suitability/feasibility study

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PROPOSED

JEAN LAFITTE

NATIONAL CULTURAL PARK • LOUISIANA

This report was prepared pursuant to authorization in the fiscal year 1973 Interior Appropriations Act (Public Law 92-369 of August 10, 1972), with the further guidance of House Report 92-1119 on that bill and Assistant Secretary Reed's letter of October 12, 1972, to the late Congressman Hale Boggs. Publication of the findings and recommendations herein should not be construed as representing either the approval or disapproval of the Secretary of the Interior. The purpose of this report is to provide information and alternatives for further consideration by the public, the National Park Service, the Secretary of the Interior, and other Federal agencies.

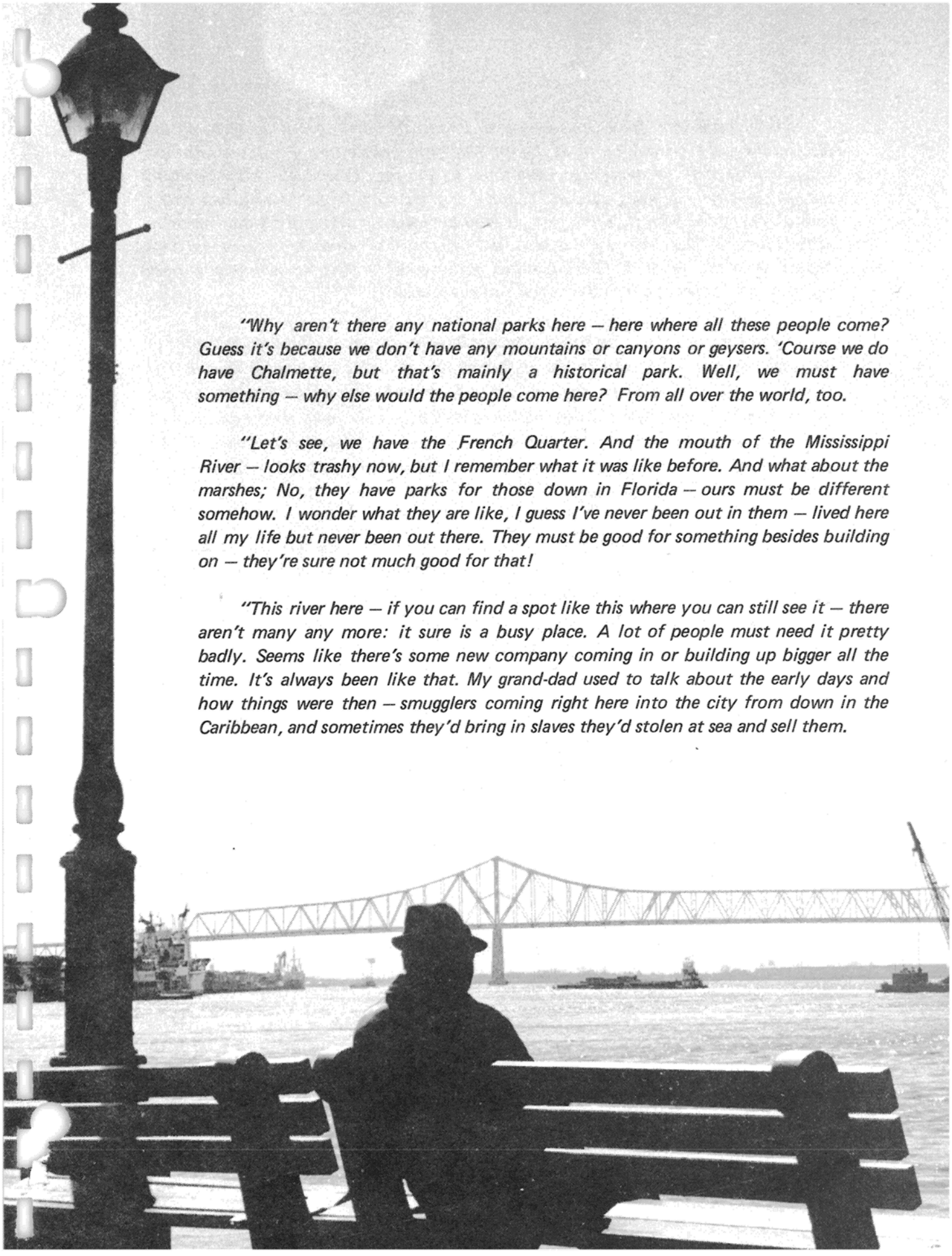
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This is a feasibility study: It locates and describes resources for potential inclusion in a prospective new unit of the National Park System, determining their national significance and suitability for visitor use. It also identifies and evaluates alternative courses of action for protection, development, and public use (including management category — natural, recreational, historical, or cultural); recommends one; and, if the recommendation is accepted, suggests that a master plan be prepared.

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"Why aren't there any national parks here – here where all these people come? Guess it's because we don't have any mountains or canyons or geysers. 'Course we do have Chalmette, but that's mainly a historical park. Well, we must have something – why else would the people come here? From all over the world, too.

"Let's see, we have the French Quarter. And the mouth of the Mississippi River – looks trashy now, but I remember what it was like before. And what about the marshes; No, they have parks for those down in Florida – ours must be different somehow. I wonder what they are like, I guess I've never been out in them – lived here all my life but never been out there. They must be good for something besides building on – they're sure not much good for that!

"This river here – if you can find a spot like this where you can still see it – there aren't many any more: it sure is a busy place. A lot of people must need it pretty badly. Seems like there's some new company coming in or building up bigger all the time. It's always been like that. My grand-dad used to talk about the early days and how things were then – smugglers coming right here into the city from down in the Caribbean, and sometimes they'd bring in slaves they'd stolen at sea and sell them.

"Even back then New Orleans was an important port – goods going to all the plantations and even way up to St. Louis. That Jean Lafitte sure put things together, what with owning the ships, organizing those swamp men to smuggle up the goods to sell in the city and away upriver. Quite a businessman. Probably why he's still a legend. Must have been patriotic, too, at least he was a big help in the fight over there at Chalmette – they call it the Battle of New Orleans. It's hard to tell what would have happened to this place if the English had gotten into the city. Probably would have changed the whole history of the rest of America, too.

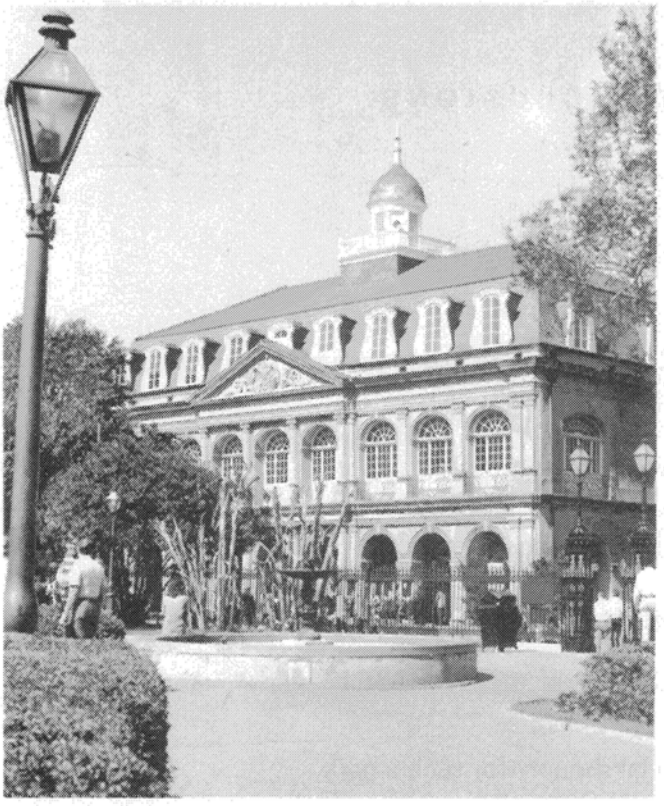
"You know, if you stop to think about it, three different countries had a lot to do with this place. It's easy to see what they left behind, or at least to hear it. The French left their language and their way of looking at life. But it's the Spanish you can see the most of, what with all those buildings with patios, wrought iron, and balconies. Real architects they were. The English left their mark too, even if they never put their crown on us. After all, those early Americans had just gotten free in the colonies a little before the Lafitte days here.

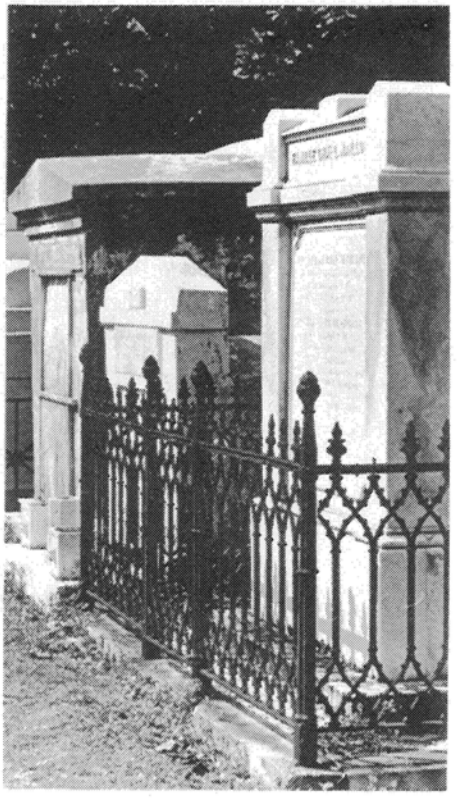
"Lots of folks like the Cajuns the best, though, living on the bayous and speaking that French of theirs. They play some good music Saturday nights, too, and I sure do like all that spicy Cajun food. That might be more African, though – the early slave cooks could have started that. And that African music – started out in Congo Square here and ended up all over the world. They call it jazz now, but I think it came in on the slave boats.

