanent or temporary an abode the space may have been for an individual and how unpredictable the constant prospect of being sold could have may domestic life. This type of documentation is key to illustrating Criterion A significance. Because of their age and the significant contribution they can make to our understanding of the experience of enslaved African Americans in an urban setting, most urban slave residences that retain enough integrity should be eligible for listing on the National Register. It is presently difficult to know what the actual survival rate of urban slave dwellings is because they have not been specifically surveyed. An urban slave quarter must retain enough of all aspects of integrity to convey its historic appearance and allow for the interpretation of its use by enslaved African Americans to be eligible for association with the theme of this context. Minor changes over time, such as the replacement of windows, are acceptable as long the space still largely conveys its historic feeling and spatial arrangements.



Figure 1: Servants' Quarters, Hermann-Grima House, New Orleans, Orleans Parish.



Figure 2: Servants' Quarters, Gallier House, New Orleans, Orleans Parish.

Because urban slave quarters typically stand in close proximity to a larger dwelling, it may not be logical to nominate such a quarter building individually unless the other building is too void of integrity or otherwise ineligible for the National Register. If a slave quarter of interest is a wing attached to an otherwise ineligible building, the integrity and documentation of the wing would have to be extraordinary in order to nominate the entire building for association with this context. Where slave quarters are part of a larger building or property to be nominated en masse, it is unlikely that Ethnic Heritage: Black could be argued to be the main area of significance, but it could possibly be a contributing Criterion A area of significance along with Criterion C for

²³⁶ Judith Bethea, "The Hermann-Grima House Slave Database" (unpublished report, Hermann-Grima House, New Orleans, LA); Carolyn Bercier, Deputy Director, Museum Administration, Hermann-Grima and Gallier Historic Houses, interview with author, New Orleans, LA, April 13, 2012.

architecture or Criterion B significance. This is true for buildings in which rooms for enslaved people were integrated throughout a multiple-unit dwelling.

b) Rural (see also Enslavement: Plantation complexes)

As described on pages 12-14 of the historical overview, rural slave quarters took many forms. The architecture of a rural slave quarter may contribute to its eligibility because of its ability to inform our understanding of the many different experiences of the enslaved population, but a slave quarter need not be architecturally distinctive to be eligible. While there were thousands of slave quarters across the state at the peak of the antebellum period, the survival rate of these buildings is very low. The rarity of the type renders most rural slave dwellings eligible for the National Register, so long as they retain enough integrity that they would be recognizable to someone from the historic period.

The one major impediment to the eligibility of a slave quarter is a loss of integrity of location and setting. Many slave cabins have been moved in the name of preservation. A quarter that has been relocated will have none of the archaeology of its original site which can aid in its interpretation and augment its potential contribution as a historic resource. Because enslaved people rarely left behind written records that would help us to understand their lives, archaeology is especially important. Studies such as those presented in *Uncommon Ground: Archaeology and Early African America, 1650-1800*, by Leland Ferguson demonstrate the ability of archaeological findings to present otherwise unknowable details about the life of African Americans in enslavement. Rural slave quarters relocated to towns, or with collections of other unrelated buildings will have a severe loss of setting that impairs the resource's ability to convey much beyond its size and materials as a representation of the experience of slavery. Relocated slave cabins would require a greater justification of their significance such as association with a significant event or person. Although not many historically significant enslaved individuals have been identified by scholars as of yet, there definitely existed significant people in slave communities who acted as spiritual leaders, educators, or rebellion activists and there was the rare individual like Solomon Northrup who left a written record of his experience.

As discussed in the background history, slave cabins on larger plantations did not stand alone, but were clustered together forming the collective quarters. Slave cabins which survive in groupings of two or more in their original location are especially remarkable. The most



Figure 3: Slave Quarters, Evergreen Plantation, Wallace, St. John the Baptist Parish.



Figure 4: Slave Quarters, Magnolia Plantation, Derry, Natchitoches Parish.

outstanding collections of slave quarters in the state are the twenty-two frame cabins of Evergreen Plantation in St. John the Baptist Parish and the eight brick slave cabins at Magnolia Plantation in Natchitoches Parish (Figures 3 and 4). These quarters, plus the entire plantation complexes, demonstrate the power of setting to enhance the significance of a single historic resource.

2. Antebellum houses of Free People of Color

a) Urban

The free black population of Louisiana, which was one of the largest in the nation by the end of the antebellum period, contributed significantly to the built heritage of the state. In addition to being property owners who commissioned the construction of homes, many Free People of Color were carpenters, joiners, plasterers, masons, and blacksmiths who built many homes. Despite the number of urban homes attributable to original ownership by Free People of Color, especially in New Orleans, only one individually listed on the National Register was identified during this project. It is possible that there are urban residences of Free People of Color listed on the National Register for their architectural significance under Criterion C with no mention of the association with Free People of Color in their nominations. This is the case for the one identified example. It may also be that individual listing has not been pursued for the many houses of Free People of Color that fall into existing Historic Districts.

In order to be eligible for listing on the National Register, the urban residence of a Free Person of Color should retain the minimum integrity level of being recognizable to someone from the historic period and its role in the life of a Free Person of Color must be well documented. A building associated with a Free Person of Color for just a few years is not likely eligible for this area of significance unless that period contained an important event or unless it is the only surviving building associated with a significant free person of color. There were many noted artists, writers, and business people among Free People of Color and there is good potential for the identification of buildings eligible for their association with these significant individuals and the historical experiences of Free People of Color. Residences may be the only remaining buildings connected to the story of manumission of enslaved people, particularly by self-purchase, and the hard work and challenges they overcame to transition themselves and their families into a free life. Evidence indicates that many urban Free Women of Color built wealth through real estate investments, while other Free People of Color operated their businesses from their homes. Houses were also the potential sites of surreptitious religious or political meetings, or venues for schools, and could be nominated for these associations under Criterion A as well.

Examples of individual houses listed on the National Register for these types of associations with the lives of free blacks are the Mann-Simons Cottage in Columbia, South Carolina and the Denmark Vesey House in Charleston, South Carolina.²³⁷ The Mann-Simons Cottage, the home of a professional midwife named Celia Mann was constructed c. 1850. The congregation of the First Calvary Baptist Church, one of the first black churches in the area, of which Mann was a founding member, met in the house. Mann's son-in-law, Bill Simons was a noted musician. This building was nominated for its significance in the areas of Ethnic Heritage, Religion, and Music. The Denmark Vesey House was named a National Historic Landmark for its significance

²³⁷ Beth Savage, *African American Historic Places* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1994), 434-436, 451.

as the home and meeting place of Denmark Vesey, who meticulously organized a slave insurrection in 1822 that could have changed history. The plot was discovered before the actual rebellion commenced and Vesey was sentenced to death, but the panic it caused was an event in of itself.

Examples of the types of houses that could potentially be eligible for the National Register for their association with Free People of Color in Louisiana are the 1810-1812 Julie Bonner Foucher House, the c. 1825 Rosette Rochon House, and the 1823 Helen LePage House built by the free black carpenter Pierre Roup in New Orleans (Figures 5-7). This sampling demonstrates the variety of styles and sizes to be found among residences associated with Free People of Color. The Julie Bonne Foucher House, which presently houses a daiquiri and pizza place, also demonstrates the kind of interior loss of integrity that inhibits a property's ability to convey its historic associations and is likely to eliminate its potential eligibility. Although architecture is secondary to the association with Free People of Color in the eligibility of these houses, distinctive aspects of the architecture interpreted from a material culture standpoint may be able to contribute to an eligibility argument. As with all types of buildings, the finer and better constructed houses of Free People of Color have been more likely to survive than their more rudely constructed, vernacular peers. Therefore, the rarity of the later would contribute to their eligibility.

The one urban house already listed on the National Register which was identified during this project as being of note for its association with the African American Experience in Louisiana is the 1853 Heaton House (Figure 8). Although now located on a rural site, the home was originally built in the town of Franklin and is a very rare example of the architecture of Alexander Jackson Davis as published in A. J. Downing's *The Architecture of Country Houses*. Just a year after its construction, it was purchased by Free Man of Color George Runk, and generations of the Runk family continued to live in the home until the mid-twentieth century. When considered in its historical context, the purchase of this house in 1854 by George Runk is notable in a couple of regards. The 1850s was a time of prosperity for Louisiana and that is reflected in the high style design and comfortable size of the house. The fact that George Runk purchased the house demonstrates that the wealth of the period was not limited to the white population, but shared in by the free black population. At the same time, however, this was also



Figure 5: Julie Bonne Foucher House, New Orleans, Orleans Parish.



Figure 6: Rosette Rochon House, New Orleans, Orleans Parish.



Figure 7: Helen LePage House, New Orleans, Orleans Parish.

a period of mounting violence against Free People of Color as whites sought to defend slavery on the basis of racism. The Runk's first years in this standout house coincided with cusp of the Civil War when many Free People of Color were trying to keep a low profile or moving abroad to avoid persecution. After the Civil War, many formerly wealthy African Americans lost their assets and property, but the Runk family continued to live in their antebellum home well into the twentieth century. It is likely that in-depth research of the Runk family history would reveal a story reflecting the broader social and political developments that influenced the African American experience in Louisiana. The building therefore could be significant not just for its architecture, but for its association with a century of the experience of an African American family in Louisiana.



Figure 8: Heaton House, Baldwin vicinity, St. Mary Parish.

b) Rural

The eligibility requirements for rural houses of Free People of Color are the same as those discussed for urban dwellings above: they should be easily recognizable to someone from the historic period and their association with Free People of Color must be well documented. Also as above, architecture may be interpreted as a contributing aspect of an argument, but the simplest building may possess greater significance in this context than the highly stylized one. There are three examples of residences on the National Register which were nominated in part for their association with Free People of Color.

There are two National Register properties associated with the well-known family of Free People of Color, the Metoyers of the Cane River. Maison de Marie Therese has long been believed to have belonged to the family's matriarch, however recent archaeology indicates that the house was built after her period of residence on the property. The two main houses of Melrose Plantation, known in the Metoyers' day as Yucca Plantation, however are well-documented as having been built for and lived in by the Metoyers (Figures 9 and 10). As was recognized in its National Register and National Historic Landmark nominations, this property is very significant as that of Free People of Color who were large land owners and slave holders. In addition to the buildings, the site holds tremendous archaeological potential. One of the plantation's buildings known as the "Africa House" was previously thought to derive its design from



Figure 9: Melrose Plantation, Big House, Melrose, Natchitoches Parish



Figure 10: Melrose Plantation, Yucca House, Melrose, Natchitoches Parish.

African architectural antecedents, however more recent scholarship has noted that it shares much in common with certain rural agricultural buildings of France and is more likely connected to that building tradition. In spite of this, there may well be African architectural elements of the property influenced by Marie Thérèse dit Coincoin that have yet to be recognized and explored.

The Carter House is significant as the house of the first African American property owner of Livingston Parish (Figure 11). Whereas the Metoyers were a part of the Creole region of the Cane River, the Carter House is located in the Anglo Florida Parishes of the state.

Thomas Freeman is believed to have built the house c. 1820 and have lived in it until 1838 with his family. The National Register nomination for the property stated that he was a large landowner like the Metoyers, but did not indicate whether he was a slaveholder as well. There were some well-established farming families who were not slaveholders.



Figure 11: Carter House, Springfield, Livingston Parish.

The Sorapurus of St. John the Baptist Parish built a substantial Creole house c. 1825 in which they continued to reside into the twentieth century, but do not appear on the parish's 1860 census of slaveholders (Figure 12). Their house is extremely significant for its ability to represent, not just the antebellum life of Free People of Color, but also the late-nineteenth and early twentieth century lifestyle of an African American family. In the twentieth century, adjustments – like the creation of two separate kitchens – were made to accommodate two separate contingents of



Figure 12: Sorapuru House, Lucy, St. John the Baptist Parish.

the family within the house. Such changes do not detract from the integrity and significance of the house, but rather enhance it. A well-documented family history and the retention of family furnishings and ephemera in their original setting further adds to the property's ability to convey its associations with over a century of the African American experience in Louisiana and renders it an exceptional cultural resource. At the time of the property's nomination under Criterion C for architecture, it was stated that the Sorapurus may be important enough in the history of St. John the Baptist Parish to justify nominating their home on historical grounds, but that not enough information to support that case was available at that time. It is certain, that an additional argument for eligibility for its association with the African American experience in Louisiana could now be made for the Sorapuru House.

3. Late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century urban residences

a) Houses (see also Educational and Political)

Several early twentieth-century urban residences have been recognized by the National Register for their association with significant African-American individuals (see Educational, Professional and Artistic, and Political categories for examples), but none for associations with the broader patterns of events of the African American experience in Louisiana. African American urban residences of late nineteenth-century Louisiana are not represented on the National Register at all. The greater numbers of extant late-nineteenth and twentieth century residences can make it more difficult to argue significance than for their rarer antebellum counterparts, however arguments for significance within the context of the African American Experience in Louisiana can and must be made. The dynamic history of Africans Americans in Louisiana from Reconstruction, through the Jim Crow era, to the Civil Rights movement, provides a framework to delineate many associations of significance.

Very modest urban houses built for freed people shortly after the Civil War may be significant for their illustration of the transition to a free life. During Reconstruction, numerous leaders emerged in the African American community and often their houses may be the surviving resources with the greatest connection to their lives. The home of C. C. Antoine in Shreveport is listed on the National Register for this association (see section J. Political). An example of a potentially National Register eligible house of a less renowned late nineteenth to early twentieth century community leader is John Gideon Lewis' home in Natchitoches (Figure 13). Lewis was Grand Master of the M. W. Eureka Grand Lodge and an important community leader for whom a school was later named. The quality of his house hints at his position in the community.



Figure 13: John G. Lewis House, Natchitoches, Natchitoches Parish.

As segregation permeated life in Louisiana and African Americans were more and more restricted in the places they could go, houses served many functions. While churches often provided the venue for many community activities, houses too might shelter meetings and important social gatherings, and also acted as boarding houses and restaurants for travelers in the Jim Crow era. The use of residential properties for commercial purposes in the context of Jim Crow is deeply telling of the extent to which segregation affected everyday African American life. When African Americans traveled away from home it could be very difficult to find a place to stay or eat a meal among other things. Because of these circumstances, a national travel guide called *The Negro Motorist Green Book* was developed in 1937 with the specific goal of keeping the African-American traveler “from running into difficulties, embarrassments and to make his trips more enjoyable.” “Tourist Homes” were one type of facility listed in this guide. These were private homes offering rooms for travelers. Among those offering accommodations to travelers in Louisiana were S. A. Wilson in Mansfield, Mrs. F. Livaudais in New Orleans, and B. Giron in

Opelousas.²³⁸ A private home used for such extra-residential purposes because of segregation is potentially eligible for the National Register if that use can be well documented and established as a product of the exclusion of African Americans from other facilities in the area. Such a residential property would also have to convey its significance in this regard by being recognizable to a visitor from its historic period, and retaining its location.

Exceptionally large and stylish residences should be eligible as symbols of African Americans' ability to excel and succeed in a social situation that put every impediment before them. An example of such a building is the S. W. Green House of 1928 in New Orleans (Figure 14). S. W. Green was the son of a former slave, an extremely successful businessman, and a community leader and his wife, Laurenia was involved with the NAACP. The Greens' seventeen-room, craftsman style mansion was designed by the renowned architectural firm of Weiss, Dreyfous, and Seiferth. Such a home would have been an expected symbol of success for a white businessman of this era, but to white supremacists, it was unacceptably ostentatious for a black man and part way through construction, the Ku Klux Klan attempted to burn the structure. Undeterred, or perhaps, even more determined to complete his dream house, Green resumed construction in the face of such threatening hatred.²³⁹ Recently threatened again by construction of the LSU/VA hospital complex, the home has been relocated and awaits preservation. Historic African-American houses such as Green's are rare because of the obstacles both to building wealth and displaying it. They could become rarer still if not identified and protected in the case of new construction projects like the LSU/VA hospital. One similar house in New Orleans, the 1925 Henry E. Braden House was documented by for the Historic American Buildings Survey before its removal for the building of a new post office on Louisiana Avenue.



Figure 14: S. W. Green House, New Orleans, Orleans Parish.

Of the many sectors of life in which African Americans achieved great individual significance, music (and particularly jazz) is of special import to the cultural legacy of Louisiana and New Orleans. The homes of notable African American musicians may be eligible for the National Register if they are the only building connected with the individual or most associated with a significant period in their lives. The Preservation Resource Center of New Orleans has worked to identify the homes of jazz legends. An example of a successfully identified and preserved musician's house



Figure 15: Kid Ory House, New Orleans, Orleans Parish.

²³⁸ *The Negro Motorist Green Book: An International Travel Guide*, 1949 ed. (New York: Victor H. Green & Co., 1949), 1, 32-33.

²³⁹ Kenneth Bryant, "A Crucial Piece of Black History Faces the Wrecking Ball," *Inside the Footprint*, New Orleans, Louisiana.; Documenting the Lower Mid-City Footprint of the Proposed LSU-VA Hospital, <http://insidethefootprint.blogspot.com/2010/09/guest-piece-crucial-piece-of-black.html> (accessed January 31, 2011).

significant to the African American experience is the c. 1890 Kid Ory House (Figure 15). Kid Ory grew up in the cane country of St. John the Baptist Parish, but built his early career in New Orleans before moving to Los Angeles. In 1922, his was the first African American jazz band make a recording. His New Orleans house is associated with the important formative years of his career and his influence on other prominent local musicians like Louis Armstrong, Buddy Bolden, King Oliver, and Jelly Roll Morton.

b) Multi-unit Residences

Another type of housing unit of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries which could be eligible for the National Register is the multi-unit residence such as an apartment building, tenement, or housing project. It would be difficult to argue eligibility for such a property for its association with a single significant individual. Multi-unit residences are more likely to be potentially eligible for their representation of social constructs like segregation and socio-economic and labor-related trends. One example of a National Register listed multi-unit residence is the Magnolia Street Housing Project (Figure 16), built in 1941 strictly for African Americans. This property is significant for its association with the early low-income housing programs instituted by the Federal Government, but it also represents the use of Federal funds to completely segregate and isolate African Americans in a large scale residential complex. As housing projects have come to be viewed as a failed social program, they are being demolished across the country. In New Orleans, Magnolia Street (later C. J. Peete) is one of many projects demolished in recent years; however one housing unit and the administration building have been saved and preserved to tell this piece of history.