"A lot of bits and pieces in this area – I'll bet you can't find as much culture anywhere else. 'Course I don't mean that big city type of culture. Maybe I'm too old to have much sense anymore, but it seems to me we could make a park out of it – as good as Yellowstone or Grand Canyon too! Sure would be a lot more fun as far as I can see anyway. Sure is a shame to lose, too. But it'd be just as bad for Uncle Sam to buy us out to preserve us. We're not like that. Might as well the British would have won the battle. What we ought to have is something to draw the things out that link us up with the old days and make this place special now, sort of make everything into a story for all the people to hear so they could know about it and take part in it. Don't you think they'd like that? Even some of these young folks like the old things now. At least they go into all those antique stores down on Royal Street.

"Maybe if they made a park here they could save some of these things before they're all gone – you know, the old churches and Lafitte's shop and maybe even some of his marsh. It sure would be a shame for all the people to come here and not be able to find out what we're really all about.

"Probably won't ever happen, though. Too many other things going on. Probably won't matter – no one'll even know the difference in a few years. Maybe the people will stop coming if they can't find out our story. Sure hope I'm gone by then."









CONCLUSIONS

A Jean Lafitte National Cultural Park is recommended as a feasible park because of:

existing historic sites of established national significance, now eligible for inclusion in the National Park System.

existing evidence of major European and African cultural contributions.

existing natural resources in a suitable marsh area.

existing appreciation of cultural and natural resources.

existing local and regional support for such a park.

existing tourism.

existing national and international interest in the Lafitte story and cultural symbol.

existing environmental concern for the delta and growing awareness of the processes operative there.

The park goal is:

to interpret the unique blend of the region's cultures, using the Lafitte career and personality as a thematic vehicle.

to preserve, reclaim, and perpetuate significant cultural and natural environments of the region.

A cultural park designation is optimum for the park because:

it allows a more encompassing theme than the historical park category, incorporating not only past traditions but current values of the living region, and extending to an environmental ethic – all with limited Federal direction and expense. While a historical park is also feasible, it cannot embrace the full resource and so would represent an opportunity lost; at best it could be justified only as an interim step in implementing the ultimate goal.

This goal will be met:

by associating National Park Service and other resources through a National Cultural Park Board.

by participating in a Regional Commission that would encourage continuance of the dynamic delta man/environment life system as one of national and international significance.

Now is the time to establish the park because:

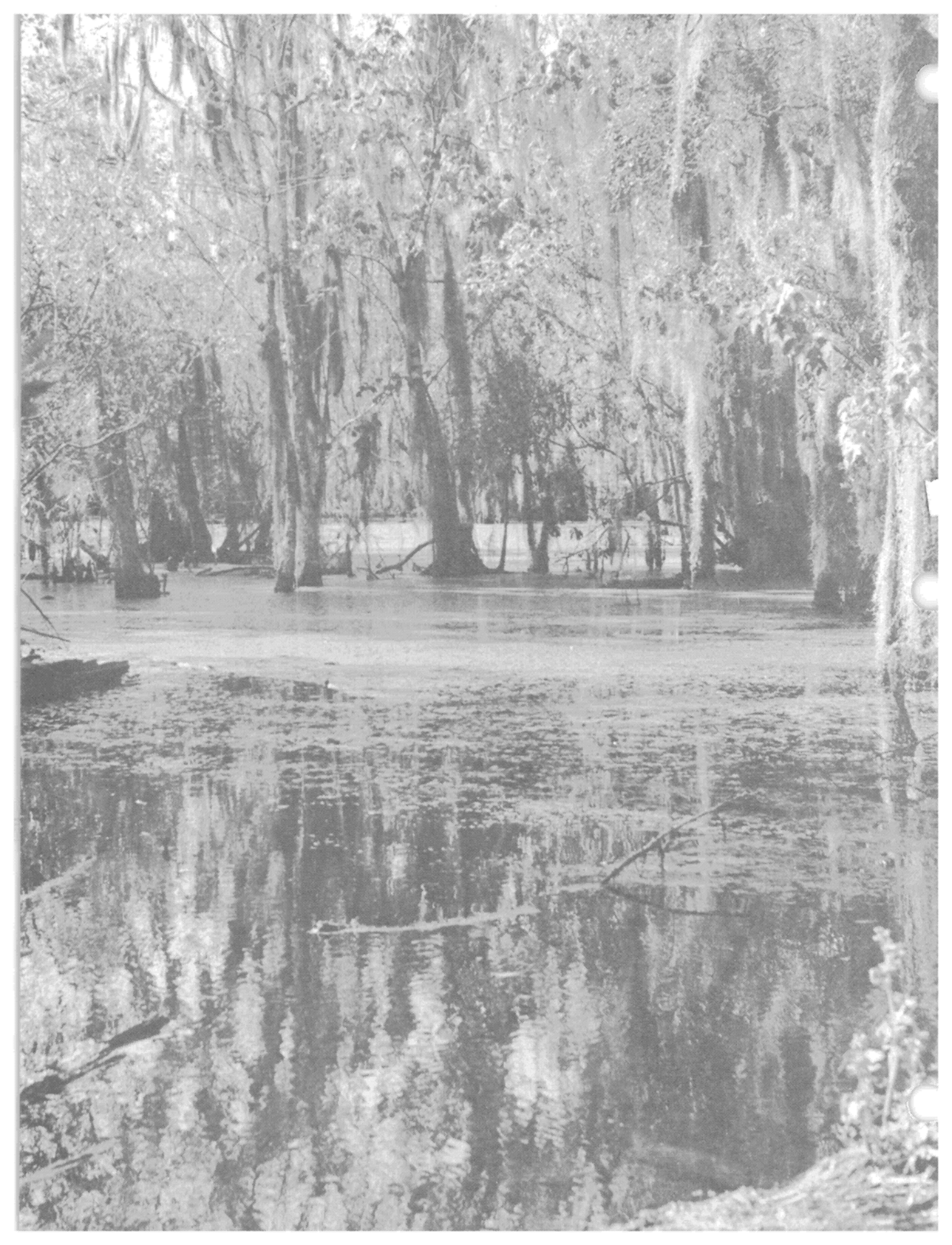
the land base and the cultural resources are eroding, and the commitment required to assure success of the park concept will become greater with each passing month. Administrative goals are supportive of present action: The park would respond affirmatively to the needs of an urban area. The area is not already saturated by the National Park System (of nearly 300 areas of the system, Louisiana has but one, Chalmette National Historical Park). The cultural/historical values of the area are directly relevant to the National Bicentennial concept; they illustrate a mainstream of the cultural blood of the Nation. The cost of establishing the park would be relatively low because of the association principle of management – extended resources would not be acquired or operated directly. The Commission would embody governing principles of self-determination of needs and would be a positive step toward salvage of environments critical to the Nation.

Louisiana's coastal zone is marked by its history. Many features survive from days of origin – early village sites, plantations, churches, and forts-while cultural traditions survive in living groups. But do visitors to this region find what they came seeking? Do they realize the implications?

The region also contains unique topographical, geological, and biological features – barrier beaches, swamps and marshes, salt domes, mud lumps, and the meander belts of the Mississippi River. Beyond question the coastal zone is an important part of our dwindling natural heritage; and the philosophical argument for preservation of wild rivers, scenic canyons, and mountain fastnesses apply here with equal force.

Inaction may not doom a wild area insulated from masses of men; but in the delta region, inaction will mean a continuation of present trends, with probable loss of the resource itself. It is a time of decision for Barataria, for Louisiana, for the Nation.

We present this proposal for a unique cultural park, not only for its intrinsic qualities, but as a vehicle of assistance in this time of decision.