Figure 16: Magnolia Street Housing Project, New Orleans, Orleans Parish.

4. Late nineteenth and early-twentieth-century rural residences

The late nineteenth and early-twentieth century story of rural African Americans in Louisiana is primarily the story of sharecropping and tenancy in the cotton regions and wage labor in the sugar region. These agricultural labor systems had a profound effect on generations of African Americans, but the historical significance of the buildings associated with them has been largely overlooked. Typically erected with minimum input of labor and materials, the homes of non-landholding farmers were not built to last, so their survival rate is low. Because of their crude craftsmanship and use of salvaged or cheap ready-made materials, they can be a challenge to appreciate architecturally. In addition, their relative youngness compared to the similarly small and vernacular slave dwellings has made them less valued.

A different perspective must be cultivated to recognize the importance of tenant, sharecropper, and wage laborer houses. They have tremendous potential to inform us about the transition from slavery to freedom, and the transformation of the rural landscape. In addition, research for this project discovered that as the agricultural systems changed in the 1940s, some African Americans' occupancy of their homes was terminated by a sudden eviction. In 1949, the new owner of Oakley plantation gave aging tenants ten days to find somewhere else to live. That new

owner was the State of Louisiana, which had acquired the property as a new historic site. Unfortunately this is not an isolated case of displacement, nor of displacement coupled with a misguided preservation agenda. Such events are irreversible, but some dignity can be returned to disregarded farmers by preserving their history now.

Because of their under appreciation and the fragility of their construction, houses of both white and black landless farmers are among our most threatened architectural resources. Therefore any small farmer's house should be eligible for the National Register if it remains recognizable to someone from its period of significance. In order to be eligible for its association with the African American experience, there must be clear documentation of the residency of an African

American family. As with slave quarters, location and setting are important integrity qualifiers in the eligibility of tenant, sharecropper, and wage laborer houses. They are intimately connected to their site, to the surrounding agricultural landscape and other buildings, and to potential archaeology with may qualify a property for listing under Criterion D. Studies such as Laurie Wilkie's *Creating Freedom: Material Culture and African American Identity at Oakley Plantation, Louisiana, 1840-1950* demonstrate

how much the archaeology of postbellum agricultural workers houses can reveal about the subtle cultural and economic shifts between slavery and free life. This study is also evidence of the imperiled nature of these buildings, because a featured house of the book, which was published in 2000, has already been lost to the deteriorating mechanisms of nature. The homes of landless farmers gain even greater significance when they appear in groupings because they represent a larger cross-section of the population. Clusters of such buildings can demonstrate the proximity in which people in these situations lived to one another. Documentation of the history of groups of houses is likely to depict the patterns of familial and neighborly interdependence that sustained landless farming families through great hardships. Houses in McNutt, Rapides Parish and on the Jones property in Natchitoches Parish are extant examples of these increasingly rare kinds of house groupings (Figures 17-19).



Figure 17: House, MsNutt, Rapides Parish.



Figure 18: Houses, McNutt, Rapides Parish.

It should be noted that antebellum dwellings should also be considered as possessing significance for their association with landless farmers. For example, Evergreen Plantation's row of slave cabins were built in the



Figure 19: Houses, Jones property, Bermuda vicinity, Natchitoches Parish.

1830s and therefore used as the residences of slaves for approximately thirty years. The same cabins were resided in by families of landless farm laborers up until the 1940s. Tenancy therefore represents eighty years of the historic use of these buildings as opposed to thirty years of enslavement. Likewise, photographs taken for the Historic American Buildings Survey in the 1930s chanced to document impoverished African American families living in the big houses of antebellum plantations. The stories of these families add to the historic continuum of these buildings, expanding their period of significance, and should be considered in the nomination process.

The twentieth century story of Thomastown in Madison Parish is one of displacement. In recent years, projects of the New Deal have been looked back on in a fairly positive light, but a little known story of the Farm Security Administration's (FSA) Resettlement Projects involves government imposed eviction and segregation of African American farmers. In Louisiana, it happened at Transylvania where African American families were suddenly uprooted to make way for a new FSA settlement for white families. Transylvania residents did not go quietly; they wrote letters and enlisted the support of national organizations like the NAACP. But even faced with national African American opposition and negative publicity, the government proceeded with its plans. Residents who could qualify for a piece of land in the new African American Resettlement Project were moved some sixty miles to the south to Thomastown, or LaDelta Farms as the project was also known. Others who could not qualify had to find other places to live. The fragment of the Transylvania community that made it to Thomastown, managed to make a success of their new life and the settlement thrived in the 1940s and 1950s, but little of it remains of it today. The school was long ago demolished and its mid-century replacement stands vacant and deteriorating. Original houses of Thomastown resettlement community have understandably been expanded and remodeled, but there is one surviving house which retains obvious material integrity. It compares favorably with a FSA photograph by Marion Post Wolcott of it, or an identical home, just after construction (Figures 20 and 21). As a testament



Figure 20 : House, Thomastown, Madison Parish.



Figure 21: "Home of FSA client. La Delta Project, Thomastown, Louisiana." Photograph by Marion Post Wolcott. Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, FSA-OWI Collection, [LC-USF34-053790-D DLC.]

to the ongoing struggle of African Americans in this part of rural Louisiana from slavery, to tenancy and sharecropping, to federal resettlement, this building is an example of a rural twentieth-century house that could potentially be National Register eligible for its associations with this context.²⁴⁰

Although wage laboring, sharecropping and tenancy are a large part of the rural history of African Americans, they are not the only story. Some African Americans, especially those who were free before the Civil War, were able to attain or retain some wealth and land and build more comfortable and substantial farmhouses. There were also community leaders, religious leaders, and educators who were very significant in their rural communities and whose homes may be eligible for the National Register. Eligibility for such properties depends upon clear documentation of association with the individual and that individual's role in the community and the retention an easily recognizable historic appearance. Location and setting are important aspects of integrity for rural residences, but loss of either may be able to be justified depending on other factors of significance and integrity. Rural residences may also be significant for extra-residential uses as described above in the urban residence section.

B. Enslavement (beyond the quarters)

While slave quarters were residential in purpose and therefore discussed in the above residential property type section, there are many other property forms that most directly served the purpose of supporting the system of enslavement and were created and controlled by slave owners or traders. This section was created to encompass those buildings or collections of buildings. Without recognition of these properties, the African American experience of slavery remains obscured.

1. Plantation Complexes

Slave quarters represent the habitation experience of the enslaved population, but the broader experience of slavery is better understood through intact plantation complexes that retain multiple building types. Examples of such National Register-listed plantations are Evergreen, as described in previous section; Oakland Plantation, which includes a cook's house, two slave quarters, a doctor's house, an overseer's house, a stables, a barn, and other buildings; Magnolia Plantation in Natchitoches Parish, which includes eight slave cabins, a slave hospital, and a cotton gin house. These plantations were nominated to the National Register for their architectural and agricultural significance, but are clearly also significant for their association with the African American experience of enslavement. All three properties are not only listed on the National Register, but have been designated National Historic Landmarks, as outstanding representations of plantation complexes in the southern United States. Another plantation, Canebrake, was listed on the National Register not only for its significance as a rare surviving plantation complex, but as an example of the unique circumstance of absentee ownership that existed in Concordia Parish. Plantations in this area were mostly run by overseers while the owners lived across the Mississippi River in the town of Natchez, Mississippi. Due to this arrangement, typical plantation complexes in Concordia Parish included an overseer's house of

²⁴⁰ A more detailed history of the Transylvania resettlement can be found in: Jane Adams and D. Gorton, "This Land Ain't My Land: The Eviction of Sharecroppers By the Farm Security Administration," *Agricultural History* 83, no. 3 (Summer 2009): 323-351; John H. Scott with Cleo Scott Brown, *Witness to the Truth: My Struggle for Civil Rights in Louisiana* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2003).

the size and proximity to the quarters often found on plantation, but without the owner's big house. Canebrake's ensemble of overseer's house, six slave cabins, a chicken house and a barn nicely demonstrated the absentee owner plantation complex configuration. Today, however, only the overseer's house remains. The fact that a National Register property experienced the loss of all of its ancillary buildings after its listing emphasizes the rarity and vulnerability of plantation complexes. Because of their rarity, any plantation with multiple surviving slave cabins and outbuildings should be eligible for the National Register as long as most of the buildings remain in their original location and retain sufficient integrity to convey their historic appearance.

2. Big Houses

While big houses were a central feature of most plantation complexes, their association with the African American experience may be less obvious than that of slave cabins and other plantation buildings. However, domestic slaves frequented big houses to execute their duties and were as much a part of the daily routines of the house as the planter's family members. Plantation big houses are more likely to be nominated to the National Register for their architectural significance; however there may be instances when a big house may be documented as having a significant role in the life of one or more African Americans that can be associated with the larger theme of the "African American Experience in Louisiana." An example of this is the association of the Epps House with the life of Solomon Northup (Figure 22). Northup was a free man of New York, but was captured by a slave trader and brought to Louisiana. When eventually freed again, he recorded his experience in a narrative published under the title *Twelve Years a Slave*. This seminal piece of American literature is a rare book-length firsthand account of slavery. The last ten years of Northup's enslavement were spent on the plantation of Edwin Epps and the Epps House itself figured into the circumstances that led to Northup's release. It was while assigned to construction of a house that Northup met a carpenter who helped to secure his release. Although the Epps House has now endured two moves from its original location and some loss of material integrity, its association with Northup's experience that it retains its National Register eligibility. As significant an association with the African American experience as that of the Epps House is likely to be rare for most big houses, but good documentation is the key to an eligibility argument for any resources of this type. Big houses must retain a recognizable appearance from their period of significance to have potential National Register eligibility. Although outstanding significance overwhelmed the loss of location and setting in the case of the Epps house, these aspects of integrity would be important eligibility factors for most big houses claiming significance for association with the African American experience.



Figure 22: Edwin Epps House, campus of LSU at Alexandria, Rapides Parish.

3. Overseer's Houses

Just as there were African-American slaveholders, there also were African-American overseers. Like many plantation buildings (as discussed above), overseer's houses are rare. A well-

documented house of an African American overseer would be very rare. None were identified during this project, but it is entirely possible that there are examples in existence. While the ability of enslaved people to create written records was extremely limited by restrictions on their education in the nineteenth century, the keeping of a written journal was almost an essential part of the overseer's job. Although the likelihood of both an overseer's house and the journal of that overseer surviving seems slim, the fact that it is possible is demonstrated by the existence of the 1861 overseer's house at Oakland Plantation as well as overseer Seneca Pace's journal for the year his home was constructed. Seneca Pace was not African American, but if a like pairing of building and journal of an African-American overseer exists, they could offer a tremendous window into a little explored aspect of the African American experience in relation to the history of slavery. It is not necessary for there to be a journal related to the house of an African-American overseer for it to be potentially eligible for the National Register, but other documentation would be necessary to illuminate a significant association of such a building with the African American experience. As with the other buildings discussed in this section, historic appearance location, and setting would be important aspects of integrity for a property of this type. However, there is always the possibility that superior significance and retention of certain aspects of integrity could compensate for the loss of others in the consideration of eligibility.

4. Sugar mill houses

The production of sugar was a key part of the experience of slavery for many African Americans in Louisiana's cane country. Work in the sugar mill was hot, grueling, and dangerous. Though sugar mills dotted the landscape in the antebellum period, almost none survive. The National Register listed sugar mill of Rosalie Plantation in Rapides Parish is an extremely rare intact example of a sugar mill (Figure 23). The only other known surviving antebellum sugar mill house is at Avery Island. Remains of sugar mill houses can be found at Fountainbleau State Park (the former Marigny plantation) in St. Tammany Parish and Woodland Plantation in Plaquemines Parish. Because of their rarity and because understanding work in the sugar mill is essential to understanding the experience of slavery on a sugar cane plantation, sugar mills in any condition should be eligible for the National Register. Those not retaining enough integrity to be recognizable as buildings should be eligible under Criterion D for their archaeological potential.



Figure 23: Rosalie Plantation Sugar Mill House, Alexandria, Rapides Parish.

5. Chapels

As described in the background history and development (pages 15-16), slave chapels provided important places for enslaved people to pursue religious life within their own community and sometimes established the foundation for later congregations. Like other parts of the built environment of slavery, chapels were places where slave owners were both in control and not. They created the buildings and hired the preachers, but the enslaved attached their own meanings and uses to the space. In this way slave chapels are very much representative of the dynamics of slavery and it is for this reason that they are discussed in this property type section rather than under "Religious." The chapel at Live Oaks Plantation, which is listed on the National Register,

is a rare example of this building type (Figure 24). Because of their rarity and their historical social and cultural importance, the eligibility requirements for slave chapels should be very flexible. Most slave chapels, even in poor or altered conditions, should be eligible as long as their original use as a chapel is well documented and the original form is readily discernible.



Figure 24: Live Oaks Plantation Chapel, Rosedale, Iberville.

An exceptional case of a plantation church which could be evaluated for its significance within this context despite the replacement of its building is Rosedown Baptist Church (Figure 25). An enslaved congregation was organized on Rosedown plantation in 1800 and a small praise house was constructed for its use. The church remained active here through the Civil War and even after through the perpetuation by descendants of the original enslaved population who continued to work the plantation as tenants and sharecroppers. The church also survived through the support of the plantation owner. In 1972, however, the owner decided that he wanted the church – originally located among the quarters – moved further away from the main house. At this time a new church was built, but it is



Figure 25: Rosedown Baptist Church, St. Francisville, West Feliciana Parish.

significant that the owner provided a new site on the plantation for its building and that the congregation chose to keep their church on the plantation grounds rather than moving it away like so many other churches that originated on plantations.²⁴¹ The simple brick building that Rosedown Baptist Church now occupies could be dismissed as a modern church disconnected from the former slave chapel. In reality however, the present Rosedown Baptist Church is the legacy of an African American congregation that has worshipped within the same square mile for over two centuries. While the site of the original slave chapel at Rosedown holds archaeological potential associated with this context, it is the modern Rosedown building that embodies the cultural tradition of this African-American Plantation Church that has survived the struggles of enslavement and freedom. It is a symbol of both change and continuity in the plantation landscape and among the people who have inhabited it for at least two centuries. In this way, it has historical significance totally apart from religious doctrine (which is not an accepted theme of significance). Though it would be very difficult to argue the exceptional significance required to nominate the property at just forty years of age, careful consideration of its eligibility should be made when it reaches fifty years of age. Likewise, any other churches in the state with similar legacies should be evaluated within this context, despite the modernity of replacement buildings.

²⁴¹ Durant.

6. Cemeteries

Plantation cemeteries for slaves are notoriously difficult to locate. If they were ever marked in the historical period, those markers were often ephemeral and have long since succumbed to the elements or been overgrown. The expansion of agricultural activities can also obliterate super-surface traces of cemeteries. In rare cases, such as at Rosedown Plantation described above, where the chapel site was said to have a space designated for burial use, historic information may help to understand and identify slave cemeteries. Cemeteries are of obvious cultural significance and burial places of the enslaved should be eligible for the National Register under Criterion A for their association with this context if markers are present above ground or Criteria D for the potential to yield information about enslavement and the enslaved not available from other sources if no markers are present.

7. Slave markets and jails

No slave market sites or jails were identified during the work of this project. Definitive identification of such properties will require intensive archival research, but could produce invaluable information. Slave market and jail sites or buildings should be considered eligible for the National Register under Criterion A or D as long as they retain enough integrity of the site and or building to be recognizable to someone from the historic period or to yield information about this understudied aspect of slavery.

8. Hospitals

Plantation hospitals provide a tangible link to the experience of receiving medical care as an enslaved person in Louisiana. Depending on the plantation, such buildings may have been where women gave birth, workers received treatment for injuries sustained in the sugar mill, and patients recovered from any number of ailments common to the era and circumstances of work on the plantation. Hospitals, like many plantation buildings, are rare and should be eligible for the National Register as long as they would be easily recognizable to someone familiar with the property during its period of significance. Magnolia Plantation (described above) retains an example of a slave hospital (Figure 26).



Figure 26: Hospital, Magnolia Plantation, Derry, Natchitoches Parish.

C. Labor, Agriculture, and Industry

Prior to the Civil War, Free People of Color worked in many occupations in towns and cities throughout the state. The places where Free People of Color operated their businesses have potential National Register eligibility for their association with the entrepreneurship of African Americans during the antebellum period. Such properties would require sound documentation and an easily recognizable historic appearance to be eligible for association with this context. Location and setting are important aspects of integrity for properties of this type.

The transition from enslavement to free labor was a pivotal aspect of the Reconstruction era and set the stage for the experience of African Americans in labor, agriculture, and industry in the coming century. With the advent of Jim Crow, the roles of African Americans in these areas were defined narrowly. Specific themes encompassed by this property type include the formation of African American labor unions, development of tenancy and sharecropping, and the central role of African American workers in the expansion of the lumber industry. No candidates were identified during this project related to early African American labor unions, but it is very likely that associated properties exist which are worthy of documentation and preservation for their significance to this context.

An integral part of sharecropping and tenancy arrangements was the plantation store or commissary. It was here that farming families had to buy their goods at the high prices and interest that prevented most from ever being able to make a profit. While a number of plantation stores, like the one at Oakland Plantation in Natchitoches Parish, survive throughout the state, their eligibility for the National Register for association with this context would depend on clear documentation of the role they played in the experience of African American families. Store account books recording purchases made and interest charged, as well as information regarding the individual families who depended on the store, and particularly, personal narratives or anecdotes from farmers themselves about the store could establish an argument for eligibility in this context. Stores would need to maintain the minimal integrity level of being recognizable to someone from the historic period to be eligible. Their setting and location in a plantation context would also be important contributing eligibility factors.

African Americans who looked outside of agriculture to industry found many jobs in the burgeoning lumber towns of the early twentieth century. Towns like Bogalusa, Louisiana became destinations for new lives, as referenced in the line of James Wiggins' "Evil Woman Blues," ". . . I wanna ride your train from here to Bogalu."²⁴² The housing and facilities of lumber towns were typically segregated by race. In addition to being relegated to different areas, the building forms sometimes varied by race. At the town of Longville, the housing for whites consisted of bungalows, log-pen house and pyramidal houses, while the housing built for blacks included log-pen houses, pyramidal cottages, and two and three-room shotgun houses.²⁴³ Churches, community halls, lodges, school, and saloons known as barrelhouses were among the other building types subject to segregation. According to one source, housing in the town of Fisher, as in other lumber towns, was segregated by race; however the 1979 National Register nomination for the town mentions nothing of segregation.²⁴⁴ Nomination of lumber town buildings for their association with the African American experience would require clear documentation of their historic segregation and role in the African American community. Such properties would also need to maintain a recognizable appearance from their period of significance to be eligible. The level of integrity of location and setting necessary for eligibility would depend on the individual property and the argument for significance. Segregated housing

²⁴² William P. Jones, *The Tribe of Black Ulysses: African American Lumber Workers in the Jim Crow South* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2005), 64.

²⁴³ "Longville Mill Will Be Ideal," *Beaumont Enterprise*, April 29, 1907; "Lumber Plant of Long Leaf Company," *Beaumont Enterprise*, August 4, 1907 cited in W. T. Block, "The Longville, Louisiana Sawmill: Once the Pride of Long-Bell Lumber Company," Calcasieu Parish, <http://usgwarchives.net/la/cacassie/bloock/longvill.htm> (accessed July 9, 2011).

²⁴⁴ Kingsley, 320.

would suffer from a loss of setting while a community facility might retain significance even if relocated.

D. Religious

1. Churches (see also Education and Political categories for churches)

It is widely acknowledged that churches have played a strong central role in the black community. Following the Civil War, churches were among the first buildings African Americans had constructed through their own resources. These buildings sheltered not just religious activities, but also provided the only classroom space available for schools and hosted community gatherings of all kinds. According to the National Register Criterion Consideration A, “properties owned by religious institutions or used for religious purposes” are not considered eligible for the National Register unless they derive their “primary significance from architectural or artistic distinction or historical importance.” Because of the exceptionally important role of the church as an institution in the black community, an argument can be made for the eligibility of most historic black churches for historical importance as long as they maintain a fair level of integrity and their historic role can be documented, discussed, and explained in terms of the specific church candidate. The significance of historic African American churches should also be considered in light of the fact that their central role in the community made them a popular target for racial violence. Some buildings did not survive their historic period because of destruction by arson. Some church buildings may also qualify for the Register based on their architectural distinction. In cases where a church derives its primary significance from its Educational or Political uses, it is considered by this context to belong in one of those respective property type sections.

a) Protestant

Of the five Protestant African American churches in Louisiana presently listed on the National Register (aside from those primarily of political or educational significance), three – St. James AME Church of 1848, in New Orleans, Antioch Baptist Church of 1903, in Shreveport, and St. Mary Congregational of 1905, in Abbeville – were listed solely for their architectural



Figure 27: St. James AME Church, New Orleans, Orleans Parish.



Figure 28: Antioch Baptist Church, Shreveport, Caddo Parish.

significance (Figures 27-29). St. Peter AME Church of 1890, in New Orleans was nominated for significance in the areas of architecture, social history, and ethnic heritage, and St. John Baptist Church, in Dorseyville was nominated for significance in ethnic heritage and exploration and settlement (Figures 30 and 31). The history of St. James AME as outlined in the background history (page 21) would clearly contribute to this building's significance in the areas of social history and ethnic heritage as well. Likewise Antioch Baptist Church which evolved from a congregation formed in 1866 by seventy-three freed people bears significance for social history and ethnic heritage as well as its grand design by architect Nathaniel Sykes Allen. These examples demonstrate that most African American churches eligible for the National Register for their architecture are also likely to eligible for their associations with this context.

On the other hand there are many African American churches that would *not* be considered eligible for the National Register under the area of architecture because of the loss of integrity through changes like new brick facades, but *are* potentially eligible for their associations with this historic context. In the past, such profound alterations as brick veneers were looked upon as destroying the integrity and thus the National Register eligibility of a historic resource. However as our temporal distance from mid-twentieth-century alterations has grown, a new perspective on such changes and potential National Register eligibility has developed. It is now recognized that many alterations themselves reflect the broad historical patterns that are a part of a given resource's significance. The social and economic repression of African Americans in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was often reflected in their buildings of these periods. Modest frame buildings were the standard for African American churches in rural areas during the Jim Crow era. Later, as the Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF) "Historic Rural African-American Churches in Tennessee, 1850-1970" summarizes,

... when new opportunities and freedoms presented themselves in the civil rights years, rural African Americans often moved quickly to add attractive porticoes with columns, to install central air-conditioning and heating, and to add indoor restrooms. This "delayed reaction" to



Figure 29: St. Mary Congregational Church, Abbeville, Vermillion Parish.



Figure 30: St. Peter AME Church, New Orleans, Orleans Parish.



Figure 31: St. John Baptist Church, Dorseyville, Iberville Parish

adding the benefits of modern technology, especially for interior comforts, is both the result of rising incomes for blacks freed from Jim Crow restrictions and the general cultural freedom that it was now permissible to display wealth and accomplishment. It was a natural and logical cultural reaction to decades of Jim Crow's "do's and don'ts," those often unwritten but very effective codes of behavior for southern African Americans.²⁴⁵

The addition of a brick veneer was one of these changes that was considered a great improvement to a building. Brick's permanence as a material endowed churches with the substantial feeling of monuments.

When considering how such changes may detract from or contribute to the eligibility of a historic African American church, a number of factors should be kept in mind. First, alterations that significantly change the appearance of a building must have occurred within the claimed period of significance for the candidate in order not to adversely affect its eligibility. For example, it may be possible to demonstrate that changes that occurred in 1951 to a church with a period of significance that extends to 1962 are a revealing part of the church's history. Whereas, a substantial alteration of a building that occurred in 1985 cannot be discussed in terms of the property's history and would be an impediment to its potential eligibility. When discussing major changes to a building as important parts of its history, it will be helpful to find documentation of how they were perceived at the time of their execution. Often, an improvement campaign which included work such as a new brick veneer, prefabricated steeple, or replacement windows would have been celebrated with a special event. Details about the work and the feelings of the community regarding it may have appeared in church meeting minutes, church bulletins, and newspapers. These types of sources help to depict changes as part of the building's evolution related to its historical associations. A notable fact that can be obtained from historic documents is the identity of craftspersons completing the work. If a brick veneer was applied by brick masons belonging to the congregation, then it can be more closely tied to the development of the church community. When claiming significance under Criterion A, it will also strengthen an argument for changes as part of the significant fabric of the resource if it can be demonstrated that important events in the property's history occurred contemporaneously or after the work. For example, if a brick veneer was applied to a candidate church and then Civil Rights meetings were held in the building, the alteration could clearly be seen as occurring within the continuum of significant events of the property and thereby as a part of its historic material integrity. Furthermore, it is always important to keep in mind how recognizable the property would be to people who witnessed the history that lends the significance to the resource. As much as a brick veneer or a new steeple change a historic church building, if the massing of the building is unaltered and the setting and interior retain a high degree of integrity, it is possible that a person from the historic period would still easily recognize their church. On the other hand, if most of the early material of a building has been dramatically changed, it may be necessary to claim a shorter, later period of significance while discussing the earlier history as background context. Finally, if Criterion C for architecture is being claimed, then any changes must be demonstrated to contribute to the architectural significance of the building.

²⁴⁵ Carroll Van West et al. National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form for Historic Rural African-American Churches in Tennessee, 1850-1970 (1999), F60-61.

Good examples of churches that retain a great deal of material integrity without such major exterior changes and are potentially eligible for architectural as well as historical significance are St. Peter United Methodist of c. 1866 in Donaldsonville and Wesley United Methodist Church of c. 1873 in New Orleans (Figures 32 and 33). In one other scenario of potential eligibility, architecture is intertwined with the African American experience. Ferdinand Rousseve was Louisiana's first licensed black architect. Born in New Orleans in 1904, Rousseve pursued a higher education and professional practice in a specialty rare among African Americans of his era. Upon graduating with a degree in architecture from MIT, he became an educator himself. After returning to Louisiana, he was employed at Southern University and then Xavier University. In his architectural practice, which he maintained at the same time, Rousseve placed an emphasis on religious architecture. Although he designed many different types of buildings, among the list of his nineteen known built designs are six churches. One of his more notable buildings is the Greater Tulane Baptist Church in New Orleans (Figure 34). For the PhD he received from Harvard in 1948, Rousseve focused on the religious architecture of the Romanesque church of St. Martial in Limoges, France.²⁴⁶ The churches he designed are significant for their association with the career of Louisiana's first licensed black architect. In order to be eligible for this association, churches would have to retain a high level of integrity of their design. But it is possible that some loss of integrity might be tolerable if the church had historical significance for its role in the black community as described above. Rousseve himself is quoted as saying, "I have a strong conviction that it is our individual and collective duty to make our communities better places in which to live."²⁴⁷ It is likely that he hoped the buildings he was



Figure 32: St. Peter United Methodist Church, Donaldsonville, Ascension Parish.



Figure 33: Wesley United Methodist Church, New Orleans, Orleans Parish.



Figure 34: Greater Tulane Baptist Church, New Orleans, Orleans Parish.

²⁴⁶ Dreck Spurlock Wilson, *African-American Architects: A Biographical Dictionary, 1865-1945* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 361-63.

²⁴⁷ Ibid.

commissioned to design would play important roles in improving their communities.

b) Catholic

The above dialogue pertaining to eligibility requirements for Protestant churches also applies to Catholic churches. To that, should be added the fact that Catholicism was the first European religion to which Africans in Louisiana were introduced and therefore has played an important role in the lives of many people of African descent in Louisiana. While in the rest of the country, African Americans are a small minority of Catholics that is not the case in Louisiana. Examples of Catholic churches that are potentially eligible for their association with the African American Experience in Louisiana are St. Augustine Church of 1841 in New Orleans, Holy Ghost Catholic Church of 1923 in Marksville, and St. Catherine of Sienna Catholic Church of 1926 in Donaldsonville (Figures 35-37). Each of these churches maintains high levels of integrity of design, materials, and craftsmanship. The history of St. Augustine Church in New Orleans and its significance with this context is described in the Background History and Development section (page 20). The histories of St. Catherine of Sienna Catholic Church and Holy Ghost Catholic Church are interesting in that, unlike many of the Protestant churches described above that housed schools or later had schools built on their site, these two churches followed behind the building of associated schools. The Holy Ghost school was opened in 1917 by the Daughters of the Cross with funds from Katherine Drexel, a wealthy white Philadelphian who contributed to many schools for African Americans across the south. The school of St. Catherine of Sienna Catholic Church, originally called the St. Augustine School, was established in 1885 by the Sisters of the Holy Family, the African American religious order organized at St. Augustine Church in New Orleans.



Figure 35: St. Augustine Catholic Church, New Orleans, Orleans Parish.



Figure 36: Holy Ghost Catholic Church, Marksville, Avoyelles Parish.



Figure 37: St. Catherine of Sienna Catholic Church, Donaldsonville, Ascension Parish.

E. Educational

1. Schools and associated buildings

As described in the Background History and Development, the story of African American education in Louisiana was one of segregation until desegregation of schools finally began in 1960. Therefore, every school that served black students prior to that year was an integral part of the African American Experience in Louisiana. In spite of all of the restrictions African Americans managed to receive education in many different environments before they were accepted into an integrated public system. Yet this history is not well represented by standing buildings. Some of the most significant buildings, like that of the *Institution Catholique* founded by Marie Couvent, are no more. Because of the scarcity of built resources and the importance of education in the African American experience, schools need only retain the minimal level of integrity of being easily recognizable to someone from their historic period in addition to good documentation of their function as a school for African Americans to be potentially eligible for the National Register. Location and setting are desirable aspects of eligibility for schools. It is possible for a school to be relocated and retain eligibility, but generally it must remain relatively close to the community it served. A school moved across a parish line would typically not be eligible unless students from the new parish also had attended it or it could be argued to have a broader regional significance. Below are examples of potentially eligible or already listed schools organized by the institutions or funders with which they were associated.

a) Catholic

As detailed in above sections, the Catholic Church was a primary provider of education in Louisiana for both black and white residents. The first organized educational opportunity for people of African descent in Louisiana was provided by the Ursuline nuns in 1727. Although the first buildings in which the Ursulines taught did not survive the eighteenth century, their 1753 convent did and stands today as the oldest building in New Orleans' Vieux Carré, its peers having succumb to fires (Figure 38). As such, it is of course quite significant and is listed on the National Register as well as being designated a National Historic Landmark for its architectural significance, but it is important to note its value as a part of the African American experience. This is true even more so because only one other antebellum building associated with the theme of education and the African American experience was identified during this project. The Badin-Roque House in Natchitoches Parish is listed on the National Register for its architectural significance as a very rare example of a *poteaux-en-terre* (posts-in-ground) house (Figure 39). Though built as a private residence, it became the school of St. Augustine Catholic Church in the late



Figure 38: Old Ursulines Convent, New Orleans, Orleans Parish.



Figure 39: Badin-Roque House, Natchez, Natchitoches Parish.

1850s, serving free children of color. It later returned to being a private home again. Though it was used as a school for a relatively short period of time, this use of Badin-Roque House as a school by the Free People of Color of Isle Brevelle is a significant part of the story of the education of African Americans in the antebellum period. If any of the private residences used for private academies for Free People of Color in the antebellum period or any space clearly documented to have been used by slaves for educational purposes should be discovered, it would be very significant.

In the late nineteenth century the Catholic Church realized the necessity of providing for the education of African Americans and many historic documents record the opening of Catholic schools specifically for African American boys or girls, but again, few survive. Two of the rare extant Catholic schools for African Americans of the late nineteenth century are Rock Chapel of 1891 in DeSoto Parish and St. Joseph's School of 1892 in Ascension Parish (Figures 40 and 41). The Rock Chapel was built by Carmelite friars for their ministry to the African American population and they used it as a school during the week. Its operation was short lived, however, as the friars left in 1897 following white opposition to their education mission.²⁴⁸ St. Joseph's School for boys was founded in 1867, but in 1890 a tree fell on the building. Its replacement, the present building, was constructed with a grant from the philanthropist Katherine Drexel. It is an exceptionally well-built school of its period, a fact to which it no doubt owes its continued existence. Originally, it held two classrooms. Although it was previously listed on the National Register, it was delisted because it had become part of a fake setting that never existed historically as the owner moved numerous historic, but unrelated buildings onto the site.



Figure 40: Rock Chapel, Carmel, DeSoto Parish.



Figure 41: St. Joseph's School, Burnside, Ascension Parish.

Examples of early twentieth century Catholic schools listed on the National Register are Holy Rosary Institute of 1913 and Our Lady of Assumption School of 1934, both in Lafayette Parish (Figures 42 and 43). The Holy Rosary Institute was founded as a school for the vocational and technical training of black women in the tradition of Booker T. Washington and also served as a Normal school for



Figure 42: Holy Rosary Institute, Lafayette, Lafayette Parish.

²⁴⁸ Kingsley, 366.

training teachers, and as a high school. From the beginning, it was staffed by Sisters of the Holy Family. It is presently in a condition that imperils its future existence. Our Lady of Assumption was another one of the many Louisiana schools for African Americans operated with funding assistance from Mother Katherine Drexel.



Figure 43: Our Lady of Assumption School, Carencro, Lafayette Parish.

b) Protestant Church Associated

The Louisiana public school system of the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century was woefully underfunded and with the additional strain of running separate systems for white and black students was not able to provide quality educational facilities for either. The two systems being anything but equal, African Americans of course received the lesser of the inadequate provisions. In the quasi-public system that developed, the meager school board support in the form of money, textbooks, or a teacher was supplemented by the community who provided the school facilities and any necessity not provided by the state. Particularly in rural areas, these facilities often ended up being the building that functioned as the heart of the community – the church. Students took their lessons on the same benches – typically made by community members – that served the church on Sundays. Whereas Catholic schools offered religious instruction, it was common for a Protestant church to house a completely secular quasi-public school. Examples of this phenomena listed on the National Register are Clear Creek AME Church of c. 1910 in East Feliciana Parish and St. Paul Baptist Church/ Moorhead School of 1910 in Allen Parish (Figures 44 and 45). Both of these churches retain very rural settings that contribute greatly to their historic feeling and overall integrity. Clear Creek AME Church is in a deteriorated condition. It appears to be suffering from a long term roof leak that has caused the loss of part of the floor and if not abated could do further damage. This highlights the tenuous existence of these types of properties, even when listed on the National Register. Although so many church-based schools were not



Figure 44: Clear Creek AME Church, Felixville, East Feliciana Parish.



Figure 45: St. Paul Baptist Church / Moorhead School, Kinder vicinity, Allen Parish.



Figure 46: St. Paul Lutheran Church, Mansura, Avoyelles Parish.

religious, there were some parochial Protestant schools for African Americans. Such schools tended to be better funded and offered a higher quality educational experience. A National Register listed example of this type of school is St. Paul Lutheran of 1916 in Avoyelles Parish (Figure 46).

c) Rosenwald/ Rosenwald-type

Aside from facilities built by religious organization, the best quality school buildings for African Americans in Louisiana, especially in rural areas, were built with the support of the Rosenwald Fund and/ or were based on the foundation's school plans. Of 393 Rosenwald schools built in Louisiana between 1914 and 1932, only three recognizable survivors are known to the State Historic Preservation Office. All three are listed on the National Register: Longstreet Rosenwald School of 1923 and Community Rosenwald School of 1928-29 in DeSoto Parish, and Plaisance School of 1920 in St. Landry Parish. Both the DeSoto Parish schools are based on a two-teacher plan while the Plaisance School is a four-teacher plan (Figures 47-49). Another possible two-teacher Rosenwald School building, converted into a residence, was observed in Ouachita Parish during this project, but no further information is known about it at this time. Based on the survival rate of Rosenwald schools in other states, it is very likely that there are other survivors that have yet to be brought to the attention of the Division of Historic Preservation and be documented. There are two excellent online resources which can aid in the identification of any extant Rosenwald schools in the state. Rosenwald School plans can be found on the "History South" website

(<http://historysouth.org/schoolplans.html>).