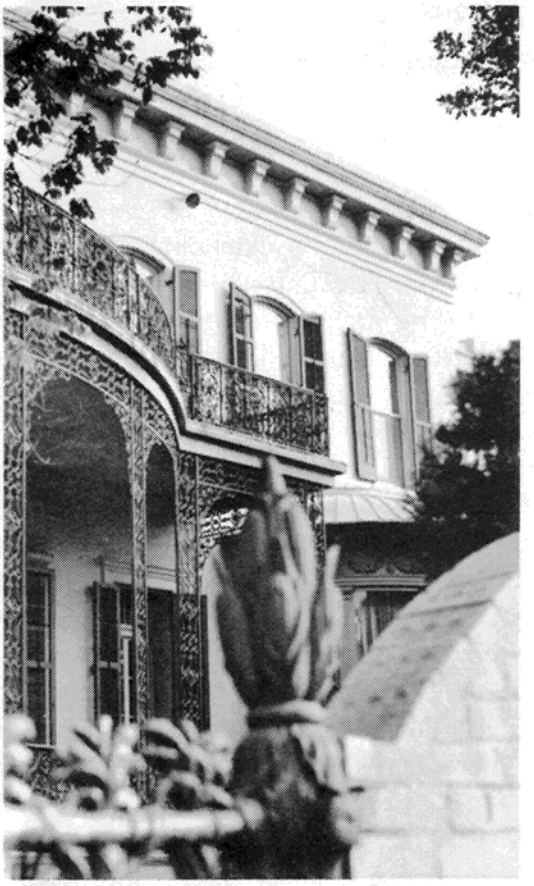
SYNOPSIS
the Jean Lafitte country

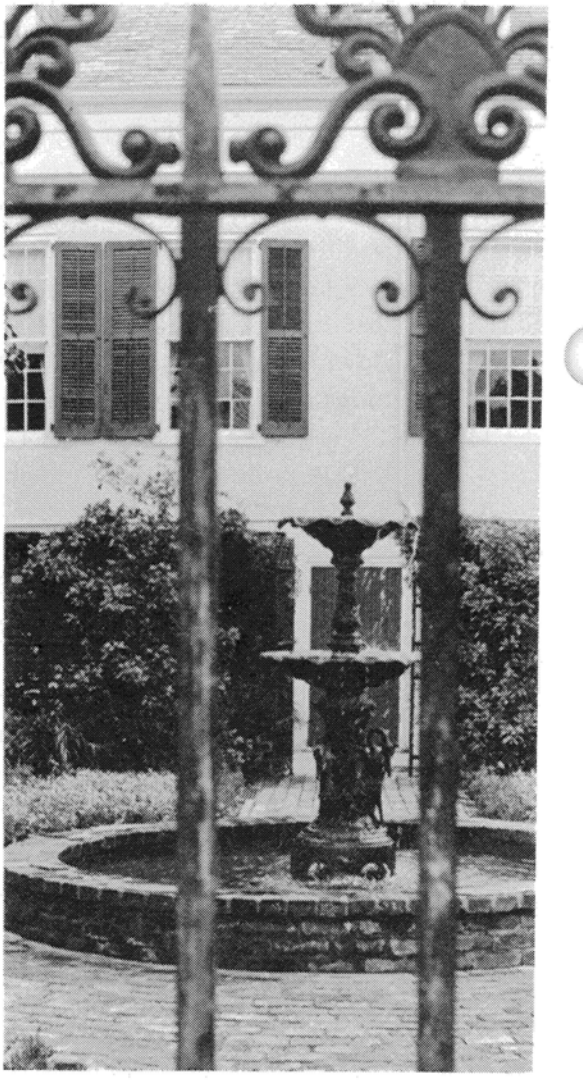
The Mississippi Delta of bayou, marsh, and swamp extending south from New Orleans to the gulf shore is Jean Lafitte's country. He is the knot that ties together this region's otherwise diverse strands of culture, history, and nature. As such he is a larger-than-life historic figure whose career illuminates the story of man's use of and impact upon this unusual natural environment – and of its impact upon man. Too, Lafitte's unique standing with competing colonial powers gives insight into the struggles of England, Spain, France, and the United States as each nation sought to influence America's interior by controlling the mouth of the country's greatest waterway. And Lafitte's involvement with the slave trade also bears on the African cultural dimension that heavily influenced evolving European traditions in Louisiana. Today, the resultant amalgam of architecture, people, and varied land uses not only vitalizes the local economy and society, but also attracts millions of visitors each year to experience New Orleans' traditions of jazz entertainment, Mardi Gras festival, and indigenous foods – all in a historic setting.

Lafitte influenced the social and economic changes during the region's heyday in the early 1800s, the "Lafitte period." A privateer on the high seas, he and his band of 1,500 men smuggled their booty of slaves and supplies through the watery maze of Barataria to goods-starved plantations. These establishments, occupying the high ground of natural levees along the flowing rivers and bayous, were on the only dry land in the area.

It was at such a plantation on such a natural levee – an easily defended bottleneck on the route to New Orleans – that Lafitte's men fought as allies of General Andrew Jackson in the Battle of New Orleans, which defeated the British and secured the Louisiana Purchase for the United States. For this service, Lafitte's men were pardoned for their shady past. Interestingly, Lafitte had received offers to fight for the British. Had he and his men done so, the battle might have been a British victory instead of Jackson's.

Today, Lafitte is remembered by a namesake town near his Barataria headquarters, by popular writings and movies, and by associations real and legendary in the French Quarter of New Orleans. But even more, history and romance link Lafitte with all aspects of the bayou country, just as Davy Crockett and Paul Bunyon signify their areas and eras.







BACKGROUND

HISTORY OF THE PROPOSAL

Interest in a Jean Lafitte Park generated spontaneously among citizens of Louisiana's Jefferson Parish almost a decade ago. From the start it centered on a swamp and marsh area 10 miles south of New Orleans, just east of Lake Salvador – an area with potential natural, scenic, historic, and recreational values. Concrete endorsement of the park idea occurred through adoption of Act Number 100 of the 1966 Louisiana Legislature when the Louisiana State Parks and Recreation Commission was "authorized and requested to create the Lafitte State Park (Jefferson Parish, Louisiana) which shall be under its direction and control." Approximately 3,000 acres were authorized, and a concept for development was then drawn up by the Commission, suggesting recreational facilities for boating, fishing, and camping; cabins; historical and natural interpretation; museums; animal enclosures; and boardwalks. However, park lands have not been acquired, and the proposal is presently dormant.

The next event was the introduction of HR 11056 by the late House Democratic Leader, Louisiana Congressman Hale Boggs.

This bill was intended:

> . . . to authorize a study of the feasibility and desirability of establishing a unit of the National Park System to commemorate the unique values of the Barataria region of Louisiana, and for other purposes, to be known as the Jean Lafitte National Cultural Park.

lake pontchartrain

10

river

mississippi

bonnet carre waterfowl management area

new orleans

ORLEANS PARISH

lake borgne

biloxi wildlife management area

waterway

ASSUMPTION PARISH

ST. JAMES PARISH

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST PARISH

ST. CHARLES PARISH

proposed I-49

ST. BERNARD PARISH

intracoastal

LAFOURCHE

1

90

salvador game management area

PARISH

morgan city

waterway

houma

TERREBONNE PARISH

intracoastal

waterway

proposed lafitte-larose highway

JEFFERSON PARISH

missi ssippi

PLAQUEMINES

23

PARISH

river

breton sound

bohemia wildlife refuge

pointe au chien game management area

1

wisner wildlife management area

gulf of mexico

delta migratory waterfowl refuge

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ries

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st. martinville
loreauville
new iberia
IBERIA PARISH
ST. MARY PARISH
ATCHAFALAYA BASIN
ST. MARTIN PARISH
WATERWAY
ASSUMPTION PARISH
INTRACOASTAL
morgan city
1
90
LAFOURCHE
TERREBONNE PARISH
houma
INTRACOASTAL
WATERWAY
russell sage game refuge
MISSISSIPPI RIVER
10
ST. JAMES PARISH
ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST PARISH
ST. CHARLES PARISH
lake pontchartrain
bonnet carre waterfowl management area
proposed I-49
salvador game management area
PARISH
proposed lafitte-larose highway
JEFFERSON PARISH
pointe au chien game management area
1
wisner wildlife management area

parish boundaries

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Subsequently, it was determined that authority to conduct the study already existed within the Interior Department. Assistant Secretary Reed noted in his October 12, 1972, report on the park bill that the Department's 1973 appropriation bill contained an item of $40,000 for a "Feasibility Study, Jean Lafitte Park, Louisiana," and he informed Chairman Aspinall of the House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs that the Department intended to complete that study. A significant guideline in Reed's report states:

> The Department would not restrict a study of the Barataria area to determining whether a national cultural park could appropriately be located there, but would consider the full range of possible recreational and conservation uses in the area.

The National Park Service then undertook the study. Principal field work was accomplished from December 1972 through March 1973, with trips to study ecological resources, research historical records, meet with interested agencies and individuals, study sociological factors, inspect cultural features, and assist a congressional tour. On October 2, 1973, Congresswoman Boggs introduced the skeleton bill HR 10665 "to authorize the establishment of the Jean Lafitte National Historical Park."

Indicative of the local sentiments behind these actions is the sign the State highway department has erected on State route 45: "Site of Proposed Jean Lafitte National Park." More substantially, planning and zoning actions in the region, including street layouts, levees, and major highway alignments, are sensitive to the park proposal.

THE STUDY AREA

The geographic study-area limits are loosely defined as encompassing the Mississippi Delta west of the river and south of New Orleans, mainly within a region threaded by the Bayou Barataria waterway from the river to the open water of Barataria Bay next to the Gulf of Mexico, and known simply as Barataria. The thematic study area limits are also loose, although always associated with the Jean Lafitte cultural symbol.

Consequently, the boundaries expanded and contracted during the study, and they remain flexible. The search for historical and cultural ties led out of the narrower region, and contemplated prologues and aftermaths as well as the critical 1800-1815 historic period. After ecological analysis, the area of concern expanded to the entire delta region, but the focus of interest became the immediate vicinity of the authorized Jean Lafitte State Park.

THE REGIONAL CONTEXT

Southern Louisiana – the most extensive marsh ecosystem complex in the United States – is more like the Netherlands than the rest of America. The "inland" delta of California's Sacramento River is similar, as are the deltas of Egypt's Nile River and South Vietnam's Mekong region. Thus, while not unique in the world, this Mississippi Delta area is an unusual and distinct type of landform, with particular environmental dynamics. It should be considered individually rather than as just a wetter part of the solid American continent to which a different set of assumptions and uses apply.

As with all deltas, the Mississippi Delta is a zone of rapid interactions between fluvial and marine processes, one of the most dynamic situations in nature. Interfaces between land and water are vague – both in space and time. In its upper reaches above New Orleans, there is a bit more land than water, at least most of the time. In middle sections below New Orleans, in Barataria, the proportion is nearer even. Farther down still, and consequently more seaward where the delta is youngest, the land/water ratio changes in favor of the fish.

In this fluid place, rainfall is also heavy with an average of 63 inches annually, distributed fairly evenly over the year but with somewhat more rain falling in spring and fall. Humidity is always high in this semi-tropical climate. Freezing temperatures are rare, as is snow. Monthly temperature means are 76 to 81 degrees F in summer, and 53 to 58 degrees F in winter. Historical extremes are a low of 7 degrees F and a high of 102 degrees F. A hurricane or other intense tropical storm passes through every 2 years on the average, occasionally with devastating effect. Hurricane Hilda in 1964 was accompanied by a water-level rise of 3.6 feet. This is significant where little area is above sea level. In Barataria no natural point of land is over 5 feet above sea level, and even in the city of New Orleans land over 10 feet high occurs only occasionally along the river banks. As if the storms were not enough, the Mississippi brings the annual floods from the interior of North America.

Drier land areas are confined to narrow strips of natural levees alongside the river and bayous, and in places are widened artificially by man by diking and draining of former swamps. These are the sites where people live and carry on their business. Shells are often dredged from lake bottoms (and sometimes Indian mounds) and spread in such sites to provide improved footing to the otherwise mucky soil. Houses and other buildings may be elevated above flood level, and open underneath. The boat is a common form of transportation. Interestingly, owners' lots – both residential and business – usually have the boat dock at the front door and the road at the back. Lots are long and narrow, so that more people have access to the river frontage, a factor which also produced long and narrow houses, called "shotguns." Nevertheless, the roads now carry most of the traffic.

Beyond these corridors of human habitation lie, successively, swamp, marsh, open estuaries, and shallow bays, all supporting a productive fishery and the Nation's largest commercial shellfish industry. Vegetation grows rapidly in the warm climate, providing abundant food for the animals, and its remains often make up a major part of the soil.

Alligators are present, as are the marsh-dwelling muskrat and nutria. Too, some 5 million ducks and a half million geese winter in Louisiana's coastal marshes. Large State and Federal wildlife management areas, game preserves, and migratory waterfowl refuges are operated in the region, including the Lousiana Wild Life and Fisheries Commission's Salvador Game Management Area west of Lake Salvador. The sum total of these and other wildlife resources in the State helps support Louisiana's claim as the "Sportsman's Paradise."

Perhaps it is because man is a land animal that this watery environment seems so hardy to him. Actually, it is delicate. Minor differences in salinity, depth, and strength of flow dictate entirely different conditions for the life within a water body, and may decimate or eliminate a species valued for its food, sport, or intrinsic qualities. Other less-desired types may replace it. Conversely, comparatively minor manipulation of water levels can encourage the growth of animals or plants valuable to the regional economy. In a real sense this is farming, just as range improvement enhances beef production elsewhere; the Louisiana Wild Life and Fisheries Commission is organized to research and monitor the water environment, and assist those who crop it.

The volatile fossil remains of past life are used too, tapped by an active oil and gas extraction industry from one of the country's largest petroleum fields. Barge canals, drilling channels, and spilled oil have in the past done much to upset the delicate balance of the life environment. Since the

industry is destined only to grow in the immediate future, in view of current national needs and international conditions, it is fortunate that improved methods are replacing the abusive ones of the past.

Thus the entire life environment relates to Barataria's origin as alluvial sediment dropped within the last few thousand years by the Mississippi River into the Gulf of Mexico with the filling process still going on. However, few Americans understand what it means to live on a delta and live off its products, and even many residents of the area fail to grasp the peculiar ecology of their environment.

Their land, low already, is sinking as the deltaic sediments undergo natural compaction – about an acre per year, on the average (since 1942), in each 640 acres, or one square mile of Barataria. The ocean waves, especially during hurricanes, are driving the barrier islands landward. But now the river flows swiftly down a defined channel, and its fresh water, nutrients, and silt are generally not available to replenish the vegetation and rebuild the subsiding land. Instead, the precious 300-million-ton annual silt load is funneled to the edge of the continental shelf, where it drops into the abyss and is lost to the ecological communities that depend on it to sustain their life.

Hence, man is out of phase with his environment here. Even so, compounding the disequilibrium are the demands of one of the world's greatest ports and the attractions of one of its most popular tourist cities (3.3 million visitors per year). The 600,000 New Orleans residents (where 27 percent of the State's population lives) are hemmed in on a narrow zone of natural high ground between Lake Pontchartrain and the river; New Orleans is literally out of land for new homesites, and its population is expected to decline slightly in the near term. On the opposite bank of the river, however, and extending south into the Barataria country, some land is available for development, and consequently Jefferson Parish here is expected to increase from its current 300,000 population to nearly twice that by 1985. Such expansion must contemplate draining many of the fresh-water marshes and swamps, and extensive levee systems have already been built – such as those north of Lake Cataouatche and east of State Route 45. Ostensibly for hurricane protection, the lands behind such levees usually are subsequently pumped dry and subdivided for development.

In the specific area of the Jean Lafitte marsh site, the land has lain basically idle until now. It is privately owned, and has limited potential for productive use. Virtually no one resides on the land nor makes his living from it, although the village of Barataria and a few other dwellings are along access

roads and canals. The area is hardly used recreationally, although it does support some fishing and hunting. The area is used mainly as a dump and a target range, however, and other than that it is used principally as a place for boat canals, oil-drilling barge channels, pipeline canals, powerlines, and roads. A route across the potential park area has been under consideration as an alternate route for an Army Corps of Engineers levee that would enclose a large area south of New Orleans.

A new highway (ultimately to be four lanes) is planned to pass near the area and through the marsh farther south between the towns of Lafitte and Larose. Now 2,150 vehicles per day enter the Barataria region through this corridor; after completion of the new route the number will swell to 10,800 by 1990, creating a greatly improved access to the southern Barataria region for industry and recreation.

Property values will surely increase, as will hurricane damage and evacuation needs if development occurs. Thus, though posing little threat in itself if constructed to allow water to flow past, the highway may encourage other developments that could cause serious deterioration of the rich Salvador-Barataria estuary system. Already a street map has been published in this zone now occupied by marsh. Jefferson Parish is now probing questions regarding future zoning in the region, including various park proposals.

The economic forces at play in the Barataria region are therefore pushing the land ever closer to the point where the biological equation will reverse and the environment will be permanently impaired. Already the ecosystem is basically a relic of a former time. This stress has been recognized, however, and the Coastal Resources Unit of the Center for Wetland Resources at Louisiana State University (Baton Rouge) is developing multi-use management proposals for the entire coastal zone. A major conclusion so far is that the system cannot be held in a static condition – that the old dream of harnessing the river (no matter how well-intentioned) will surely destroy the vitality of the entire region. But because geological processes associated with delta building and deterioration are rapid, subdeltas are highly amenable to manipulation, and river water and its silt can be diverted to create new ones. This process occurs accidentally during levee breaks, termed "crevassing," and silt is deposited downslope in the marshes. Why not do it deliberately, for an intended goal? Man's engineering projects on the Mississippi have already demonstrated his capacity to succeed in this new undertaking, too.

Meanwhile, the delta dies.

lake pontchartrain

10

river

mississippi

waterway

intracoastal

lake borgne

new orleans

FRENCH QUARTER

GARDEN DISTRICT

CHALMETTE NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

proposed I-410

BARATARIA WATERWAY

MARSH SITE

BARATARIAN VILLAGES

mississippi

fort de la boulaye site

23

BARATARIA STUDY AREA

river

breton sound

ft. st. phillip

ft. jackson

LAFITTE'S HEADQUARTERS GRAND TERRE ISLAND

ft. livingston

gulf of mexico

proposed lafitte-larose highway

STUDY AREA

1

90

morgan city

waterway

houma

intracoastal

N

■ historic plantations

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the resource



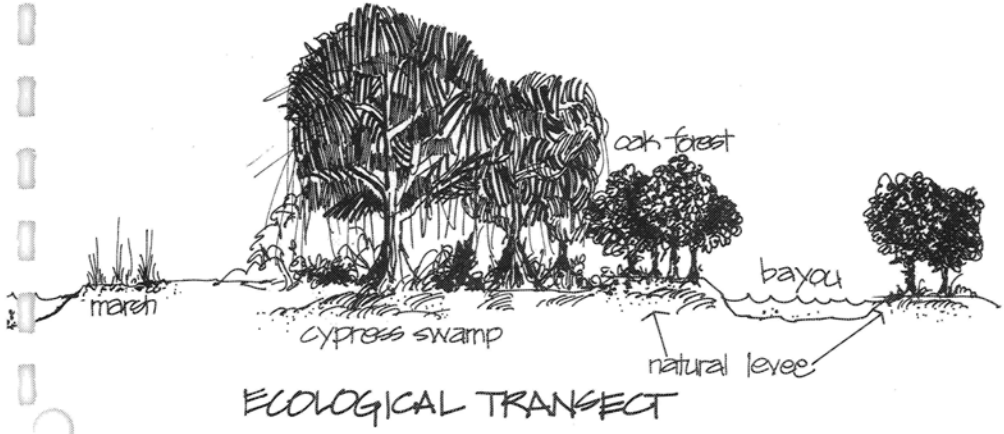
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NATURAL RESOURCES

Description

Natural features of the Barataria region include the Mississippi Delta and the river and associated bayous that created it. Take a moment now to learn how the land was produced. You must know this to understand not only all the natural features of this region, but also its history and culture, and the character of its recreational opportunities.

The river banks are the highest ground. This is the most important point! Even persons otherwise familiar with deltas often do not think of it. Water flowing downstream in a natural distributary system is confined to a channel as the most efficient transporter, and can carry an abundance of silt. During times of flood, however, the excess water leaves the river channel and spreads out as a sheet over the flatter country alongside. The sheet, having less capacity to carry sediment, drops part of its load, and this builds up into "natural levees" near the river on both sides, eventually providing higher ground alongside. Likewise, the channels bifurcate downstream into an intricate maze of slow-flowing waterways, depositing more silt with each division. Thus the land is formed, with *the river banks the highest.*



ECOLOGICAL TRANSECT

Down the gentle slopes of these natural levees, at right angles to the river channels, vegetative types change as wetter conditions are encountered. Man's eye cannot see the elevation differences, for they are too slight, but he can readily perceive the different plants. The natural levees themselves are likely to be oak-covered, while the swamps just beyond support moss-draped cypress. Next come reed-filled flat marshes, and even more distant are open fresh-water lakes or salt tidal basins. Downstream nearer the mouths of the river or bayous, the channels are younger, with lower natural levees, and they may not have some of the drier-site plants, especially oaks.

In general, the northern, drier part of the Barataria region (north of Lafitte town and including the Lafitte marsh site) supports a diverse mosaic of lowland hardwood forests (oak, sycamore, willow, sweetgum, hackberry, red maple, southern magnolia, etc.), cypress-tupelo gum swamps, and numerous fresh-water marsh communities (cattails, Delta duck potato, alligator weed, panic grasses, water hyacinth, etc.), all arranged along bayou corridors as already described, except where artificial levees, roads, or canal banks have modified the natural habitat. This zone contains the most species of plant and animal life. Biotic productivity is very high. Alligators are present, as well as a variety of other reptiles (turtles, snakes) and many amphibians (frogs, toads). Deer roam the area, and other mammals include otter, mole, bobcat, weasel, skunk, shrew, rabbit, nutria, muskrat, raccoon, beaver, opossum, mink, and bear. Fish, frogs, and crayfish are plentiful. Egrets, herons, ibises, redwings, and other wetland birds are very abundant – more than 50 species in all.