Familiarity with these plans greatly facilitates the recognition of standing examples. Fisk

University's Rosenwald Fund Card File Database (<http://rosenwald.fisk.edu/?module=search>) is searchable by parish and includes photographs of many schools at the time of their construction and details such as numbers of teachers and total cost; though unfortunately not specific locations. This information can be a great help in confirming the identity of a suspected school building or gaining more information about a known property.



Figure 47: Longstreet Rosenwald School, Longstreet, DeSoto Parish.



Figure 48: Community Rosenwald School, Grand Cane vicinity, DeSoto Parish.



Figure 49: Plaisance Rosenwald School, Plaisance, St. Landry Parish.

There were also instances where communities used their own resources to construct schools based on Rosenwald plans without receiving actual funding from the foundation. Such schools would not have been included among the 393 enumerated by the foundation. Though not Rosenwald schools in this sense, they are being categorized as Rosenwald-type schools for the purposes of this context and are still significant for communities' use of the foundation's



Figure 50: Central Agricultural School, Donaldsonville, Ascension Parish.

plans and ability to construct schools of this quality without the assistance of Rosenwald funding. An example of this is the Central Agricultural School of c. 1929, originally located in St. James Parish (Figure 50). Records indicate that the Rosenwald foundation did allocate funds for this school, but later required the school board to return them because they had not been distributed to the community.²⁴⁹ In this case it seems that the African American community, when denied the promised funds, prevailed in building a Rosenwald plan school with their own resources. While the Rosenwald school building program was extremely significant, this type of community effort must be seen as equally so.

In order to be eligible for the National Register either Rosenwald or Rosenwald-type schools need to retain enough integrity of design and materials to be easily recognizable to someone from their historic period. While setting and location contribute greatly to the eligibility of resources, because so few of these once numerous schools are known to survive, relocated buildings may still be eligible. Ideally any new location and setting will be similar to the original, but a different setting may be acceptable if other factors of integrity and the associated history provide a strong justification for significance.

d) Public and Quasi-public (without church or Rosenwald affiliation)

1) Repurposed Buildings

Most of the public schools for African Americans that opened following the Civil War occupied existing buildings. The Freedman's Bureau accepted space for schools most anywhere they could find it. Schools for African Americans operated in former white schools, churches, agricultural buildings and homes. Because buildings used by the Freedmen's Bureau often reverted to their former uses, it is difficult to identify such buildings except by oral tradition, which is not always dependable. A rare example of a building documented to have been used by the Freedmen's Bureau is located on Euterpe Street in New Orleans. The building was a cotton merchant's home seized by the Union Army. How exactly the Freedmen's Bureau used the building is uncertain, but it is possible that it administered some of its education program from here. The public school systems also continued the long standing practice of using residential and other buildings for schools. The long-demolished two-story brick commissary building of Shady Grove Plantation was reported to have served as the first school for African Americans in

²⁴⁹ Kathe Hambrick Jackson, interview by author, Donaldsonville, LA, September 30, 2011.

Iberville Parish when it was documented for the state's "Standing Structures Survey" in 1984. In New Orleans, the 1831 LaLaurie House, which is notorious as a site of the brutal torture of slaves, is less well-known for its significant 1870s use as the first integrated public high school in New Orleans and the entire South (Figure 51). Many buildings that served as African American schools in the late nineteenth and very early twentieth centuries have been demolished or reverted back to other uses that have obscured this aspect of their history. Therefore, examples of repurposed buildings known to have been used as African American schools are rare. In spite of their rareness, however, the eligibility of these resources must be carefully considered.



Figure 51: LaLaurie House/ Lower Girls School, New Orleans, Orleans Parish.

The eligibility of a repurposed building for its association with this context must depend on the duration of its use as a school, the significance of that use, and the quality of the documentation of the use. There are many residential buildings that are purported to have held classes for freed people. That mere fact, even if substantiated, is not enough to claim eligibility in this context. Further information about the role the school played in the community and how long it operated from the building in question must be attained. Furthermore, the integrity of such buildings can be difficult to assess because it may not be known what parts of them were used for classrooms and if they were altered before or after this use. This must be thoughtfully considered and an educated decision made regarding how recognizable the facility would be to a former student.

2) McDonogh Schools

The first provision of funding for the public education of African American students in New Orleans was made by John McDonogh. The first school constructed for African Americans using this funding was McDonogh #6, designed by William Freret and completed in 1875 (Figure 52). It is a landmark in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century battle over the quality of school facilities for African Americans in New Orleans not just because it is a well-designed brick school equal to



Figure 52: McDonogh School #6/ St. George's Episcopal School, New Orleans, Orleans Parish.

contemporary schools provided to white students, but because the school board subsequently attempted to reassign it to white students in 1888. Immediate protest from the African American community halted that attempt, but the school board finally succeeded with a reassignment in 1926. Although the building has been remodeled, it is clearly recognizable and demonstrates obvious significance for its association with this context. In addition, it seems to be the only surviving McDonogh school built for African Americans in this period.²⁵⁰ Subsequent buildings

²⁵⁰ For further analysis of the survival of McDonogh schools in New Orleans see Federal Emergency Management Agency, *Historic Context Statement for the New Orleans' Public Schools* (2009).

for African American students tended to be of poor frame construction and have not survived. Also, often formerly white school buildings in New Orleans were reassigned to black students when better facilities were constructed for white students.

3) One-room Schools

Although churches were often the one-room schools of African American communities, dedicated one-room school buildings did exist as well. These were typically roughly constructed in the first place and have not endured the passage of time. They are therefore rare buildings that should be considered eligible for their association with this context as long as they retain a minimal degree of integrity. Examples of one-room African American schools listed on the National Register are the McNutt School of c. 1910 in Rapides Parish and the Phillips School of 1918 in Winn Parish (Figures 53 and 54). It should be noted that both of these schools demonstrate the persistent significance of community churches in African American education because they share sites with churches. In this regard, their location is an important part of their history and context. However because one-room schools are rare, although integrity of location and setting is desirable, relocation should be acceptable as long as it does not adversely impact the resource and the new setting is similar to the original, or differences are outweighed by other positive integrity factors of the building.



Figure 53: McNutt School, McNutt, Rapides Parish.



Figure 54: Phillips School, Emry, Winn Parish.

4) Multiple-room Frame Schools

Two nineteenth-century African-American multiple-room frame schools were identified during this project. The Laurel Hill School in West Feliciana Parish was originally named after educator John S. Dawson and is estimated to have been constructed in 1895 (Figure 55). This two-story building is said to have also accommodated meetings of the local Masons until their own lodge was constructed in the 1950s. At present, the Laurel Hill School is in too deteriorated and vegetation-choked of a condition to fully evaluate its potential National Register eligibility, but it appears to retain a good deal of integrity and could possibly be eligible in a stabilized or restored condition. The Dorseyville School was built in 1893 and remained in operation as the only school for African Americans in the area until 1952 when the parish school board had a modern school constructed (Figure 56). At one time the school is said to have served grades one through seven, but shortly before it closed, it is remembered as

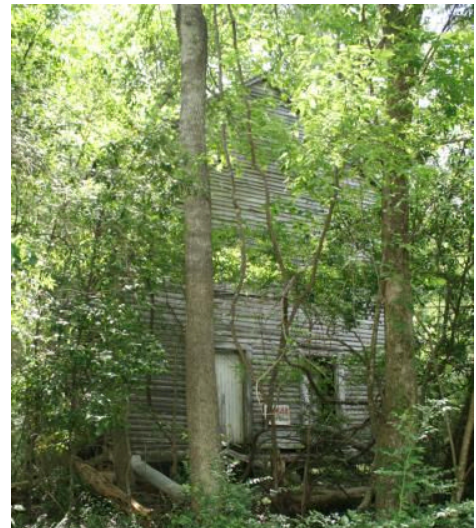


Figure 55: Laurel Hill School, St. Francisville vicinity, West Feliciana Parish.

housing just grades one through four. The main floor of the building is one large room that was partitioned in two so that one teacher could instruct grades one and two on one side while another taught grades three and four on the other side.²⁵¹ Buildings of this type are very rare and just need to retain an easily recognizable historic appearance in addition to documentation of their historic role in relation to African American education in order to be eligible for the National Register. Integrity of location and setting are always important, but because of the rarity of these buildings they are not essential to their potential eligibility.



Figure 56: Dorseyville School, Dorseyville, Iberville Parish.

In the twentieth century multiple-room frame schools for African Americans were often constructed with funding from the Rosenwald Foundation following that organization's plans, but this does not seem to have been a popular form for public schools or quasi-public schools built without Rosenwald support. This conclusion is based on the historic background research conducted for this project, review of the state's "Standing Structures Survey" files and fieldwork. Much further research is necessary to establish a comprehensive portrait of the architecture of African American schools throughout the state in the early twentieth century because each parish school board had a slightly different approach to the management of its physical plant. According to Fisk University's Rosenwald Fund Card File Database, Avoyelles Parish was in the minority of Louisiana Parishes with no Rosenwald schools. This is not evidence that there were no decent schools for African Americans in the parish; on the contrary the only two non-Rosenwald multiple-room frame schools of the twentieth century identified during this project are in Avoyelles Parish. This fact indicates that the school board supported the construction of such schools without the help of the Rosenwald Fund.



Figure 57: Odenburg School, Odenburg, Avoyelles Parish.

The two identified schools are in Odenburg and Goudeau (Figures 57 and 58). Both are estimated to have been constructed in the 1930s. The Odenburg School was long ago converted for use as a private residence. This was a practical course of adaptive reuse for these types of buildings when they were decommissioned as schools. The exterior of the Odenburg School retains a fair degree of integrity and would certainly be recognizable to a former student, but its residential use has led to many



Figure 58: Goudeau School, Goudeau, Avoyelles Parish.

²⁵¹ "The Dorseyville School," anonymous manuscript, National Register file for St. John Baptist Church, Dorseyville, Division of Historic Preservation, Baton Rouge, LA; Carolyn Smith Wilson, interview by author, Dorseyville, LA, April 15, 2012.

alterations of its interior that render it quite different from the days of its school use. Even though these kinds of buildings are believed to be rare, the loss of interior integrity seriously inhibits its ability to convey its significant associations with this context. On the other hand, the school at Goudeau is in such an immaculate state of preservation – complete with the initials of students scrawled into its wooden weatherboards in the 1940s – it resonates with historical feeling. Like so many African American schools of the early twentieth century, the Goudeau School sits next to a church. It is very probable that the first classes for African American children in this area were held in the original Antioch Baptist Church building which was constructed in 1899 and that the 1930s school house built by the parish school board evolved out of this church-housed school. When the school house was decommissioned in the 1950s following the construction of George Washington Carver High School in Bunkie, it was purchased from the school board by Antioch's Burial Association.²⁵² Thereby, this school that probably had its origins in the church has been preserved through its ongoing connection to it and the dedicated work of alumni. It is an excellent example of a potentially eligible property of this type. Lesser examples could also be potentially eligible, but would have to retain an easily recognizable historic appearance.

5) Primary Schools of the 1910s-1940s

As the twentieth century progressed, some major improvements in the quality of public school facilities provided to African Americans appeared sporadically throughout the state. An example of a National Register listed school that represents this significant trend is the Scott Street School in Baton Rouge (Figure 59). Built in 1922, the Scott Street School was the third modern brick school to be built for African Americans in Baton Rouge. The others, which were built in the 1910s do not survive. Buildings of this genre need to be able to be discussed in terms of the advancement they offered in the quality of education for African



Figure 59: Scott Street School, Baton Rouge, East Baton Rouge Parish.

Americans. It is important to be able to describe the types of buildings that preceded them in their specific area. Location and setting are more important integrity factors for this subsection of schools than for the previous two because the significance for this type is in part established by the community history. Like all properties, these types of schools must at the minimum retain an easily recognizable historic appearance to be potentially eligible for the National Register.

6) Secondary Schools of the 1910s-1940s

Even as school officials finally conceded to improved school buildings for African Americans, provision of secondary education remained a point of contention. There are six buildings related to the secondary education of African Americans in Louisiana presently listed on the National Register.

²⁵² R. C. Bonton, interview by author, Goudeau, LA, April 4, 2012.

A compromise between the demand of African Americans for secondary education and the reluctance of certain whites to provide it was found in the concept of “county training schools.” There was to be just one such school per parish and they would emphasis industrial and vocational instruction as well as teacher training. In this way, they were less threatening to opponents of secondary African-American education than academic programs. In 1911, the Tangipahoa Parish Training School became the first such school in the south and one of the first rural secondary schools for African Americans in the country. The school’s 1920 dormitory was listed on the National Register in 1979 as one of the two oldest surviving buildings of the school. Attempts to locate the building during this project failed and it is presently presumed to either demolished or substantially altered. The fate of the other building mentioned in the 1979 nomination is unknown. The National Register listed Beauregard Parish Training School became the first secondary school for African Americans in that Parish in 1929 (Figure 60).



Figure 60: Beauregard Parish Training School, DeRidder, Beauregard Parish.

Central High School in Shreveport, opened as that city’s first high school for African Americans in 1917 and remained the only one until 1949 (Figure 61). It is listed on the National Register as is McKinley High, which became the first dedicated high school building for African Americans in Baton Rouge in 1927 (Figure 62). Previously high school instruction had been provided at a joint elementary and high school. For many years, McKinley remained the only secondary school for African Americans within a forty mile radius of Baton Rouge. Cohn High School became the first place where African Americans in West Baton Rouge Parish could receive a secondary education in 1949 (Figure 63).



Figure 61: Central High School, Shreveport, Caddo Parish.

Booker T. Washington High School was the product of an epic struggle for a high school by African Americans in New Orleans. It was the first high school built specifically for Africans Americans in the city. After ardent demands,



Figure 62: McKinley High School, Baton Rouge, East Baton Rouge Parish.



Figure 63: Cohn High School, Port Allen, West Baton Rouge Parish.

African Americans in New Orleans had received their first high school in 1917, housed in an old white school building. In 1930, the Rosenwald Fund attempted to give money towards the construction of a long petitioned for vocational high school, but the Orleans Parish School board claimed it did not have the required matching funds and instead built a cheap wood frame elementary school on the site that had been set aside for the vocational school. It was finally Federal funding from the Public Works Administration that made the vocational high school named after Booker T. Washington a reality in 1942. The design and quality of the large three-story, art deco school rivaled that of contemporary white schools. In addition, its large auditorium provided a venue that had not previously existed for events in the African American community (Figure 64). Although the entire property was listed on the National Register in 2002, just the auditorium remains today, while the rest of the school was demolished as part of a broad revamping of New Orleans public school buildings after Hurricane Katrina. Such losses make the remaining buildings that symbolize African Americans' valiant fight for higher education even more important. All six of the National Register listed properties described above were the first high schools in their communities, but properties in this category needn't be firsts to be significant. It is obviously easy to ascertain and explain the significance of a first of a kind, but properties in this category can easily have significance gained in other ways. Location and setting are important integrity aspects of this property type for their ability to convey the significance of the school in the community. Schools of this kind are more likely to be substantial masonry building and less likely to be moved anyway. As with other schools, an easily recognizable historic appearance is an important prerequisite to eligibility for these buildings. Because they tend to be more monumental edifices that serve as community landmarks, the exterior integrity is more important than the interior integrity of schools of this type.



Figure 64: Booker T. Washington High School, New Orleans, Orleans Parish. Auditorium in foreground with school to be demolished in background.

7) Schools of the 1950s

In the 1950s, further strides were made in the construction of quality school buildings for African Americans. By this time, the wide disparity between the number and quality of public school

buildings for African Americans versus those for whites was undeniable. The 1950s were ushered in by the filing of *Brown vs. the Board of Education* which called for the desegregation of the Topeka Kansas School District. As the case awaited review by the Supreme Court, some states, like South Carolina and Mississippi made a last ditch effort to protect segregation by implementing programs of school equalization.

Louisiana did not institute such a statewide program, but whether individual districts attempted to hold off integration by improving black schools is unclear. The examples of new modern facilities constructed for African Americans in the 1950s that were studied as part of this project appear to have been derived from African American demands for equal facilities and from acknowledgement by school officials that new buildings were truly needed, even if white voters didn't always agree. It is possible that some school officials did also imagine that integration could be avoided by building new schools; regardless of the motives behind it, the construction of new modern schools in the 1950s provided African Americans with quality learning environments and were a source of pride for communities.

National Register-listed St. Matthew High School in Natchitoches Parish is an example of such a school (Figure 65). When it opened in 1952, it was the first public high school in the lower part of the parish and its longtime principal was recorded as saying that the erection of the school “meant everything” to the community. An ambitious public school building program in New Orleans included the construction of two cutting edge schools for African American students. The imminently modern designs of the Thomy Lafon School of 1954 and Phyllis Wheatley Elementary of 1955 received critical acclaim and coverage in national publications. Architects, Curtis and Davis received an AIA honor award for the Lafon design and it was featured in *Architectural Forum*, and in *LIFE* magazine as one of the country's well-equipped elementary schools, while Phyllis Wheatley appeared in *Progressive Architecture*. In response to advanced deterioration following Hurricane Katrina, both were demolished in 2011.



Figure 65: St. Matthew High School, Bermuda vicinity, Natchitoches Parish.

For some African Americans, integration came with an ironic twist – the closure of these schools they had waited so long to have. John S. Dawson High School in West Feliciana Parish is an example of this phenomenon (Figure 66). Opened in 1951 and named for a local African American educator, the school was the first public high school for African American children in West Feliciana. In 1962 a thirty room elementary school was added to the site, but in 1969, both schools were closed following integration. Buildings of the second half of the twentieth century are among our least loved architectural resources. Their style, building materials, and the relatively brief passage of time since their construction seem to impair our ability to value them as historic resources, so it is imperative that we view the significance of African American

schools of the 1950s within this context. In rural areas in particular, where schools have been greatly consolidated, many schools of this era dwell as hulking ghosts on the landscape, seemingly only waiting to be torn down. Yet if there is recognition of the importance these institutions held for their communities when they were built, they might yet be able to be restored and adaptively reused to once again serve their communities. In order to be potentially eligible for the National Register, the significant role in the local history of African American education played by the school must be established. Schools of this era must retain a historically recognizable form. It is unlikely that they will have been moved from their original sites, but location and setting do greatly contribute to the ability of such schools to convey their significance and any changes should be evaluated carefully.