In the southern part (south of Lafitte town), the waters become progressively more brackish and there are fewer plant species (couch grass, bayonet rush, spike rushes, etc.). The zone is a labyrinth of grassy islands, open water, and canals. Shrubs and trees are more narrowly restricted to the levees along bayous and canals. Salt marsh – mostly salt grass, couch grass, black rush, and salt cane – occurs on most of the Barataria Bay islands and on the adjacent lands subject to frequent and prolonged intrusions of saline waters. The black or honey mangrove, widespread in southern Florida and the West Indies, is near its northern limit of range on the Barataria Bay islands. Here it occurs as scattered individuals, and occasionally as dense stands, from 5 to 8 feet tall. As the major woody vegetation type in the salt marsh zone, these mangroves provide valuable cover and nesting habitat for many shore birds.

At the south of Barataria Bay, on Grand Terre island, the brown pelican has been reintroduced after suffering everywhere from pesticide residues in its food. The brown pelican is the Louisiana State bird, now almost extinct.

Integrity of the ecosystem complex is threatened by several factors, most important of which is subsidence and urban development.

One consideration is that of accelerated erosion. The marshes of the eastern delta are crossed by numerous modern and historic canals and the micro-waterways left by marsh buggies. These have increased the rapidity of inflow and outflow of water, thereby accelerating erosion. Stong winds associated with high pressure systems from the north evacuate water from estuaries ever more rapidly, and the intrusion of storm tides from the gulf likewise is made easier. The east shore of Lake Salvador is eroding rapidly and Grande Terre, once a single island, is now broken by storms into several.

Another consideration is salinity changes. Canals, channelization of waterways, and subsidence all contribute to the progressive increase in salinity of inland waters. The eventual result would be to reduce the area of productive fresh-water marshland as salinity increases from the south and urban development encroaches from the north. Small changes in salinity can have pronounced adverse effects on natural ecosystems, and the commercial operations (i.e., shellfishing and fishing) that depend upon them.

Evaluation

The natural features provide an opportunity for ecological understanding and a base for a land ethic that must spread to the entire region if appropriate environmental management is to occur. Even if water were released to the area now, it would not bring the silt load of former years due to upstream dams, and at times its chemical quality could endanger the animals dependent on the region's fresh water. The entire Mississippi Delta is so threatened, however, that even partial steps would be beneficial. Perhaps an environmental sample will help dramatize the opportunity to reverse the deterioration that is now going on, or at least document that deterioration.

Esthetic values could also be served by such a sample, and the resources here do represent one of America's original landscapes. But to date, Louisiana has no sites on the National Register of Natural Landmarks, and the only area of the National Park System within its borders is Chalmette National Historical Park.

This lack of representation within the National Park System is not in keeping with the intent of the Policy Guidelines of the National Park Service promulgated by the Secretary of the Interior on June 8, 1969, point 8 of which directs the National Park Service to identify gaps in landscape representation and locate sample areas that would fill them. In response – for the purposes of inventorying the Nation – natural regions were established such as Atlantic Coastal Plains, Northern Rocky Mountains, and Mohave-Sonoran Desert. [See Part Two of the National Park System Plan (Natural History), referenced in the bibliography section.]

Within these natural regions, then, a number of natural themes were also established, such as "Landforms of the Present" (including "Works of Glaciers," "Eolian Landforms," etc.), and "Aquatic Ecosystems."

The Barataria region fits into the Gulf Coastal Plain natural region, as does all of Louisiana and Mississippi and large parts of adjacent States. There is no established natural area of the National Park System within this entire region, although Padre Island National Seashore, Gulf Islands National Seashore (both recreation areas), and a few historical areas do incorporate some pertinent terrain. There is the possibility now of a natural area in Texas – Big Thicket – that is being proposed for establishment. While it has swamp country, it lacks marshes.

The themes considered to be of prime significance that occur within the Gulf Coastal Plain are "River systems and lakes," "Seashores, lakeshores, islands," "Eastern deciduous forest," "Marine environments," and "Estuaries." The Barataria region contains samples of all of these, although many areas are badly marred by man's activities. Nevertheless, it is tentatively suggested that further studies might indicate three areas for potential inclusion in the National Registry of Natural Landmarks.

The Jean Lafitte marsh site, admittedly, would probably not have been discovered were it not for its historical associations. Yet an extensive survey showed that it is probably the best remnant left in Barataria that includes a variety of habitats.

The Atchafalaya Basin has been studied before by the National Park Service, and various proposals by the public include setting it aside as a recreation area, or natural area, or wilderness area. This hardwood swamp is in a flood channel overflow area of the Mississippi River, and hence in fair biologic

health as silt is still deposited there periodically. If establishing a natural area were the sole present objective, this area would probably exceed the Lafitte marsh site in potential.

The Mississippi River mouth, at least in the lateral subdeltas such as at the Delta National Wildlife Refuge, is a dynamic area of active sedimentation, a natural process that would probably be of popular interest if only there were a platform from which to watch. The lack of present practical access does not diminish its intrinsic importance as a site of active land building, however.

RECREATIONAL RESOURCES

Description

Studies done in the preparation of Louisiana's "Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan" show that each Louisiana resident participates in outdoor recreational activities 74 times yearly on the average, a rate exceeding that of the Nation as a whole. Even the State's auto license proclaims "Louisiana – Sportsman's Paradise," and of course the reference is to the excellent hunting and fishing opportunities.

In the Barataria section, the nature of the country dictates the kind of outdoor recreation possible, and it is predominantly boating, fishing, and hunting in the wetlands. Water skiing is impractical – the water is too shallow, and debris, stumps, alligators, etc. are hazards. State wildlife areas provide some camping facilities, hunting, and fishing. Federal refuges offer fishing, hunting (in certain areas only), and nature study. Both they and the State areas also could provide interpretive boardwalk nature trails and fishing piers.

Surprisingly, some of the most important recreational needs in this "land of water" are boat ramps, swimming pools, beaches, and hunting areas. The State outdoor recreation study, for instance, found fewer boat launching ramps in the Barataria-New Orleans region (just 20) than anywhere else in the entire State, which as a whole has limited or no access to many public water bodies. Within the region of the present study area, it was estimated that 98 percent of the water suitable for outdoor recreation was effectively inaccessible. Too, only 9 miles of trails for public use are provided in the New Orleans-Barataria region.

It has to be concluded that outdoor recreation in the region has so far just happened. But it will likely not thrive in the future without guidance and support. Industrial activities threathen the serenity of the setting and introduce new canals that affect wildlife habits. Pollution is a danger. Storms must be reckoned with, as well as the simple but severe problems of accidents and getting lost. Exclusive private ownership will increasingly deter use as land becomes more valuable and as there are more would-be users.

To rectify these shortcomings, the Louisiana "Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan" made several major conclusions:

> that a boat "road system" be developed to enable both Louisiana and out-of-State sportsmen to more effectively use existing waterways (with launching ramps, guide markers, maps, and "how-to" booklets).
>
> that flood protection lands (including levees and associated areas) be used for hiking, cycling, and horseback trails, scenic roadways, "boat-watching" points, outdoor games, and unstructured "green-belt" activities in general.
>
> that the State Parks and Recreation Commission give higher priority to acquisition and development in or near urban areas in order to serve more people.

Evaluation

Louisiana has few areas of outdoor recreation that are of national significance. (The Atchafalaya Basin may be an exception, but the Barataria region is not.) Therefore, most of the demands are generated by Louisianians and residents of neighboring States, and so State agencies associated most closely with the areas used can best respond to the needs while still administering the land for multiple purposes. Assistance from supportive Federal programs could be expected, such as the Land and Water Conservation Fund (land acquisition), Army Corps of Engineers (levee lands), Coast Guard (rescue, storm warnings), the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife (hunting, fishing areas, nature study), and others. The potential does exist in the Barataria region for many such programs that could provide valuable recreational opportunities for nearby residents. Broader interest in these resources could easily be generated through expanded information programs to encourage boating, hunting, and fishing and through provision of basic facilities for access, guidance, and safety. While some land would have to be acquired at key sites, much of that needed is public already. Accompanying or even preceding this development would be information programs so that opportunities could be more certainly discovered.

ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Description

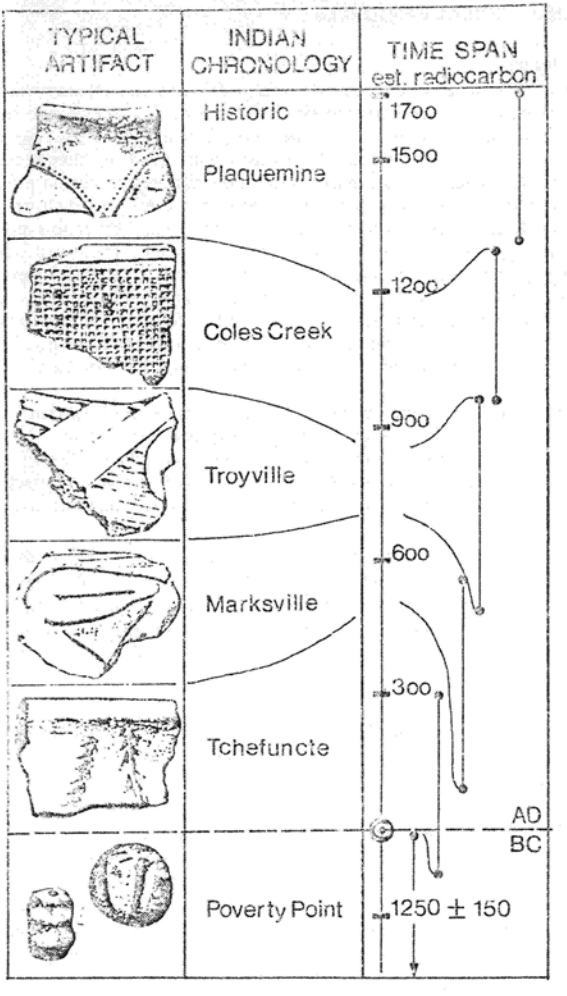
Rich in wildlife and edible plants, and with many natural waterways to provide easy travel and transportation for the human species, the deltaic region was found a feasible living environment early in its formative period. In these areas, however, man has to contend with flooding, intense coastal storms, and disease. Thus a major adaptation has been to live on the high ground and to build living sites even higher in the form of shell or earth mounds. Such elevations dot this watery region, in the form of low mounds of white clam shells mixed with scarce pottery fragments, and in many cases, providing the only ground dry enough to live on. More than 600 archeological sites are known in coastal Louisiana. These sites have been reused by man again and again, and still serve him today as building sites and burial grounds. The mounds are also used as sources for shell aggregate in road and walk construction, and so site integrity has often been lost.

A good mound is in the northwest section of the authorized Jean Lafitte State Park, although Lake Salvador is eroding one end of it and there is a presently used campsite nearby; another striking example is in the Berthoud Cemetery near Barataria town. Artifacts from early European manufacturers are also recovered from the area occasionally, lost by Lafitte, some say.

Human cultures have thus existed in places in Louisiana long before the time of Christ, named and dated by the chronological chart shown on page 28. In the southern reaches, the land is but a few thousand years old; consequently, Barataria did not become the locus of Indian occupation until Marksville times. The north end of the Des Allemands-Barataria basin contains a number of such sites.

A survey of the specific park area was done by Dr. J. Richard Shenkel, Assistant Professor of Anthropology at Louisiana State University, and his findings are quoted in part below:

> The survey of the Lafitte Park area disclosed a number of archaeological sites. Most of these were stations where the *Rangia* shells were deposited with a small scatter of artifacts. The heart of the park concept area is at the juncture of Bayou Coquilles and Bayou de Familles. The remains of a large midden (refuse dump) composed primarily of *Rangia* shell extend for several hundred feet along both banks of Bayou Coquilles and continue more hundreds of feet along Bayou de Familles. The size of this site indicates a long occupation. Ceramic sherds collected during the survey were all plain, nondecorated materials; however, some are of exceedingly poor quality and may



CHRONOLOGY OF PREHISTORIC INDIAN CULTURES IN LOUISIANA

indicate a possible occupation as early as Tchefuncte. A few decorated sherds from previous surveys were identified as Marksville and this site is believed to be the earliest in the area.

Across Bayou de Familles from the mouth of Bayou Coquilles there is an ellipsoidal clay covered mound that has a shape characteristic of a Marksville burial mound. Another mound of similar conformation was noted approximately 200 yards downstream on the same side. No artifacts were found on either of these deposits.

Three very small lenticular shell middens were located along the banks of Bayou Coquilles well within the cypress swamps to the east of Bayou de Familles.

On the shores of Lake Salvador, there are several shell beach deposits and remains of what were once extensive middens. Abundant artifacts can be found along these beaches and they date from Coles Creek well into the historic period. Glazed earthenware sherds are characteristic of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth centuries.

A few other sites of unknown cultural affinities were noted in the marsh between Lake Salvador and the swamps bordering the high ground along Bayou de Familles.

Two rectangular shell middens are located at the mouth of Bayou Villars and Bayou Barataria of Coles Creek and Plaquemine affinities. On the east bank of Bayou Barataria at this juncture is the Berthoud Cemetery shell mound and two middens. There may be a low flat topped mound also in association with this site. The prehistoric affinities of the cemetery have been identified as Coles Creek to Plaquemine. This site gives some indication of being a more permanent center than other sites in the area.

[Recent excavations in the Big Oak Island site, in eastern New Orleans, indicate the possibility of a very long occupation ranging possibly from pre-ceramic times through the entire Tchefuncte Period and into Marksville. This large midden, with a total exposed area of just under 8,000 square meters, and the associated Little Oak Island site, are two of the few remaining of the once abundant Tchefuncte shell middens that dotted the south shore of Lake Ponchartrain.]

The archaeological sites near to and within the general proposed park area offer a broad opportunity to understand many of the problems

connected with man's adaptation to a coastal, wet land environment. The total temporal range of Louisiana prehistory as is found in wet land contexts is not represented in the proposed park area as man has been adapting to coastal environs longer than this particular area has been in existence. However, this area combines to a great extent the kinds of adaptation that occured [sic] and can be used to demonstrate the processual relationships throughout prehistory even though particular temporal representations may not be in the park itself.

Evaluation

Bartaria has no structures and few deposits of artifacts. Further, the zone has existed as habitable land for only a short time and so cannot contain clues to the ancient settlement of America. More significant sites in Louisiana are Marksville Prehistoric Indian Site (in Avoyelles Parish) and Poverty Point (in West Carroll Parish), both of which are impressive mounded earthworks, and both of which are on the National Register of Historic Landmarks. However, neither can be associated with the Barataria region.

Nevertheless, interesting remains of Indian life do occur in the Barataria region, as do European artifacts lost long ago, apparently from traders' vessels. None of these justifies national involvement, however, except incidentally where Federal agencies might manage other resources on land that also contains archeological sites. This is true for the entire Barataria region and for the particular area of the Lafitte marsh. The more impressive sites should be protected and interpreted, if appropriate, by the agency most logically involved in administering the land for its principal uses.

CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL RESOURCES

Historical Perspective

The European powers so aggressive in colonizing America showed little interest in the lower Mississippi Valley until 1699, when France claimed a stronghold near the river's mouth.

By 1712 the Louisiana colony had been only thinly settled, numbering but 324 men. At that time the French businessman Antoine Crozat acquired the territory and held it until 1717. But he could not make his investment pay even with the importation of slaves and, therefore, returned the land to the king.

Bienville, a Canadian who explored and held land for France, and an original claimant, was then ordered to establish a town and make it profitable as a

colony. He chose the site of New Orleans along the curve of the Mississippi where the river swung nearest to Bayou St. John and Lake Ponchartrain — an important natural crossroads with both river and gulf waterfront.

The plan laid out by Bienville in 1718 made New Orleans a late French medieval town. But besides creating a town in the wilderness, he faced other immense problems. France wanted gold and there was none. Bienville wanted hard-working colonists, but France sent him instead prisoners, slaves, and bonded servants. Nevertheless, by 1723, the new settlement superseded Biloxi as the capital of the vast colonial empire of Louisiana; at that it was a mere outpost housing officials, soldiers, slaves, merchants, and rivermen. Until 1731, the colony was under the control of the Company of the Indies, headed by John Law, a financier who wrecked the French economy with worthless stock. He convinced Europe that Louisiana was full of riches, but arriving colonists were embittered when they saw the truth; many starved and many perished of disease. Nevertheless, lands along the river were granted as farms and plantations, and slaves from Santo Domingo and other West Indian islands were brought in on credit.

Between 1719 and 1722, many German colonists also came to Louisiana because of John Law's propaganda. They settled a long stretch of the Mississippi 30 miles above New Orleans that is still called the German Coast, but the people themselves were eventually absorbed by the French and the Spaniards, losing or altering their names and language.

France had many administrative problems in Louisiana. The peace of the colony was disturbed in 1729 by a massacre of whites by the Natchez Indians. Revenue from commerce was so meager that the colony constantly had to be subsidized. Comparatively few settlers migrated to the territory, and by mid-century, except for plantations along the river and small settlements clustered about military posts, Louisiana still remained essentially an uninhabited wilderness.

With the loss of Canada to England in the Seven Years War (1756-1763), France was ready to dispose of the unprofitable colony. To prevent the territory from falling into English hands, Louis XV made a gift of New Orleans and all of Louisiana west of the Mississippi to his cousin, Charles III of Spain. Spain rather reluctantly accepted.

The transfer was kept secret for a time and the colony was not informed until 1764. The action was unpopular with the French colonists and a petition was sent to France requesting the king to rescind it.

The first Spanish commissioner lasted until revolt broke out, then returned to Europe. For the next 10 months, Louisiana enjoyed freedom from foreign rule, but in 1769 the arrival of a large fleet and 2,000 soldiers put the Spanish Count Alexander O'Reilly in command.

After establishing his power, O'Reilly changed the government and laid the foundation for Spanish administration in Louisiana. This restored the colony essentially as it was before the cession, except that Spanish became the official tongue and Spain became the sole country with which Louisiana could trade.

In 1788 and again in 1794, great fires swept New Orleans, leaving only a few of the original French buildings. Spain rebuilt, and as a result, the French Quarter, with its hidden paths and shuttered windows, took on a definitely Spanish look. Intermarriage again hastened conciliation, as Spanish officers and soldiers took French wives. The "Creoles" are descendants of these early French and Spanish colonials.

In the 30-year period following 1765, about 4,000 Acadians came to Louisiana. They had been expelled from their settlements in Nova Scotia by the British. Of French descent, they were readily welcomed by the Creoles and settled along many of the bayous in southwestern Louisiana.

Two centuries of linguistic intercourse have molded the dialects of the French settlers into two rather distinct types, that spoken by the cultured Creoles, an approximation of pure French, and the patois spoken by the Acadian descendants. In the latter, archaic French forms have been retained, and words borrowed from English, Spanish, German, Negro, and Indian neighbors have been added.

During the Spanish regime, Louisiana depended increasingly upon the settlers in the Ohio Valley for its commerce. Such trade had always been illegal, but enough smuggling was carried on with the connivance of Spanish officials to satisfy both the merchants and the traders of the upper valley. Agriculture had depended on indigo for a cash crop for some time, but in the 1790s, a means was found to make granulated sugar from sugar cane, and this new crop became dominant.