Figure 66: John S. Dawson High School, St. Francisville, West Feliciana Parish.

8) Landmarks of Integration

In the aftermath of the *Brown vs. the Board of Education* decision, the state of Louisiana immediately did all it could legally to circumvent the federal ruling. The reaction of racist whites to the prospect of desegregation was virulent and on November 14, 1960, it was displayed on national television as New Orleans public schools – or, rather, to be literal, four young African Americans – took the first steps of integration. One of the two schools that was integrated that day was the formerly all white William Frantz Elementary School (Figure 67). The march of little Ruby Bridges into Frantz, flanked by federal marshals, was later immortalized in Norman Rockwell's painting *The Problem We All Live With*. In 2005, less than fifty years after this event, William Frantz Elementary School was listed on the National Register for its exceptional significance. In 2011, it was nearly demolished as part of the aggressive campaign to improve school facilities that determined the demolition of Wheatley and Thomy Lafon, but preservation of the landmark prevailed. All around the state of Louisiana, desegregation played out in different ways. A great many schools were desegregated so the eligibility of an individual school for its association with integration must depend wholly upon the specific events and local context of that school. Association with very significant historic events may outweigh



Figure 67: William Frantz Elementary School, New Orleans, Orleans Parish.

loss of location or setting for some schools of this type as long as they retain an easily recognizable historic appearance.

2. Colleges, Universities, and Business Schools

During the Reconstruction era, three institutions of higher learning for African Americans were established in New Orleans. This was a milestone in educational opportunities for African Americans which had not existed before the war. Those previously privileged enough to receive a higher education did so out of the state or indeed, out of the country. The institutions of higher learning established during Reconstruction were Straight, Leland and New Orleans universities. Straight University and New Orleans University eventually merged into Dillard University, while Leland moved out of the city. The original Leland buildings on St. Charles Avenue are no longer standing, nor are those of New Orleans University which were torn down to make way for De La Salle High School. The original Straight University campus on Esplanade Avenue burned in 1877. Straight then moved to Canal Street and the buildings of that campus have been demolished. It was thought that no building features of Straight remained until recently, when the Preservation Resource Center of New Orleans discovered that a house it was in the process of rehabilitating was part of the original campus (Figure 68). The grand home was constructed c. 1866 and purchased by the American Missionary Association, the founding organization behind Straight University, in 1871. Believed to have functioned as a housing and dining hall, this property is very significant as the last remnant of the important Reconstruction years of these institutions and was added to the National Register in 2011.

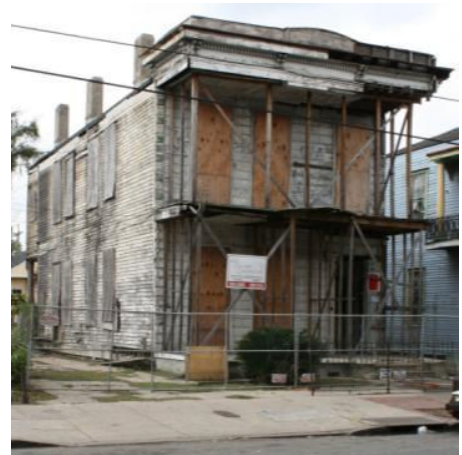


Figure 68: Straight University Boarding Hall and Dining House, New Orleans, Orleans Parish.

The remainder of buildings associated with the state's Historically Black Colleges and Universities date from the 1920s-1950s. The historic buildings of five different institutions are presently listed on the National Register. Leland, as noted above, moved from New Orleans in 1923, and its campus in East Baton Rouge Parish retained four buildings dating between 1923 and 1930 when it was added to the National Register in 1982, but all four have since been demolished. Southern University, which was also founded in New Orleans in 1880, is notable as a public, rather than private institution. It was originally located near Tulane University and was relocated to a former plantation in East Baton Rouge Parish where it opened the doors of its



Figure 69: Southern University, Riverside Hall and Industrial Building for Girls, Scotlandville, East Baton Rouge Parish.

Scotlandville campus in 1914. One pre-existing plantation building and five university buildings from the 1920s were determined to be contributing elements of the Southern University Historic District when it was listed on the National Register in 1999 (Figure 69). One of the contributing buildings, the machine shop, has since been removed, but the others remain in good condition.

Xavier was founded in New Orleans in 1915, and reincarnated at a new campus in 1932. It is significant as the continent's first and only historically black Catholic university. The campus retains three historic building from the 1930s (Figure 70). Dillard University, into which Straight and New Orleans universities merged, was chartered in 1930 and has ten historic buildings dating from the 1930s to the 1950s (Figure 71).



Figure 70: Xavier University, New Orleans, Orleans Parish.



Figure 71: Dillard University, New Orleans, Orleans Parish.

Robinson Business College in Monroe opened in 1944 in the private residence of its founders. In 1946, it moved into a single building that is now listed on the National Register (Figure 72). While the above mentioned institutions were focused in New Orleans and Baton Rouge, Robinson Business College is significant for providing a higher education opportunity to African Americans in the Monroe area.



Figure 72: Robinson Business College, Monroe, Ouachita Parish.

In order to be eligible for the National Register in association with this context, college or university properties must have played a demonstrably notable role in the education of African Americans. Like all other kinds of properties, they must retain an easily recognizable historic appearance. Location and setting are almost essential aspects of integrity for this property type, but in outstanding cases, a loss of location or setting still may be acceptable in regards to potential National Register eligibility.

3. Homes of Educators

Typically school buildings best represent significant contributions to education, but in some cases it is the home of an educator that is most associated with a particular aspect of educational history. There are two such residences listed on the National Register relevant to this context. In addition to the above described colleges and universities, there is another significant historic institute of higher learning, Grambling State University, which is located in Lincoln Parish. Although the university has its origins at the beginning of the twentieth century, its present campus is modern. Grambling's founder was Charles P. Adams and it is his home that is the historic building most closely associated with him and his achievements as the founder of Grambling (Figure 73).



Figure 73: Charles P. Adams House, Grambling, Lincoln Parish.

The Jeanes program played a very important role in the education of African Americans. It provided for supervisors who taught and advised teachers at many schools within a jurisdiction and served various other supportive functions for schools. Because such supervisors, or teachers as they were also called, worked with many schools, they were not wholly connected with one. Therefore, the property most associated with Jeanes supervisor, Emma Grayson, is her parents' house which was her permanent address while she traveled for her career (Figure 74).



Figure 74: Emma Grayson House, Monroe, Ouachita Parish.

Houses of educators must be the only or most representative properties associated with the significant individual in order to be potentially eligible for the National Register. They must display an appearance that closely resembles that of the years during which the individual resided in the home *and* was involved with the important achievements for which they gained significance. The importance of location and setting as aspects of integrity for these types of properties depends upon the work of the individual it represents and how closely tied it was to the community. For example in the cases of the two National Register properties listed above,

the Charles Adams House would lose some of its ability to convey its significance if it were relocated away from Grambling State University, while the Emma Grayson House would not suffer so greatly from a loss of location because the work of the Jeanes supervisor was widespread.

4. Libraries

Libraries were important accessories to schools in the provision of education. An example of a library that is potentially eligible for the National Register because of its association with the African American Experience in Louisiana is the Dryades Street Branch Library (now Dryades YMCA) in New Orleans (Figure 75). This library built with a grant from Andrew Carnegie, was the first public library for African Americans in New Orleans when it opened in 1915 and remained the only one until 1953. It is worth noting that one of the Carnegie libraries of the same period sat on the same property as the African American McDonogh No. 6 School, but being a white library denied access to the students of this sister institution. For a library to be significant for its association with this context, it must have an arguable significance in the history of African-American education. It need not be a first of its kind as the Dryades Street Branch, but it must represent a milestone or significant event within this context. As neighborhood landmarks, the exterior integrity of libraries is more important than their interior integrity. Location and setting are very important integrity factors for libraries because of these institutions' roles in their communities.



Figure 75: Dryades Street Branch Library, New Orleans, Orleans Parish.

F. Professional and Artistic

Properties with associations with professionals and artists have many different potential aspects of significance to this context. The offices of doctors, lawyers, architects, and businessmen, and the work spaces or studios of writers, musicians, painters, and photographers all fit into this category. There are presently no professional offices or artistic studios listed on the National Register for their significance in regards to Ethnic Heritage. These types of properties have potential significance for their association with the challenges African Americans faced in pursuing professional careers and achieving artistic success. Musicians were particularly affected by Jim Crow laws which limited the places where they could play and record music, where they could stay and eat while traveling, and even with whom they could play. These types of properties can also be significant for the role the professional services played in the community. For example a doctor's office like that of Doctor Lowery in Donaldsonville was likely to be the only place where community residents could receive medical attention (Figure) (see also Medical). Many times professionals were also important community and civic leaders. In some cases, the only buildings associated with the productive life or formative years of such significant persons are residences. This is the case for the influential Civil Rights attorney A. P. Tureaud. His offices do not survive, so his home is listed on the National Register for its association with pivotal years of his career (see Political).

African American artists many times illuminated particular aspects of the African American experience through their medium. The environments they inhabited and worked in are significant for how they shaped their experiences. An example of this is the relationship between Melrose Plantation in Natchitoches Parish and the work of the famous folk artist Clementine Hunter. When Melrose Plantation was nominated to the National Register and designated a National Historic Landmark in 1974, there was not enough historical perspective on the work of Hunter, who was still a productive artist at that time, to include it as part of the significance of the property, but today, it can be seen as adding another layer of association with the theme of Ethnic Heritage: Black. Hunter's work provides a vivid record of the life of African Americans on a Louisiana plantation in the early twentieth century and her images are deeply shaped by her many years of living and working at Melrose Plantation to which she moved as a teenager. Hunter not only portrayed memories of life at Melrose in her art, but in 1955 she made her art a part of Melrose when she painted a mural on the interior second floor walls of the plantation's food storage building that is known as the "Africa House." If the property were to be nominated today, its associations with this artist and her portrayal of the African American Experience in Louisiana would certainly be a part of the plantation's multifaceted significance.

Sometimes the formative years of an artist had a profound effect on their work. The family of writer Arna Bontemps left Louisiana when he was young, but his childhood home in Alexandria remained a defining influence on him and hence his work and is therefore listed on the National Register for its association with him (Figure 76). Writer Ernest Gaines' family also made the migration out of Louisiana when he was young, but he came back in the 1960s to write about his home and in the twenty-first century, the famous author returned to live on the plantation of his youth in Pointe Coupée Parish. This property is where generations of his family lived, where his ancestors were enslaved, and what he recognizes as "my source of writing."²⁵³ Just as Hunter's paintings visually recall the African American experience on a plantation in early twentieth century Louisiana, Gaines' writing is well known for illuminating the complexities and human drama of that experience. Although Gaines produced his first novel in 1963, he is still a working writer and it would be too soon to evaluate his property for its association with his work, but it certainly holds the potential for future significance in this regard. (It is quite possible that the property, which includes a cemetery, church, and slave quarter, could be potentially significant for its other associations with this context, but it was not assessed as part of this project.)



Figure 76: Arna Bontemps House, Alexandria, Rapides Parish.

In the above examples, both the A. P. Tureaud House and the Arna Bontemps House were nominated to the National Register under Criterion B for their association with these significant individuals. Properties in this category may often be associated with individuals who were significant persons in local, state, or national history because of their professional or artistic achievements, but a property need not be associated with an important individual to be

²⁵³ Wayne Drash, "Author Ernest Gaines Comes Home to Live Where His Ancestors Were Enslaved," CNN U.S. (November 2010), http://articles.cnn.com/2010-11-09/us/ernest.gaines.cemetery_1_grave-sites-ernest-gaines-cemetery/4?_s=PM:US (accessed May 5, 2012).

significant for this association. Furthermore, association with a significant African American does not necessarily lend a property significance in this category. For a property in this category to have significance for its association with the African American Experience in Louisiana, it must in some way reflect the significant historical patterns of this experience outlined in the background history, as in each of the above examples. Properties of this type must retain an appearance that would be easily recognizable to the individuals connected to it during its significant period. Whether the interior integrity or exterior integrity is any more or less important than the other will depend upon the individual nature and use of the property. Likewise, the importance of location and setting to the eligibility of properties in this category must be assessed on a case by case basis.

G. Commercial

Commercial properties reflect the manner in which rigid segregation permeated every aspect of life. Banned or provided with only the most limited services from most white businesses according to Jim Crow laws, African Americans needed separate commercial facilities of all kinds. *The Negro Motorist Green Book*, a travel guide to help African Americans negotiate the Jim Crow landscape, listed many different kinds of businesses. In 1949, the entries for Louisiana included hotels, restaurants, taverns, beauty parlors, barber shops, night clubs, service stations, road houses, taxi cabs, drug stores, trailer parks, and tailors. A good example of a property in one of the state's smaller cities that portrays the story of segregated businesses is the Morgan Hotel in Natchitoches (Figure 77). Because of the extremely limited number of places where traveling African Americans could stay, this modest, two-story frame building was frequented by people of all classes and occupations, from laborers to business professionals.²⁵⁴ It became particularly popular with soldiers who came to the area for training during World War II. It is from their patronage that it gained another moniker, the "Brown Bomber."



Figure 77: Morgan/ Brown Bomber Hotel, Natchitoches, Natchitoches Parish.

Any business could also be a potential community gathering spot. When clustered together as African American businesses sometimes were, they formed a distinct commercial and cultural hub. Such was the case for New Orleans' South Rampart Street. The *Green Book* listed four hotels, one restaurant, one barber shop, one beauty culture school, and two taverns on South Rampart. In addition many other businesses for African Americans lined the popular street. Rampart Street is also a prime example of the decline of urban commercial areas in the second half of the twentieth century. Today, of over one hundred buildings that once occupied several

²⁵⁴ Paul Morgan, quoted in Dayna Bowker Lee, "Morgan Hotel, aka Brown Bomber Hotel," in "Civil War Civil Rights: The African American Community in Natchitoches, Louisiana," Louisiana Regional Folklife Program, Louisiana Folklife Center at Northwestern State University, 2006, <http://winhttp.nsula.edu/regionalfolklife/civilwartocivilrights/15MorganHotel.html> (accessed April 8, 2012).

blocks of the street, just a dozen remain. Because of the great loss of buildings, this area would not qualify for nomination to the National Register as a district. Instead, three of the surviving buildings have been listed on the National Register individually for their association with this once vibrant African American commercial center. The Eagle Saloon, Karnofsky Tailor Shop and Residence and 445-449 S. Rampart were operated as many businesses through the years (Figures 78-80). Another commercial mecca for African Americans in New Orleans was Dryades Street, now named Oretha Castle Haley Boulevard after the New Orleans Civil Rights activist. Two anchors of this area were Kaufman's Department Store of 1919 and Handelman's Department Store of 1922 (Figures 81 and 82). In Monroe, a National Register listed commercial property is the Miller-Roy Building of 1929 (Figure 83). It is an example of a building which served many important purposes for the African American community. It housed many businesses, served as a music venue, and provided space for NAACP and CORE offices. In addition to the commercial properties of bigger cities, the individual "mom and pop" operations in small towns and neighborhoods are also of potential significance to this context. Corner stores, barber and beauty shops, funeral homes, and businesses of all kinds may be eligible for the role they played in the community.

In order to be potentially eligible for the National Register in association with this context, commercial properties must have played a significant role in the African American community that is documented and can be discussed in relationship to the broader state context. Simply having been a business operated or frequented by African Americans does not automatically make a property significant in relation to this theme. Commercial properties, in fact do not have to have been owned or operated by



Figure 78: Eagle Saloon, New Orleans, Orleans Parish.



Figure 79: Karnofsky Tailor Shop and Residence, New Orleans, Orleans Parish.



Figure 80: 445-449 S. Rampart Street, New Orleans, Orleans Parish.



Figure 81: Kaufman's Department Store, New Orleans, Orleans Parish.



Figure 82: Handelman's Department Store, New Orleans, Orleans Parish.

African Americans to be significant for their role in the community. As the names Karnofsky, Kaufman, and Handleman mentioned above suggest, Jewish families often operated businesses that welcomed African Americans and were integral parts of the community. The Karnofsky family played a prominent role in the young life of Louis Armstrong. As a result of the early twentieth-century social hierarchy that was accompanied by racism and xenophobia, the businesses of people of minority ethnicities were often found clustered with those of African Americans (see other discussion of this under districts). Commercial properties that have significant historical associations with the African American experience must be able to convey those associations by being easily recognizable to someone from the historic period. Location and setting are very important integrity factors for commercial properties because their historic role was very much connected with their location and setting.



Figure 83: Miller-Roy Building, Monroe, Ouachita Parish.

H. Social

1. Masonic Temples, Lodges, and associated buildings

Masonic and fraternal organizations have a long history in the African American community that is disappointingly understudied. Such organizations provided social networks that were advantageous in many other areas of life and their buildings were significant centers for community activities. The 1909 seven-story Pythian Temple built for the Colored Knights of Pythias in New Orleans was one of the grandest examples of this property type, but its façade is now covered in a modern veneer (Figure 84). Completed for a cost of \$200,000 and topped by a roof garden that hosted famous jazz bands, the Pythian Temple was a cultural center for its community.²⁵⁵ A rare example of a temple built for the female branch of this order is the Calanthean Temple in Shreveport (Figure 85). This 1923 building is four floors tall and also topped by a roof garden where jazz legends are said to have played.²⁵⁶ The only African American Masonic temple in Louisiana listed on the National Register is the Prince Hall Masonic Temple of 1924 in Baton Rouge (Figure 86). Founded in 1784 and named for a free black man of Boston, Prince Hall is the largest and best known



Figure 84: Pythian Temple, New Orleans, Orleans Parish.

²⁵⁵ Bryant.

²⁵⁶ Kingsley, 349.

Masonic organization for African Americans in the country. The Baton Rouge temple is four floors tall and housed a theater as well as a rooftop garden famed for its dances and musical performances like the aforementioned examples. Its rooftop garden also hosted basketball tournaments because there was no gymnasium for African Americans in the city.

Examples of later and more vernacular Masonic lodges are the J. S. McGehee Lodge #54 of 1955 in West Feliciana Parish, the Bermuda Lodge and the Dawn of Light Masonic Lodge in Natchitoches Parish (Figures 87-89). Like the fancier lodges and temples, these buildings, were centers of community activity and the J. S. McGehee Lodge #54 housed voter registration clinics organized in conjunction with CORE. As documented in a 1964 edition of *Ebony* magazine, it is also from here that local minister Reverend Joseph Carter departed to register to vote in 1963, when the Reverend became the first African American in the parish to do so since 1902.²⁵⁷ Associations with such historic events highlight the great potential eligibility of this type. In addition to lodges and temples, other buildings used by Masonic organizations may have significance in association with this context. An example of this is the building that housed the printing press for the Masonic journal *The Plumb Line* in Natchitoches (Figure 90). Masonic buildings must be easily recognizable to someone from their historic period to have potential National Register eligibility. The Pythian Temple would presently be



Figure 85: Calanthean Temple, Shreveport, Caddo Parish.



Figure 86: Prince Hall Masonic Temple, Baton Rouge, East Baton Rouge Parish.



Figure 88: Bermuda Lodge, Natchez, Natchitoches Parish.



Figure 87: J. S. McGehee Lodge #54, St. Francisville vicinity, West Feliciana Parish.

²⁵⁷ Bob Adelman, "Birth of a Voter: Louisiana Parish Registers 1st Negro Voter in 61 Years," *Ebony*, February 1964; West Feliciana Parish African American Heritage Task Force Oral History Project, Harry T. Williams Center for Oral History, Louisiana State University;

barely recognizable to someone from its historic period, but it is possible that it could be restored to its original appearance, in which case it could be potentially eligible. Location and setting are desirable, but not essential aspects of integrity for buildings of this type.



Figure 90: The Plumb Line Printing Press Building, Natchitoches, Natchitoches Parish.



Figure 89: Dawn of Light Masonic Lodge, Natchitoches, Natchitoches Parish.

2. Benevolent Society Halls

Benevolent societies functioned much like Masonic organizations with the added benefit of providing medical and funeral benefits and other forms of mutual assistance before the days of insurance and welfare programs. For the guarantee of this assistance members paid regular fees. Such societies were already well-established in Louisiana prior to the Civil War, but became particularly useful tools for newly freed people afterwards. Along with the church, the benevolent society was central to the sustenance of many communities. By the 1880s, reports indicate that these societies were very prevalent. The two-story True Friends Benevolent Association Hall in Donaldsonville is an excellent example of an African American benevolent society building from this period (Figure 91). The True Friends Mutual Benevolent Association was founded in 1882 and in 1885 they passed a resolution to purchase a lot for a meeting place.²⁵⁸ Like the temples and lodges above, the hall hosted many notable social events and provided meeting space for Civil Rights activities. A less assuming one-story building in St. Francisville housed a society



Figure 91: True Friends Benevolent Association Hall, Donaldsonville, Ascension Parish.



Figure 92: Old Benevolent Society Hall, St. Francisville, West Feliciana Parish.

²⁵⁸ Thomas J. Durant, Jr., *Our Roots Run Deep: A History of the African American Museum* (Virginia Beach: The Donning Company Publishers, 2002), 95.

founded in 1883 (Figure 92). The building of the Perseverance Benevolent Mutual Aid Association in New Orleans also dates to the 1880s, although the organization itself was founded by Free People of Color in 1853 as *La Société de la Persévérance* and was listed in the city directory at this site as early as 1868.²⁵⁹ The building includes a c. 1927 Spanish Mission façade added by the organization (Figure 93). It too is remembered as the site of many lively jazz concerts by famous musicians.²⁶⁰ The Dew Drop Social and Benevolent Hall in Mandeville is another surviving nineteenth century hall; the only one listed on the National Register (Figure 94). Its organization was founded in 1885 and the building constructed in 1895 and like all the others was a community center and entertainment venue. While most benevolent societies did play significant roles in their communities, the significant historic associations of any given society hall must be able to be discussed and explained in detail for a candidate to have potential National Register eligibility. It cannot be assumed that merely because a building was an African-American benevolent society hall that it has significance in association with this context. To be potentially eligible for the National Register, benevolent society halls must retain an easily recognizable historic appearance. Loss of setting or location may be tolerable if the building otherwise has good integrity and clear significance.



Figure 93: Perseverance Benevolent Mutual Aid Association Hall, New Orleans, Orleans Parish.



Figure 94: Dew Drop Social and Benevolent Hall, Mandeville, St. Tammany Parish.

3. Carnival Krewe and Mardi Gras Indian facilities

No properties of sufficient age of significance associated with African American carnival krewes or Mardi Gras Indians were discovered during this project. For example, although the Zulu Social Aid and Pleasure Club was organized in 1909, it did not occupy its present facility until 1972, and its use of previous properties is not clear enough at this time to justify their listing. However, this category is included to note the fact that both of these traditions have made important contributions to the community, the association with which, if found, could be argued as a source of National Register eligibility.

²⁵⁹ Ann Woodruff, "Society Halls in New Orleans: A Survey of Jazz Landmarks, Part I," *The Jazz Archivist* 20 (2007): 17.

²⁶⁰ It should be noted that a thorough survey of other New Orleans society halls and their present conditions as well as discussion of their associations with jazz is provided in Parts I and II of the above cited paper by Ann Woodruff.

4. Cemeteries

Cemeteries are the final elements of our social and religious lives. Benevolent societies assured that members had proper burials and sometimes even financed the construction of tombs, while some of the other above mentioned organizations also contributed to the final rites of their brethren. Cemeteries are sites of the cultural activities of funerals and visitation rituals; they are landscapes of symbolic mortuary art and records of genealogical and historical information. Although these are all obvious reasons that cemeteries should be treasured, they must be evaluated for their value in more specific terms to be eligible for the National Register. Register guidelines stipulate that a cemetery is only eligible for listing if “it derives its primary significance from graves of persons of transcendent importance, from age, from distinctive design features, or from association with historic events.” There are many possible ways, however, in which a cemetery could be eligible for the National Register under Criterion A in association with this context. (See *National Register Bulletin 41: Guidelines for Evaluating and Registering Cemeteries and Burial Places* for further guidance on this subject: <http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/publications/bulletins/nrb41/>). *National Register Bulletin 41* notes that, “The evolution of burial customs and memorialization also can be an important context for understanding our history.”²⁶¹

There are presently two Louisiana cemeteries listed on the National Register for their association with the African-American experience and one of those is archaeological. Star Cemetery in Shreveport was nominated for its significance to the African-American history of Shreveport (Figure 95). Established in 1883, it was Shreveport’s first African-American cemetery. Its date makes it contemporaneous with the founding of many benevolent societies as discussed above and the nomination notes that the symbols of many different Masonic orders found throughout the cemetery reflect the importance of these organizations in the African-American community. Kenner and Kugler Cemeteries in St. Charles Parish were nominated to the National Register as an archaeological site under Criteria A and D for the potential to yield information important to history not available from other sources. The cemeteries are believed to have begun as slave cemeteries for Roseland and Hermitage Plantations; however, the archaeological findings could only identify use of the site between 1895 and 1920, which is why the site is mentioned here rather than in the category of slave cemeteries.

Cemeteries can also be significant under Criterion A as the last traces of a settlement not otherwise represented by standing



Figure 95: Star Cemetery, Shreveport, Caddo Parish.



Figure 96: Cemetery, Bobtown, Terrebonne Parish.

²⁶¹ For sources that may aid in the interpretation of the history of burial and memorialization practices in African American cemeteries, see *Historic African American and African Caribbean Cemeteries: A Selected Bibliography* by Sharyn Thompson, <http://www.flheritage.com/archaeology/cemeteries/documents/afamcem.pdf>.

buildings or structures. Possible examples of this are the Bobtown cemetery in Terrebonne Parish (see section M. Districts) and the Burton cemetery in Natchitoches Parish (Figures 96 and 97). The Burton family of Natchitoches Parish owned an extensive farm – a very notable achievement for African-Americans in late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century Louisiana. The Burton's land was once dotted by the homes of landless farmers and provided the site for the

New Nazarene Church and this adjacent cemetery. The church was relocated to the site of the Burton School (a Rosenwald supported school) in 1961 after that building was closed and dismantled by the parish.²⁶² New Nazarene still stands in its new location, but the Burton cemetery situated between the Little River and the slight rise that marks the church's former location best conveys the distinctive history of this large African American landholding.



Figure 97: Burton Cemetery, Bermuda vicinity, Natchitoches Parish.

It should be noted that there are many African Americans buried in non-segregated cemeteries which may be eligible for the National Register for reasons other than their association with the African American experience. For example, St. Louis Cemeteries No. 1 and No. 2 in New Orleans are listed on the National Register for their artistic and architectural merit, but also happen to be the final resting place of many significant African Americans. For a cemetery to be significant for its association with this context, it must specifically represent historical patterns of the African-American experience. Cemeteries must of course retain their original location, unless there was a relocation of graves in or before the historic period. Integrity of the setting surrounding the cemetery is not essential for eligibility, but the cemetery itself must retain its historic feeling. It is acceptable for a candidate cemetery to have new grave markers that post-date its period of significance, as long as those do not overwhelm the historic markers such that the cemetery does not have an overall historic feeling.

I. Recreational

1. Public squares and parks

As described in the Background History and Development, Congo Square is extremely important for its association with the gathering of enslaved people of African descent and the perpetuation of African music and dance in New Orleans (Figure 98). For this significance, it is listed on the National Register. While Congo Square is the only known resource with this history, there may be other public squares or spaces which have been important



Figure 98: Congo Square, New Orleans, Orleans Parish.

²⁶² J. W. Anthony, interview by author, Bermuda, LA, April 6, 2012.

gathering spots that contributed to African American history. Potentially eligible resources of this nature could include segregated parks and the sites of historic Juneteenth celebrations. To be eligible for this association, public spaces would have to retain a reasonable degree of integrity of their historic boundaries and feeling, and their history would have to be well-documented and its significance clearly justified. The importance of the surrounding setting to the eligibility of a public square or park will depend on the nature of the significance of the individual resource.

2. Beaches and Pools

During segregation, beaches and pools were among the many types of places to which African Americans had very limited access. There were few of these recreational properties open to African Americans, so those that were were popular and newsworthy. No properties in this category were identified during this project, but more research should be done at local levels to determine if eligible properties exist. Such resources would have to remain easily recognizable to someone from the historic period. While natural changes to a beach should not preclude eligibility, any manmade elements such as boardwalks would need to have enough historic integrity to make the property recognizable to someone from the historic period. Location is essential for these types of resources, but the importance of the setting will depend on the individual resource.

3. Golf Courses

Another highly segregated type of recreation was golf. The story of Joseph Manual Bartholomew, Sr. illustrates the ironic limitations of race in this sport. Bartholomew first entered the world of golf as a caddy and greenskeeper. He soon demonstrated skill in playing and even became a private instructor. His white clients felt that he possessed the skills to design a fine golf course and actually sent him to study with a renowned golf course designer, Seth Raynor. Bartholomew studied well and returned to New Orleans where he began work on a course in Metairie in the 1920s. This first course was such a success that he was commissioned to design and build at least seven others, but he was never allowed to play one of these finished works, but one. The Pontchartrain Park Municipal course in the African-American subdivision of Pontchartrain Park was the only one that this celebrated designer was allowed to play aside from that at his own home (Figure 99).²⁶³ Bartholomew designed the course free of charge. His personal course has been long demolished, so the



Figure 99: Pontchartrain Park Municipal Golf Course, New Orleans, Orleans Parish.

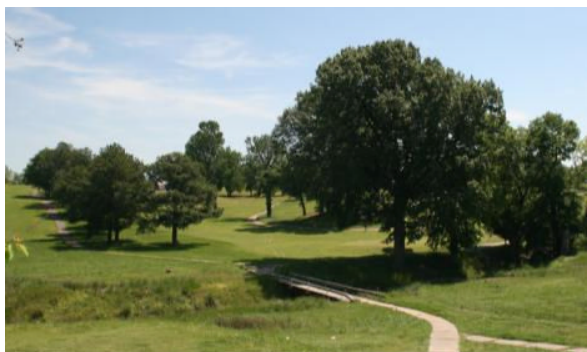


Figure 100: Lakeside Municipal Golf Course, Shreveport, Caddo Parish.

²⁶³ Wilson, 25-27.

Pontchartrain Park course, now renamed for Bartholomew, is of special significance not just as a rare example of an African American golf course, but as the only existing course both designed *and* played by Bartholomew. The Lakeside Municipal Golf Course in Shreveport, which is listed on the National Register, opened as the first for African Americans in its region in 1952 (Figure 100). It was developed on the site of a former park and golf course, on another part of which the Booker T. Washington High School for African American students had recently been completed. In order to be eligible for the National Register in association with this context, golf courses must have a demonstrated significance to the African American community and substantially retain their original design.

4. Theaters

Theaters were yet another aspect of life affected by segregation. In theaters that served both blacks and whites, African Americans were relegated to poor seats in balconies and typically had to enter through separate doors. In their own theaters African Americans instead got to enjoy the entertainment without such discriminatory treatment. This category includes two different types of theaters, those that hosted live performances and those of later years that showed only movies. There are three Louisiana African American theaters presently listed on the National Register. The Iroquois Theater of 1911 belongs to the live performance genre (Figure 101). It was located along the African American commercial hub of South Rampart Street in New Orleans and has been identified as being of National Significance for its association with early jazz performances. It should be noted that two of the Masonic temples discussed above also housed theaters. Both the Pythian and Prince Hall temples offered theaters. It was an act at the Pythian Temple theater that is said to have inspired the creation of the Zulu Mardi Gras parade.

As cinema became the popular entertainment medium numerous small African American theaters opened, but it was many years before African Americans could go to the movies in a first rate theater of their own. The Carver Theater, which opened in 1950 in New Orleans, was a watershed in this area (Figure 102). It offered a movie experience on par with the best movie theaters, but was built specifically to serve African Americans, many of whom lived in the housing project across the street from its location. Likewise, in Baton Rouge, the National Register



Figure 101: Iroquois Theater, New Orleans, Orleans Parish.

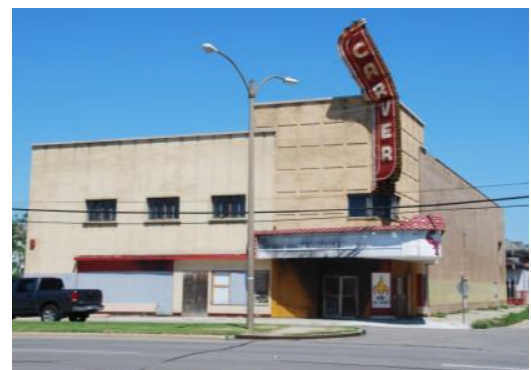


Figure 102: Carver Theater, New Orleans, Orleans Parish.



Figure 103: Lincoln Theater, Baton Rouge, East Baton Rouge Parish.

listed Lincoln Theater was much celebrated when it opened in 1950 (Figure 103). News reports of the day demonstrate the monumental importance of the opening of such theaters to the African American community. Theaters must be sufficiently intact to convey their original purpose as theaters, as well as being easily recognizable to someone from the historic period, to be eligible for this association. Because the primary experience of the theater occurred in the interior space, interior integrity of design, materials and feeling is important. Enough interior material must remain to convey the historic design and function. Location and setting are important factors for theaters because they convey the relationship of the theater to its neighborhood, but an altered setting should not necessarily make a candidate ineligible.

5. Clubs/ Taverns/ Music venues

Night clubs, taverns, saloons and businesses of this type by any name were obviously another significant type of recreational property. Often, they also provided venues for music. Perhaps the oldest music venue with significance for the African American experience in Louisiana was not any type of saloon, but a Masonic Temple. Perseverance Lodge No. 4, which was built in New Orleans in 1820 and is listed on the National Register, was a white Masonic hall, but provided a venue for some of the earliest performances of African American bands known (Figure 104). Located in the Faubourg Tremé, where many Free People of Color lived, and within close proximity to Congo Square, the hall also was available for use by other members of the public and became renowned as a place to see the city's African American performers. Many of the other property types discussed above also included venues for music. See also the Commercial and Masonic Temple and Benevolent Society Hall sections. Two popular clubs in Natchitoches Parish that offered African Americans opportunities for recreation and entertainment they could not enjoy at other local venues were the Fiesta Club and Bubbá's (Figure 105 and 106). The Fiesta Club was the place to be on Sunday afternoons where the activities included horse races, football, baseball, and billiards. Bubbá's juke joint was also home to race track and baseball games and additionally hosted popular musicians like Fats Domino. To be eligible for the National Register in association with the theme of this context, these types of properties need to have a demonstrated significance in the African American experience and retain an easily recognizable historic appearance. Original location and setting are important contributing factors for eligibility, but are not necessarily essential.



Figure 104: Perseverance Lodge No. 4, New Orleans, Orleans Parish.



Figure 105: Fiesta Club, Natchez, Natchitoches Parish.



Figure 106: Bubbá's, Bermuda vicinity, Natchitoches Parish.

J. Political

This property type is intended to encompass all kinds of resources for their association with political events or activities. This property type was created mainly for properties associated with Reconstruction and the Civil Rights Movement, but it may include associations with political elements of any era. To be eligible for the National Register specifically for significance in relation to politics, the associated political events must have been important at the local, state, or national level. Resources of this type must retain an easily recognizable historic appearance. The importance of integrity of location and setting must be evaluated on an individual basis.

1. Places of political gatherings

An example of a property that is listed on the National Register in large part for its significance as a Civil Rights meeting place is Union Bethel AME Church in New Orleans (Figure 107). Built in 1921, the church long served as an auditorium and civic gathering spot for the African-American community, but this became particularly important during the Civil Rights movement when it hosted mass meetings. The church had a seating capacity of 1,500 and historic sources reported meetings attended by 2,000 to 2,500 people during the Civil Rights movement. Notably, one the historic meetings at the church featured the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. as the speaker.