Also in the early 1790s another large influx of immigrants to New Orleans again reshaped the character of the city. French settlers from Santo Domingo fleeing slave uprisings nearly doubled New Orleans' population in a few years. Many of these people were of wealth and distinction, bringing with them a languid life style suitable to the tropics. They quickly formed a

society of their own and exerted an influence on the social life of the city, making it gayer and more frivolous.

At the end of this Spanish period, the Creole culture that had evolved was a fairly happy mixture. Although the era had begun in revolt, Spain had governed the territory fairly, appointing French Creoles to high positions and permitting the people to continue speaking French. In this way, the Spaniards left few traces of their period of colonial rule, but they did leave the spirit of chivalry, laws and legal customs, and an imprint on the physical face of New Orleans. The French of New Orleans did not forget that their life under Spain had been peaceful and happy. When the Spanish government was denounced in 1803 by the new French governor, they answered with, "We have never groaned under the yoke of oppression.... We have become bound together by family connections and by bonds of friendship."

The power of Spain had been declining for many years, and Napoleon was pressing for the return of Louisiana to France. In 1800 the secret Treaty of San Ildefonso accomplished this transfer, though it was not announced until 2 years later. Meanwhile, unknown to Louisianians, negotiations for the purchase of Louisiana were under way between Napoleon and a United States that was eager to control the Mississippi to prevent being hemmed in on the south and west. In 1803, the Louisiana Purchase was officially consummated. Within 20 days, New Orleans changed hands twice, ultimately with William Claiborne as its first American governor.

The transfer of the colony to the United States was as unsatisfactory to Louisianians as the prospect of French rule had been. Claiborne, who surrounded himself with American officials, was disliked as governor because of his unfamiliarity with the customs and language of the people. Their previous experience with rowdy American rivermen led them to look askance at immigrants from the States, and wonder if Louisiana had not been turned over to the "barbarians."

Americans, "Kaintucks" as they were called, came slowly to the colony at first and did not mix with the Creoles to any great extent. They built a separate city beyond the boundaries of the Vieux Carre that became known as the "garden district" because of the large lawns surrounding their mansions.

The period between 1803 and 1815 is one of intrigue, flux, and finally fusion. As before, business interests and marriage ultimately brought Creoles and Kaintucks together, and their common enemies of floods, hurricanes, and plagues reinforced cohesion.

Louisiana and New Orleans continued to prosper under American administration. Agriculture and trade were bustling and the Mississippi commerce was making New Orleans into a large port city. Goods not available legally – slaves, luxuries, whatever the population wanted – were supplied by smugglers despite the efforts of the American administrators.

On April 18, 1812, Louisiana was admitted as the 18th State of the Union.

Two months later, Congress declared war on Great Britain. After many battles elsewhere, the British in 1814 blockaded the mouth of the Mississippi River and attempted to secure the cooperation of the privateers who lived at Barataria. Lafitte, the leader, refused and sent continued warnings to the American officials in New Orleans. Few preparations, however, could be made. There were only small stores of weapons and other supplies of war. Andrew Jackson, charged with the defense of the city, trained the militia units, fortified the banks of the Mississippi, and finally accepted the services and supplies of the Baratarians and pledged assistance in securing pardons for their past offenses.

When the battle occurred, every available detachment was deployed. Besides Creoles there were Choctaw Indians, Baratarians, Free Men of Color, Acadians, Germans from the German Coast, and companies of rough Kentuckians and Tennesseans. At Chalmette, the British were defeated by a united front and, consequently, a new era began.

In the ensuing time of peace, endless streams of men came down the river and overland to New Orleans. The full force of westward expansion was soon underway and the Mississippi River swarmed with steamboats. The population of New Orleans tripled in 10 years. Trade boomed and the heyday of commerce and industry was beginning. New Orleans rivalled New York as the richest city in the United States.

The prosperity of New Orleans was based upon an economic system that Louisiana believed to be sound – river commerce and plantation agriculture. The first blow to New Orleans came in 1832 when the waters of the upper Ohio were connected with Lake Erie by canal and later with the Hudson River. Railroad building began in 1830, but railroads were at first considered mainly expedients for getting goods to the river. Still, in 1849 receipts for commerce were at an all-time high and New Orleans was entering its career as the cotton city of the world. The Civil War, however, was soon to issue the "coup de grace." It killed prosperity on the river and ended slave labor – the cornerstone of plantation agriculture. Louisiana cast its lot with the South. Federal forces occupied New Orleans in 1862 and the Golden Age of the city became a cultural memory instead of daily life.

Brief Chronology of New Orleans Cultural Elements

PRE-COLONIAL PERIOD 1699-1717

1699 Iberville and Bienville, French explorers, establish a stronghold at the mouth of the Mississippi River, wanting control of the lands along its banks for France.

1712-17 With French control established, the entire territory was acquired by French businessman, Antoine Crozat, who never made it into a profitable venture. He returned the territory to the king.

FRENCH COLONIAL PERIOD I 1718-1763

1718 French king orders Bienville to establish a town at the New Orleans site and make it a profitable colony. The town is laid out and settlers arrived – mainly prisoners, bonded servants, and slaves.

1719-22 German colonists settle along the Mississippi River north of New Orleans, enticed by false tales of vast riches circulated in Europe about Louisiana. This area was and is still termed "the German Coast."

1728 France begins sending women of poor but reputable families for colonists to take as wives. Colony begins to take hold.

1760s Acadians (Cajuns) begin arriving from Nova Scotia, displaced when France lost the "Seven Years War" to England. Cajuns settled away from the city, in swamps and on farms, making their living off the land and water. Their immigration continues for 30 years.

SPANISH COLONIAL PERIOD 1763-1800

1763 To prevent losing the territory to England as a result of the Seven Years War, France gives it to the King of Spain. French colonists, informed over a year later, protest the cession.

1769 Count Alexander O'Reilly arrives and firmly establishes Spanish control. Spain sends mainly military men and administrators who frequently marry into French families. Descendants of French and/or Spanish colonials are considered Louisiana Creoles.

SPANISH COLONIAL PERIOD 1763-1800

1788 New Orleans is razed by fire and rebuilt in the Spanish tradition.

1790s French settlers arrive from Santo Domingo, fleeing the island's slave uprising. They double the population of New Orleans and bring a culture that furnishes theaters, ballet schools, etc.

FRENCH COLONIAL PERIOD II 1800-1803

1800 The secret Treaty of San Ildefonso returns the territory to French rule.

AMERICAN ADMINISTRATION 1803 to present

1803 Louisiana Territory is purchased by the United States. William Claiborne becomes the first American governor. American settlers and Creoles do not immediately intermix.

1812 Louisiana admitted as the 18th State.

1815 The Battle of New Orleans unites the culturally diverse people of Louisiana.

1830 New Orleans is a major port city and the region is in its plantation heyday. By 1850, it is the Cotton City of the world.

1861 Civil War begins, slavery ceases, and warehouses are burned.

1862 Federal troops occupy the city, the Golden Age of New Orleans ends.

A Robust Amalgam of Culture

"Travel to Louisiana and you're in another world, experiencing another way of life. Here you sense the drama of history colored by Indian lore... French colonists, Spanish conquistadores, and British armies... the Americanization of a polyglot empire . . .

You see the evidence of this colorful past in old forts and battlefields, magnificent mansions, quaint cemeteries and stately buildings.

Yesterday is here today in the traditional cuisine, the faces of the people, nuances of idiom, music with African roots, shimmering bayous, Indian mounds and moss-bedecked oaks . . ."

So states a recent publicity brochure concerning the cultural and historical flavor of the New Orleans area, succinctly capturing the essence of the region's appeal. These resources, taken together or sometimes singularly, encompass the history of three great colonial powers, their pawns, and a new independent Nation. The port city, laid out by the French in 1718, dispersed goods to the Creole planters 50 years later under Spanish rule, unified diverse groups to repel a British attack 50 years later, and surrendered the Confederate flag to a Union Admiral in another 50 years. The Vieux Carre, a National Historic District, exhibits the Spanish and French influences that combined to form a unique Creole style of architecture, while the Garden District, the residential area for the American aristocracy, is characterized by lavish homes with large lawns. Plantation homes stand as silent evidence of the by-gone economic structure, and forts, which fought against changing political enemies, now stand in final battle with the natural elements. Museums and collections exhibit and commemorate the past, while cemeteries accept its participants and testify to an ultimate unity. To begin to grasp the array of resources, one must categorize the cultural elements, though never forgetting the interrelationships.

The Creole culture is the heart of New Orleans; here are its earliest roots and most venerable traditions. By 1750, New Orleans had become a gay social center. From that time the city became noted both for its bawdiness as a river town and for its gaiety as a cultural center dominated by a socially exclusive Creole set. Festivals assumed importance, the best known being Mardi Gras, a pre-Lent period of private parties with street parades. Name days on the Roman Catholic church calendar – feast days of the saints for whom they are named – are celebrated with gusto. Creole society thus represents a way of life reflected in a preference for certain foods, a mode of dress, a way of speaking; it continues in customs, laws, and religion. Present expression is best seen in the French Quarter, a myriad of houses, shops, churches, and world famous Creole restaurants. Many of these buildings are distinctively decorated with enclosed courts, balconies, and wrought-iron railings. Now hemmed in by a major American city, congested by autos on its narrow streets, and continually fighting demolition and replacement, the Quarter has gained some respite because of its historical designation and the formation of the Vieux Carre Commision to guide its fate.