Figure 107: Union Bethel AME Church, New Orleans, Orleans Parish.

While Union Bethel AME Church hosted very large meetings, a church or other venue in a smaller town might still have local significance for its role in a political movement of that region. It should be remembered, however that eligibility for association with events that occurred less than fifty years ago requires exceptional significance and that places associated with Civil Rights activities are very likely to be eligible for other roles in the community as well.

2. Places of protests and demonstrations

The Kress Building in Baton Rouge is listed on the National Register for its significance as the site of the first of Baton Rouge's sit-ins in the 1960s (Figure 108). Sit-ins have a clear association with a building, but other protests and demonstrations might have a less easily definable links to individual properties. For example, the instigating moment of the 1953 Baton Rouge Bus Boycott occurred on a bus, which could be an eligible object if that individual bus was identified and preserved, but the boycott itself was not limited to one place or object.



Figure 108: Kress Building, Baton Rouge, East Baton Rouge Parish.

3. Places of riots, massacres, and inciting events

St. Joseph Courthouse Square in Tensas Parish is listed on the National Register as part of the St. Joseph Historic District (Figure 109). Although the district has several areas of significance, the courthouse square contributes significance in this area for its association with the 1878 Republican convention held by African Americans that incited the subsequent riot in the town of Waterproof. While the historic courthouse is gone, the courthouse square does retain integrity whereas there is no property of any integrity specifically associated with these events in Waterproof. Similarly, sites of other significant events like the Colfax Massacre and Mechanics Hall Riot have lost their historic buildings and much integrity, but all events in this category deserve careful scrutiny to determine if an eligible associated property exists.



Figure 109: St. Joseph Courthouse Square, St. Joseph, Tensas Parish.

4. Homes or offices of political leaders and activists

As noted in the Professional and Artistic section, homes are sometimes the resources that best represent a significant individual. Although an office or other place of work would be the ideal representation of the political efforts of an individual, these places are often unknown or lost. A 1905 house in Shreveport is listed on the National Register for its significance as the home of C. C. Antoine, who was the state's lieutenant governor from 1872 to 1876 and was one of only three African Americans to hold statewide office during Reconstruction (Figure 110). In the absence of any other properties associated with Antoine's term in office, or another part of his life, his Shreveport home was considered eligible for its association with this significant individual. It is likely that homes are the only resources associated with the many other African American leaders of Reconstruction. As mentioned briefly in the Professional and Artistic section, the home of A. P. Tureaud is noted for its association with this relentless advocate for equal rights who is responsible for much pivotal litigation of the Civil Rights era in Louisiana (Figure 111).



Figure 110: C. C. Antoine House, Shreveport, Caddo Parish.



Figure 111: A. P. Tureaud House, New Orleans, Orleans Parish.

K. Military

Although the history of distinguished service of people of African descent in the military in Louisiana begins in the eighteenth century, the earliest known resources associated with this context date to the Civil War. The best known of these is the battlefield of Port Hudson, where the Union Army implemented the African American Native Guard soldiers in major combat for the first time. This State Historic Site is listed on the National Register for this significance. Fort Pike State Historic Site is also listed on the National Register, but its nomination for military and architectural significance mentions nothing of the Corps D’Afrique (Figure 112). Regiments of African American soldiers were trained and stationed at Fort Pike outside New Orleans and it was from here that the future governor, Capt. P. B. S. Pinchback, tendered his resignation, citing the impossibility of continuing in his situation due to the “inimical” behavior of his fellow officers.²⁶⁴ A notable association

with the Corps D’Afrique is also absent from the education-focused National Register nomination for Centenary College, which Union soldiers used as a recruiting and training center for the 12th Regiment of the Corps (Figure 113). In 1863, Confederate soldiers ambushed the 12th Regiment and other Union soldiers here and it was near here that captured Corps D’Afrique men were massacred in transit by Confederate troops. St. James AME Church in New Orleans, which had a distinctive antebellum history discussed elsewhere in this document, is also significant for its Civil War use as the headquarters of African American soldiers led by Colonel James Lewis.²⁶⁵ The diversity of these properties – a battlefield, a fort, a school, and a church – and the earlier lack of acknowledgement of the African American military significance of the latter three suggests that many other sites may have significant associations with this context yet to be recognized by Register listing. No associations with WWI, WWII, the Korean War or peacetime military activities of African Americans in Louisiana were identified for military sites already listed on the National Register, but there is good potential for the future identification of significant sites connected to the twentieth century military service of African Americans. One example of a property of this type that could potentially be significant for its association with this context is segregated military housing such as the Barksdale Annex, in



Figure 112: Fort Pike State Historic Site, New Orleans, Orleans Parish.



Figure 113: Centenary College, Jackson, East Feliciana Parish.

²⁶⁴ Hollandsworth, in Vincent, Part B, 74.

²⁶⁵ Kingsley, 78.

Bossier City. The Barksdale Annex provided housing for African American soldiers serving at Barksdale Air Force Base and their families (Figure 114). Military properties must reflect a particular aspect of the African American experience in the military, such as segregation, to be potentially eligible for the National Register for association with this context. Like all other properties, they must retain an easily recognizable historic appearance. Although location and setting are likely to be important integrity factors for the eligibility of military properties, these elements need to be evaluated in light of their affect on a specific candidate.



Figure 114: Typical housing unit, Barksdale Annex, Bossier City, Bossier Parish.

L. Medical

Medical treatment was another aspect of life seriously impeded by racism and segregation. While benevolent societies provided benefits to covers costs of receiving medical care, actually finding a provider was another matter. A big impediment to the creation of black doctors was the system of training in the medical field. Even though universities were providing medical programs, students needed to attain internship positions to become doctors and those were few and far between. Flint-Goodridge Hospital in New Orleans, built in 1931, was the only institution in the state throughout the 1930s offering internships to black doctors (Figure 115). It was also the only place where black nurses could receive professional training and the only facility in the city aside from Charity Hospital where African American patients could receive care. For this very significant role in the African American experience, Flint-Goodridge Hospital is listed on the National Register.



Figure 115: Flint-Goodridge Hospital, New Orleans, Orleans Parish.

The practice of medicine in the more rural parishes is embodied by the c. 1895 medical office of Dr. John H. Lowery in Donaldsonville (Figure 116). Dr. Lowery received his medical certificate from New Orleans University Medical College in 1894 and returned to his native town of Donaldsonville where he practiced medicine until 1941. He is also said to have studied at Flint-Goodridge, possibly prior to the construction of the current 1931 building, after the hospital's 1911 founding. His office, which appears on a 1906 map, was located beside his house. Typical of rural or small town offices of the period, it is a petite building measuring just 10' – 6" wide by 29' – 6" including the front porch. Its shotgun plan includes a waiting room at the front, an examining room in the middle, and an office at the rear. At the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century, Dr. Lowery's office



Figure 116: Dr. Lowery's Office, Donaldsonville, Ascension Parish.

was likely the only place in Donaldsonville and surrounding areas where many African Americans could receive medical care. Around 1908, Dr. Luther C. Speight also started a practice in Donaldsonville and surrounding areas. The limitations in medical care created by segregation make early medical facilities for African Americans of great import. Properties associated with this aspect of this context need only to have an easily recognizable historic appearance to be potentially eligible for the National Register. Location and setting will not be essential aspects of integrity for most small properties of this type. For example, Dr. Lowery's office was moved from its original location to another site in Donaldsonville. Although its setting has been changed, the office building still readily conveys its historic associations. For larger building complexes, like hospitals, location and setting communicate the property's role in the community and are more important aspects of integrity.

M. Districts

Districts are collections of properties which combine to form a distinctive whole. They may contain any of the above property types, but all of the properties in a district need not be individually eligible to contribute to the eligibility of the district as a whole. Every building within a district does not have to be a contributing element. It is almost inevitable that there will be modern intrusions in any given district, however they must be in the small minority of the properties and not in any way overwhelm the feeling of the district. Finally, a district must occupy a continuous geographical area with no holes or extreme narrowing in any part of the middle. In other words, district boundaries should not be drawn as donuts or hourglasses to artificially exclude large intrusions. In general, districts must retain a fair degree of integrity in all respects in order to be eligible for the National Register. To be eligible for the National Register in association with this context, a district must demonstrate one or more historical patterns of the African American Experience in Louisiana.

1. Residential and mixed residential/commercial/institutional neighborhoods

St. Paul's Bottoms, also known as Ledbetter Heights in Shreveport, which is listed on the National Register for its architectural significance is an excellent example of a predominately African American neighborhood of the late nineteenth to early twentieth century (Figure 117). The neighborhood's moniker derives from St. Paul's AME Church, and the low lying nature of terrain, a typical characteristic of the undesirable land apportioned to African Americans in other cities in the state as well. It was developed in the 1880s as a rental neighborhood for African Americans who were transitioning from agricultural work in the surrounding areas to urban jobs.

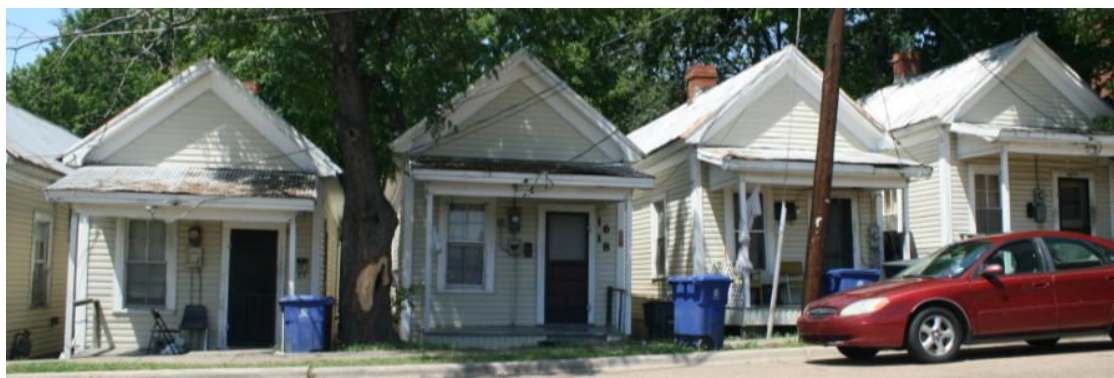


Figure 117: St. Paul's Bottoms, Shreveport, Caddo Parish.

Although the Bottom's originally had white as well as black residents, by the 1920s, it was a solidly African American neighborhood. Eventually it claimed the largest collection of shotgun houses outside of New Orleans, as well other housing types, shops, and churches. When it was nominated to the National Register in 1984, St. Paul's Bottoms was considered the most intact neighborhood of its type in Louisiana. Unlike similar working class neighborhoods in the state, St. Paul's Bottoms had not been ravaged by urban renewal or divided by modern highways. Since that time, however, it has suffered some significant losses through demolition. These losses are so substantial that delisting of the district has been considered. Although St. Paul's Bottoms no longer has the wonderfully intact collection of buildings that qualified it for nomination under Criterion C for architecture in 1984, the passage of time between then and now could allow for an extension of its period of significance and a reevaluation of the district for its associations with the African-American experience.

The period of significance in the original nomination for St. Paul's Bottoms ended at 1934. In 1999, an addendum to the nomination for a boundary extension for the district took the period of significance up to 1945, and added African-American history as an area of significance. If the district were reexamined today with a period of significance extending up to 1962 and a focus on the African American experience, other buildings and associations may be found to contribute to the district. For example, an unassuming 1950s brick and concrete block building that was previously designated a non-contributing element is notable as the home of KOKA, a gospel and rhythm and blues radio station (Figure 118). Some 10,000 people attended the building's dedication in 1959, which featured appearances by national celebrities.²⁶⁶ Today it is the home of the NAACP Multicultural Tourism Commission and the African American Chamber of Commerce. An example of an already contributing building that gains greater significance when evaluated with an extended period of significance and additional area of significance is Galilee Baptist Church of 1877 (Figure 119). It can be seen as contributing greatly to associations with the African American experience when it can be taken into account that Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. spoke here in 1958 and 1962, and that initiatives that led to the later desegregation of Shreveport schools also took place here.²⁶⁷ Although St. Paul's Bottoms physical losses are regrettable, its remaining buildings still tell the story of the migration of African Americans to urban areas in the late nineteenth century and their development of self-sufficient neighborhoods during the Jim Crow era.



Figure 118: KOKA Radio Station Building, St. Paul's Bottoms, Shreveport, Caddo Parish.



Figure 119: Galilee Baptist Church, St. Paul's Bottoms, Shreveport, Caddo Parish.

²⁶⁶ Dayna Bowker Lee and Autumn Campbell, "KOKA Radio Station," in "African American Heritage Tour of Shreveport-Bossier," Louisiana Regional Folklife Program, Louisiana Folklife Center at Northwestern State University, 2003, <http://winhttp.nsula.edu/regionalfolklife/aamct/pages/14.html> (accessed April 8, 2012).

²⁶⁷ Dayna Bowker Lee and Autumn Campbell, "Old Galilee Baptist Church," in "African American Heritage Tour of Shreveport-Bossier," Louisiana Regional Folklife Program, Louisiana Folklife Center at Northwestern State University, 2003, <http://winhttp.nsula.edu/regionalfolklife/aamct/pages/08.html> (accessed April 8, 2012).

A careful evaluation of all buildings in St. Paul's Bottoms would need to be undertaken to determine if the contributing elements outweigh the non-contributing ones, but it is hopeful that it may still have eligibility as a district. The case of St. Paul's Bottoms demonstrates part of the complexity of evaluating the eligibility of districts.

Although less well preserved than St. Paul's Bottoms and affected by just the type of interstate intrusion referenced above, Old South Baton Rouge (OSBR) is also a historic neighborhood with significant associations with the African American Experience in Louisiana (Figures 120 and 121). Nestled between the central business district and Louisiana State University, notably, it too was referred to as "The Bottom." While the story of St. Paul's Bottoms focuses on the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, an important aspect of OSBR's story is how it reflects the patterns of African American life in the 1940s and 1950s. Also composed of a rich stock of shotgun houses, bungalows, and other housing types, shops, and churches, Old South Baton Rouge is the location of the National Register listed McKinley High School (described above in the Education section). Although located outside of the neighborhood, the National Register listed Prince Hall Masonic Temple (described above in the Social section) was an important part of the vibrant social life of the community. It was also here that many of the participants in the groundbreaking Baton Rouge Bus Boycott lived. In short, the physical fabric of this area is intertwined with the historic development of a thriving African American community in the first half of the twentieth century.²⁶⁸ The Louisiana Division of Historic Preservation has declined to nominate Old South Baton Rouge in the past because it has suffered many losses and consequently has many "holes" however the potential eligibility of an OSBR district deserves careful reconsideration. As articulated above regarding St. Paul's Bottoms, the passage of time can allow for the inclusion of newer resources and more recent associated events. In addition, evolving perspectives on material integrity and changes that have occurred during a period of significance in regards to National Register eligibility may influence the assessment of potential districts like OSBR.

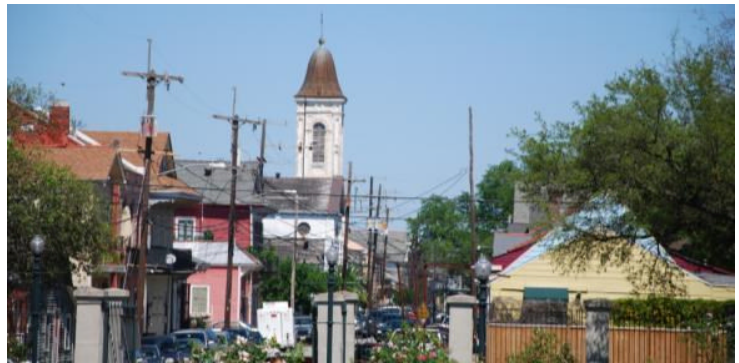


Figures 120 and 121: Old South Baton Rouge, Baton Rouge, East Baton Rouge Parish.



²⁶⁸ For a full treatment of Old South Baton Rouge's complex historical development, see the community study *Old South Baton Rouge: The Roots of Hope*, by Petra Munro Hendry and Jay D. Edwards.

There are other neighborhoods with distinctive African American histories that although not individually identified as historic districts, fall under the umbrella of larger historic districts. Examples of this are the Tremé neighborhood of New Orleans and part of Donaldsonville's Historic District. Tremé, which was home to many Free People of Color in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as described previously in this document, is considered by many to be the oldest black neighborhood in America (Figures 122 and 123). In the twentieth century, it continued to develop as a predominantly African American neighborhood which expressed its rich Creole heritage in many forms. The pulsating life of the community suffered serious wounds in the later part of twentieth century in the name of urban renewal and transportation improvements. An interstate cleaved the neighborhood in two, tearing through a main promenade and another large piece was demolished. In spite of these disruptions to the community life and loss of historic fabric, it remains a distinct historic neighborhood with notable association with the African American experience, though it receives only a short mention in the nomination for the much larger collective area of the Esplanade Ridge Historic District.



Figures 122 and 123: Tremé, New Orleans, Orleans Parish.

Within Donaldsonville's Historic District is an area that is distinguishable through historic records as the heart of the town's African American community. The fact that this community was composed of many professional people and leading citizens is recognizable by the size and quality of the buildings. While there are smaller working class homes, there are also substantial cottages and two-story Queen Anne residences. Because this Mississippi River town was mostly rebuilt after the Civil War, its building stock reflects the trends of the late 1800s in all regards: culture, religion, politics, transportation, planning, and architecture. The houses, churches, businesses, and other properties of a several block area speak to post-Civil War life of African Americans. Examples of some of these buildings, such as Dr. Lowery's Doctor's Office, St. Peter's United Methodist Church, and the True Friends Hall are mentioned elsewhere in this document. If it were not already part of a larger historic district, an area such as this could easily be eligible as a district for its associations with the African American Experience in Louisiana.

One other example of a type of neighborhood which could potentially be eligible for the National Register for its association with this context is Payton Place in West Feliciana Parish (Figure 124). This small neighborhood of a dozen homes was established by Elasco Payton, an African American landowner for other African American families who were being threatened with

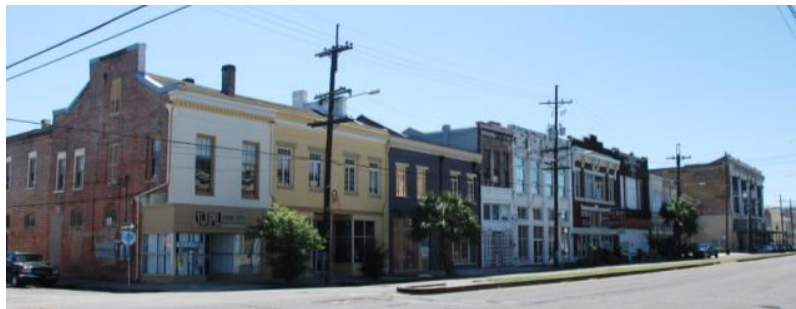
eviction by white landlords should they register to vote. The period of significance falls slightly outside of the fifty year mark at present and research would need to be done to confirm the exact development pattern and contextual circumstances for this neighborhood, but it has high potential significance for association with events of the Civil Rights movement.

2. Commercial districts

Areas that were primarily commercial in nature are another type of potential district. As discussed in the commercial properties section, Rampart Street in New Orleans was once a thriving commercial hub for the African American community. However, today, all that remains of that district are a few buildings interspersed with vacant lots. While the remaining buildings are individually eligible for the National Register, enough of the collective grouping of properties is not retained to be eligible as a district. An example of a commercial hub which does have enough building stock to retain a feeling of the lively commercial center it once was is Oretha Castle Haley Boulevard (formerly Dryades Street) in New Orleans (Figures 125 and 126). Anchored at its termination with Phillip Street by the Dryades Branch Street Library (now the YMCA and described in the Education section) the street was the home of Kaufman's and Handelman's department stores (noted in the Commercial section). It was one of the most important retail areas in the city and was the site of many Civil Rights demonstrations. As part of the larger Central City Historic District, Oretha Castle Haley Boulevard is not individually recognized for its significance, but should be acknowledged as an example of this property type within the state.



Figure 124: Payton Place, St. Francisville vicinity, West Feliciana Parish.



Figures 125 and 126: Oretha Castle Haley Boulevard, New Orleans, Orleans Parish.



The Texas Avenue Historic District in Shreveport, which encompasses the 800 block of the avenue, was nominated to the National Register for its architectural significance, but it has strong associations with the African American experience as well (Figure 127). Texas Avenue was a commercial destination for African Americans in Shreveport referred to simply as “The Avenue.” Another part of it was added to the St. Paul’s Bottoms Historic District in 1999. Five of the addresses in the Texas Avenue Historic District were traditionally occupied by African American businesses. These included a pharmacy, doctors and dentist offices, a newspaper, barbers, a shaving parlor, and a notary public. Other buildings on the block were occupied by Lebanese, Jewish, Italian, and Chinese businesses. This is evidence a phenomenon seen elsewhere in Louisiana as well; the coexistence of various groups of ethnic minorities and immigrants with African Americans on the outside of the white American mainstream during the early twentieth century.



Figure 127: Texas Avenue Historic District, Shreveport, Caddo Parish.

3. Suburbs

As the suburbanization of American occurred in the mid-twentieth century, African Americans were often excluded from the new developments. In 1955, Pontchartrain Park opened as the first subdivision for African Americans in New Orleans (Figures 128 and 129). This was a momentous event for the many African Americans who like others in the middle class in this period wanted new homes with the yards and other amenities of semi-suburban living. Emblematic of the achievement of truly equal housing opportunities



Figures 128 and 129: Pontchartrain Park, New Orleans, Orleans Parish.



in the mid-century segregated south, Pontchartrain Park is significant for its association with the African American Experience in Louisiana. It should be noted that as one of the later developed areas of New Orleans, Pontchartrain Park is in a lower lying part of the city which was devastated by Hurricane Katrina, but residents are fighting to restore this treasured and consequential historic neighborhood. Rebuilding post-Katrina has resulted in a lot of alterations to the historic fabric of the neighborhood, such that while the official determination of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Louisiana Division of Historic Preservation is that Pontchartrain Park is still eligible to be nominated as a historic district presently, there is a question as to whether it will remain eligible in the future.

4. Towns and Settlements

Towns and settlements tell a distinctive story of the African American experience in Louisiana, whether it is of the establishment of free life or of displacement. Rural communities of Free People of Color are the earliest examples of this classification of district. From Iberville Parish, to St. Landry Parish, to Point Coupée Parish, to Natchitoches Parish, and beyond there were enclaves of Free People of Color. A good portion of these were well-off and had substantial landholdings and homes. Many Free People of Color with smaller farms were concentrated in Calcasieu, Jefferson, Lafayette, Lafourche, Rapides, and St. Tammany Parishes.²⁶⁹ Although there is a fair amount of documentation of such settlements in the historic records, there is not a lot of data available regarding what historic resources remain of them, except for Isle Brevelle in Natchitoches Parish. Musicologists and linguists have produced scholarly research on such communities, but probably because of the focus of architectural historians on observable built resources, less is known about the subtle features or remodeled buildings that may survive to communicate important information about the formative years of these settlements.

Following the Civil War, newly freed people found little success in securing land for their own farms or communities (see page 34). Government programs intended to help freed people attain landownership were largely unsuccessful and not many white landowners were willing to sell to African Americans. Thus, African-American communities established shortly after the Civil War are significant examples of an uncommon story. Perhaps the most well-documented and best preserved early post-bellum African-American community in Louisiana is Dorseyville in Iberville Parish. Dorseyville was established shortly after the Civil War by people laboring on the surrounding sugar cane plantations. The oldest standing building in the community is believed to be St. John Baptist Church, constructed c. 1871 and listed on the National Register as a representation of the early settlement of Dorseyville (see Religious). The Dorseyville School, built in 1893 is another significant nineteenth century landmark in the community (see Educational). Although residential buildings from the early years of Dorseyville's settlement may not survive in their original form, the community definitely retains a late nineteenth-century to early twentieth-century character. It is very likely that a careful analysis of property records, the collection of family oral histories and an examination of privately held family records could reveal a more detailed history of the founding of Dorseyville than is presently understood. It is also very likely that many of the present buildings, though not dating to the earliest period of establishment reflect the settlement history of Dorseyville through their familial associations. It is without a doubt a community worthy of study and a close study could help to establish potential National Register eligibility for the community.

Though there must certainly be others, only two other surviving settlements were identified during this study as being the direct product of liberated slaves. Those are Freetown in St. James Parish and Mossville in Calcasieu Parish. Freetown was established in 1866 from a row of cabins. It remains a small community today, but one that has maintained a sense of its history. As in other settlements of its kind, properties have been passed down from one generation to the next in Freetown. In 1999, Dr. Clyde C. Robertson completed a study of the community entitled "Pride and Perseverance: A Case Study of a Louisiana Freetown Community" which showed

²⁶⁹ Sterkx, 214.

that descendents of some of the early settlers still reside in the Freetown.²⁷⁰ Although there is only one building in the community that appears to possibly date to the turn of the twentieth century, the continued residency by generations of the same families since the early post-bellum period presents a great opportunity for archaeological study. Therefore, it is possible that the community could have potential National Register eligibility under Criterion D for its likeliness to yield important information about history.

Mossville also shows little visible evidence of its early settlement history, but it retains twentieth century buildings that speak to the later history and evolution of the community. The Mossville School built in 1957 is a community landmark. Mossville's history cannot be mentioned without acknowledging



Figures 130 and 131: Mossville, Calcasieu Parish.

its present day circumstances. The town made headlines in recent years for the poisoning of its residents by toxic pollution from the adjacent chemical plant. The situation has been partially addressed through buyouts and relocation. Signs on some lawns in town suggest that anyone who wants to live a long and healthy life should move. Along with the ultimate loss of lives and health, Mossville's population has suffered a loss of their rootedness in a place with a sense of their history.²⁷¹ The displacement of Mossville's



population will also make it more difficult for future researchers to document the oral histories that often hold the key to understanding significant historical patterns in a community. In the face of its present catastrophe, Mossville should be documented and recognized for its history. It has potential National Register eligibility under Criterion A in individual buildings like the Mossville School and under Criterion D for the likeliness to yield information about history through archaeological discovery.

While of a more recent vintage, late nineteenth century African American settlements are equally obscure in the documentation of historic properties. A rare example of a late nineteenth century settlement with a published genesis story is Bobtown in Terrebonne Parish (Figure). In 1898, an African American man named Robert Celestin and his father-in-law Bob Greasy purchased a large portion of a plantation in Terrebonne Parish and established a village they named Bobtown. Robert and his wife Betsy had twelve children and the town continued to expand with each generation. The founder and patriarch Robert Celestin died in 1952, but the town continued on,

²⁷⁰ Thomas J. Durant, Jr., *Our Roots Run Deep: A History of the African American Museum* (Virginia Beach: The Donning Company Publishers, 2002), 164-65.

²⁷¹ Fran Dexter Brown, "Mossville: A Story of Life and Death," EarthAfrica News Service, April 9, 2001, SeeingBlack.com, <http://www.seeingblack.com/x040901/mossville.shtml> (accessed October 9, 2011); Adrienne Appel, "Officials Allow Dioxin to Publish Historically Black Town," Inter Press Service, July 25, 2007, FinalCallNews.com, http://www.finalcall.com/artman/publish/article_3813.shtml, (accessed October, 9, 2011).

preserving the history of this remote and independent African American place.²⁷² Today, the settlement remains, but there is no apparent evidence of its early-twentieth century buildings. Most buildings in the area have been elevated to protect them from the inevitable flooding of this watery southern tip of Terrebonne Parish. The Bobtown cemetery, which is still in use, and archaeological remains may be the only surviving material fabric from the historic period.

The precarious condition of what remains of late nineteenth century African American settlements and the need to address their documentation is gaining recognition in many parts of the country. Of the significance of even just traces of late nineteenth century African American settlements, the Multiple Property Documentation Form for the African American Historic Resources of Prince George's County Maryland states:

The situation and form of these settlements, their relations to the roads and waterways, and their location with respect to large, white-owned farms provides important information about the transition from bondage to freedom. . . . their surviving elements – churches, cemeteries, or road junctions – can provide potentially important information about the web of kinship and interrelationships within the African American community.²⁷³

In the article “Race, the National Register, and Cultural Resource Management: Creating an Historic Context for Postbellum Sites,” based on a study focusing on archaeology in Texas, the author asserts that multidisciplinary research is essential for identifying significant postbellum African American sites and concludes that:

If steps are not taken soon to eradicate this problem [of disregarding context], the result will be that few late-19th –century African American sites will be federally or locally protected. This era, and those who experienced it and their descendents will remain “without history” indefinitely.²⁷⁴

And in North Carolina, residents’ concerns over threatened demolitions prompted diligent study of land records, oral histories, and private family documents that constructed a clear and compelling history of a settlement of freed people that could not be determined through standard architectural survey methods.²⁷⁵

The common consensus of these independent studies is that late nineteenth century settlements may not be easily recognizable architecturally as distinctive historic places, but are worthy of the intensive research their identification requires because of their significance to the patterns of the African American experience and hence to the broader American experience. This should also be considered true for earlier and later settlements. Rural settlements are particularly ephemeral parts of our cultural landscape as people are increasingly drawn out of historic rural communities to education and jobs elsewhere. The rural landscape had changed significantly over the past

²⁷² Roland Charles, “Bobtown: The Legacy of Robert Celestin,” *The Crisis* 104, no. 2 (October, 1997): 46-47.

²⁷³ Bird, 58.

²⁷⁴ Kerri S. Barile, “Race, the National Register, and Cultural Resource Management: Creating an Historic Context for Postbellum Sites,” *Historical Archaeology* 38, no. 1 (2004), 98.

²⁷⁵ Heather Fearnbach, “From Farm to Factory: Continuity and Change in the Bethania Freedmen’s Community” (paper presented at the 29th Annual Meeting of the Southeast Chapter of the Society of Architectural Historians, Charleston, SC, October 27, 2011).

century with the mechanization of agriculture and the increase in acres cultivated by single entities, but when the traces of historic settlements begin to be recognized, then our history comes into focus and our present regains its context.

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

This context is limited to the geographic parameters of the state of Louisiana.

SUMMARY OF IDENTIFICATION AND EVALUATION METHODS

Identification of associated properties began with a review of the Louisiana National Register of Historic Places Database, which includes African-American Heritage as a searchable theme. In order to establish a list of potential associated properties that could be easily sorted by dates, location, or property types, an Excel spreadsheet was created and the fifty-eight properties found in the database under African-American Heritage provided the starting pool of properties. This was substantially augmented through an examination by Project Developer, Kristin Sanders of files for some thirty parishes in the Louisiana Historic Standing Structures Survey collection. All of the files identified by Sanders as potentially related to this context were sent to the consultant in digital form. These files were all subsequently reviewed by the consultant and information for each property was added to the list. The consultant also reviewed some parish files in the Louisiana Historic Standing Structures Survey collection and identified additional properties. Another group of properties was identified through the study of *Buildings of Louisiana* by Karen Kingsley. Still additional properties were identified by research of Historic American Buildings Survey files, personal knowledge, and knowledgeable contacts. In addition, as research progressed, other associated properties were periodically identified. Eventually 161 resources representing thirty-nine of the state's sixty-four parishes were included on the spreadsheet of properties.

The windshield survey, a typical architectural survey, method was not employed for this project for two reasons. The primary reason was that the geographic area of the state of Louisiana was entirely too large to survey in this manner during the nineteen month duration of the project. Existing survey files were instead depended upon for the type of information this technique might produce. The second reason for not using a windshield survey as a means of identifying extant properties associated with this project was the fact that visual clues are often not an effective means of identifying a property's historic associations. Only a few property types, such as Rosenwald schools, have distinctive forms or features that help to identify them visually as African American properties. Whereas buildings that are significant for their architectural design, materials, and craftsmanship may be easily identified by visual inspection, buildings connected with the African American Experience in Louisiana must be studied through additional multidisciplinary methods in order to recognize the associative value of their history. These methods include a combination of archaeology, oral interviews, and archival research.

Although windshield survey was not utilized as an essential tool of this project, it was certainly used in a less systematic manner during travels to properties. However, only one property of interest was identified by this method. This building was an early nineteenth-century frame church very much like a National Register listed one in the area. A modern church next to it had a plaque with a founding date of 1867 that suggested a good possibility that it was established by freed people. However, a letter left in the door and subsequent phone calls did not garner any more information about the property. A crosscheck of survey files for this area revealed that it had been surveyed and simply not noted for any possible African American

associations. This further confirmed the limitations of standard surveys in identifying properties for this project without a more intensive level of interdisciplinary research than could be completed for properties across the entire state within the time limits of this project.

Once the list of 161 properties was established, a review was conducted to identify those appearing to have true significance in association with this context. This selection process was heavily based on property type and dates, with consideration of background history when available. For example, because many potentially relevant churches accompanied by sparse historical notes had been found in the survey files, only those that appeared to retain a good deal of integrity were chosen for onsite documentation. On the other hand, singular examples of a type, such as a slave chapel, were automatically marked for identification. Properties already listed on the National Register were likewise automatically considered worthy of new photography. Initially, 109 properties were selected for site investigation and photographic documentation. This list ended up being revised considerably. As soon as field work began, it was discovered that many previously surveyed properties had been demolished while others were found to have been incorrectly identified or associated with inaccurate histories.

When it became clear that chasing after buildings surveyed decades ago could waste valuable project time, attention was refocused on outlining the background history and associated property types of the context. This allowed for a much more informed and selective evaluation of the individual and collective significance of the identified properties. While the rough inventory of properties associated with the context had helped to shape research of the context, the broad historic pattern of the context now sharpened the assessment of the properties. Ultimately, 114 properties representing thirty of the state's sixty-four parishes were felt to be notable examples of the property types defined in relation to this context. While the list had started with just fifty-eight National Register listed properties, the final list actually included eighty-two National Register listed properties. The reason this balance of twenty-four National Register listed properties had not been identified as associated properties at the outset is that their nominations either obscured their associations with African American history altogether or mentioned it only briefly while arguing the significance of the property's architecture or other historic associations.

The fact that there were so many properties in Louisiana already listed on the National Register with important associations with the African American Experience in Louisiana was a slightly surprising revelation of this project. While it should be obvious that a great many architecturally and historically significant properties would have association with the three-hundred years of the African American Experience in Louisiana, the element of surprise came because of the fact that African American history is simultaneously underrepresented on the National Register. The conclusion that should be drawn from this is that we need to do a better job not just of identifying and nominating significant African American properties, but of articulating all of the history of a given property, not simply that which contributes most forcefully to an argument of significance. National Register nominations now do this much more so than they did thirty and forty years ago, but in light of this finding it is well worth considering and investigating the African American associations of any property so that we may better understand the whole story that the historic buildings we value can tell of our national collective experience. Only in this way, will a more holistic view of the inherent connections

between Louisiana's historic resources and its rich African American heritage become more apparent.

Finally, while the 114 properties discussed above are felt to provide a strong selection of examples of this context's associated property types, this is a mere starting point for identifying properties related to the African American Experience in Louisiana. It is hoped that this context will provide a foundation to build upon and inspire much more research of this topic. A true inventory of properties associated with the African American Experience in Louisiana will be best accomplished through many local efforts. In every community, there are elders who hold the key to local history and the identification of significant places in their memories. Through the collection of oral histories, research of private and public historic records and coordination with archaeological studies, there is tremendous potential to bring the details of the African American experience that lie latent in the cultural landscape of Louisiana to life.

ILLUSTRATION CREDITS

All photographs by Laura Ewen Blokker except figure 21 by Marion Post Wolcott and figures 5, 6, 7, 14, 27, 33, 34, 35, 64, 67, 70, 71, 75, 78, 79, 80, 84, 93, 98, 99, 101, 102, 104, 107, 111, 112, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 128, and 129 by Charles Leshner.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author is greatly indebted to the many people across the state who contributed to this project by generously sharing their knowledge of the history and historic resources related to the African American Experience in Louisiana. Without their assistance and dedication to the preservation of history this context would lack breadth and depth, and many of the historic resources described herein would no longer exist.

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