The following is a list of traditions and sites of this culture:

*Fort de la Boulaye Site
Near Phoenix on the Mississippi River, near Louisiana 50,
1700

Fort de la Boulaye was founded by Pierre le Moyne, Sieur d'Iberville, as a formal act proclaiming possession of the mouth of the Mississippi River in the name of France. Here in a wooden blockhouse the French successfully defended themselves against English and Spanish encroachment until 1707, when hostile Indians forced its abandonment. No physical traces of the fort remain above ground.
Private

*Vieux Carre Historic District
18th and 19th centuries

Also called the "French Quarter," this 85-block area coincides approximately with the original area of the City of New Orleans. The city was laid out in 1721 on a gridiron plan and was among the earliest planned cities in America. A focal point of the plan was the town square — the Place d'Armes — now known as Jackson Square. Within the district is to be found a continuum of architectural development. The styles represented include the French and Spanish Colonial (1720-1803); early Federal (1803-1825); antebellum (1825-1860); post-Civil War (1865-1900); and modern. Fires in 1788 and 1794 destroyed over 1,000 18th-century buildings. Other National Historic Landmarks within the district are Jackson Square (1721), the Ursuline Convent (1748-1752), and the Cabildo (1795).
Multiple public/private operation

*Jackson Square
(Place d'Armes)
18th, 19th, and 20th centuries

On December 20, 1803, in Jackson Square, the American flag was raised for the first time over the newly purchased Louisiana Territory, the greatest single acquisition of territory in United States history. The center of the city since its first plan in 1720 and now a public

* Registered National Historic Landmark or District.

park, the square offers views of the Cabildo, St. Louis Cathedral, and other historic buildings lining it. In the center is the historic flagpole and a statue of Andrew Jackson (1856).
Municipal

St. Louis Cathedral

Stands on the spot of the first French church. Rebuilt after the 1788 fire.

*Cabildo
1795

The Cabildo originally housed the Administrative and Legislative Council which ruled Spanish Louisiana. Under the French rule of Louisiana from 1800 to 1803, it continued in similar use as the Maison de Ville (Town Hall). Composed of an array of Renaissance architectural forms, the stuccoed brick building exhibits the marked Spanish influence in Louisiana. It presently houses the Louisiana State Museum. Actual signing of the Louisiana Purchase took place here.
Municipally operated

*The Presbytere
ca. 1791-1813

Gilberto Guillemard designed the Presbytere as a companion building to the Cabildo. Both flank St. Louis Cathedral and the former was intended to be the parish rectory. Two and one-half stories high, the Presbytere was constructed during the Spanish rule in New Orleans. The exterior is stuccoed brick with classical ornamentation in the form of pilasters, a central pediment, and an arcaded first-floor portico. A rear wing was added in 1840 and the mansard roof in 1847. Upon completion the Presbytere was rented by the city as a courthouse. In 1911 the State acquired the building for a museum.
State operated

* Registered National Historic Landmark or District.

*St. Louis Cemeteries II **St. Louis Cemeteries I	Both active. Many famous historical personages buried here. Jean Lafitte's brother buried in St. Louis Cemetery, No. 2.
Old Absinthe House	Built in 1806 as a tavern. According to legend, Jackson and Lafitte met here to plan the tactics of the Battle of New Orleans.
*Old Ursuline Convent 1748-1752	Ursuline Convent was constructed under the direction of a group of nuns who had come to New Orleans to relieve the poor and the sick and to teach young girls. In subsequent years it was used as the archbishopric, as offices for the archdiocese, and as a seminary. At present it serves as the rectory for the adjacent St. Mary's Church. Despite some alterations, the convent is considered an important historic and religious monument in the United States. It is one of the few remaining links with the French capital of Louisiana. *Private; not accessible to the public*
*Madame John's Legacy 1722-1728, 1788 (rebuilt)	Madame John's Legacy was built as a French Colonial, raised cottage town house, once a popular type of city dwelling. Country homes were raised 6 or 8 feet as a flood precaution, but in town this feature was unnecessary. The two-and-one-half-story cottage has brick walls at the first level and a second story of wood. Front and rear *galeries* extend the full length of the house that has a hip roof with a double pitch. In 1783 the cottage was moved to its present location. A fire 5 years later did extensive damage, and the existing house was built from salvaged materials – hardware, doors, and some beams. Oldest building in the French Quarter. Lafitte's First Lieutenant was born here. *State*

* Registered National Historic Landmark or District.

** Considered for National Historic Landmark recognition.

*Lafitte's Blacksmith Shop Late 18th century	This one-story cottage is traditionally associated with Jean and Pierre Lafitte, who supposedly posed as blacksmiths while engaging in less respectable economic ventures. The building is a one-story, nearly square example of a French Colonial town house with a hip roof and two symmetrically placed dormer windows. Construction of the walls is *briquette-entre-poteaux,* meaning that the spaces between the upright timbers and the diagonal wall supports were filled with bricks covered over by a coat of lime plaster. *Private*
Exchange Alley	Housed many dueling salons during Creole period.
House of John Grymes	Was Lafitte's lawyer in New Orleans.
Bourbon Orleans Hotel	New hotel on the site of the hotel famous for its Quadroon Balls.
House where the 1758 fire started.	
The Gaz Bank	Built and used as bank in 1800.
Merieult House	Built in 1792. Presently houses Williams Foundation's New Orleans collection of historic documents and art.
**Pontalba Buildings	Built in 1849 and designed by James Gallier Sr. First U.S. row house or apartment.
LaLaurie House	Built in 1832 by Creole family.
*Cable House 1874	As the voice of the Louisiana Creoles, George Washington Cable made major contributions to American regional literature. Through his

* Registered National Historic Landmark or District.

** Considered for National Historic Landmark recognition.

work the term "Creole" became better known and understood. The author's regional writings include his first book, *Old Creole Days; The Creoles of Louisiana; Bonaventure;* and *Strange True Stories of Louisiana.* While the surroundings of his house have been changed materially, the Cable residence itself is substantially unaltered, aside from interior alterations.
Private; not accessible to the public

*Girod House
500 Chartres Street
1797, service wing; 1814, main house

The three-story Nicholas Girod House has walls of stuccoed brick and is surmounted by an octagonal cupola. There are ironwork balconies on the second floors of both the main house and the smaller, two-story service wing. Nicholas Girod, who built the house, was mayor of New Orleans from 1812 to 1815.
Private; only first floor accessible to the public

**Hermann-Grima House
St. Mary's Assumption Church,
Leathers-Buck House,
Pilot House, and
Galliers House

Acadians (Cajuns) arrived after the Creoles, having been displaced from their Nova Scotia homes by the British. Traditionally farmers, the first arrivals settled about St. Martinville (about 100 miles west of New Orleans) and continued in that pursuit. Much has changed in that region; traditional homes are being replaced by new brick models, cars have replaced buggies, and oil brings about "progress." Some remnants of the physical setting remain, however. The Acadian House, built in 1765, invites visitors to explore the past with costumed guides. The Church Congregation, established in 1765, still worships at St. Martin of Tours Church. Crafts are demonstrated at the Acadian Craft Shop and Evangeline Museum houses antiques and memorabilia of the culture.

* Registered National Historic Landmark or District.

** Considered for National Historic Landmark recognition.

Cajun music, presently in a state of revival, is heard on local radio stations and at Saturday night dances. Cajun French rings in local cafes, and recipes have outlasted the area's transition. The people themselves, friendly and proud of their heritage, do most to portray the cultural distinction. Along with the Acadian immigration from 1765 to 1800, Canary Islanders, emigres from France during the French Revolution, also made the district their home (as did some Creole families from New Orleans). Regarding themselves as temporary exiles from Paris, they maintained their former mode of life, causing the village to be called Le Petit Paris. Eventually, salvaged jewels and other belongings were sold, and except for those who married into the wealthier families, these settlers also turned to trade and farming for a livelihood.

The Cajuns' pleasure-loving nature is manifested in the community gatherings, dances, and peculiar sports that are integral parts of bayou life. Of these, the annual pirogue race at Bayou Barataria is the most widely known. On this occasion trappers and fishermen from all over the southern part of the State meet to show their skill in handling boats.

Particularly popular are *fais-dodos,* the big Saturday night dances. The name means literally "go to sleep," possibly because the dancers stay up all night and sometimes fall asleep dancing; possibly because the mothers sing *fais-dodos* (lullabies) to put the younger children to sleep so that they can leave for the dance floor.

Radios, swing bands, and record players have penetrated the Cajun country, but at the genuine *fais-dodos* the music of the fiddle, the accordion, and the triangle is always featured, for the Acadian retains his love for these instruments and often possesses rare skill in playing them.

Religious festivities brighten Protestant as well as Catholic lives. The blessing of the sugar cane crop and of the shrimp fleet are always noteworthy. The first takes place at harvest time, the second in summer just before the fleet sails out into the gulf for the catch. Hundreds of small boats, gayly decorated with flags, tie up at one of several bayou villages. The elaborately designed vestments of the priests, the fluttering flags, and the green water hyacinths, all add color to the scene as the Bishop waves his aspergillum in the direction of the boats.

On All Saints Day, November First, cemeteries throughtout the State turn into flower gardens as tombs are decked with bouquets and wreaths. In the

Cajun parishes, the evening assumes an eerie aspect as hundreds of candles are lighted in the grave yards.

The Acadians have always made their living from the land, modified by where they happened to settle. If it was the prairie country around Lafayette, farming was the mainstay with the growing of general produce, rice, or sugar. If one was farther into the bayous, fishing, shrimping, oystering, trapping the muskrat and later nutria, and whatever farming the levees might allow provided the living. It offered a simple, but self-sufficient life.

The following is a list of sites pertaining to the Acadian culture:

Evangeline Oak	St. Martinville. Here is where the Acadians first landed. Also the traditional meeting place of Evangeline and Gabriel of Longfellow's poem. The historic district of St. Martinville is being considered for National Historic Landmark recognition.
St. Martin of Tours Church	1832 Congregation first established in 1765.
Evangeline Museum	Founded in 1925 as a store of antiques and memorabilia of the Acadians.
Acadian House Museum	Built in 1765, it housed an early Acadian family. Furnished with authentic Acadian objects.
Acadian Craft Shop	Replica of early houses where traditional crafts are demonstrated.
Heritage Museum Village	Loreauville. Demonstration of rural history by means of shops and houses.

* **Shadows-on-the-Teche — 1831-1834 New Iberia. Example of wealthy landowners' houses in this area. Granted to planter David Weeks in 1792, he selected a site on Bayou Teche for construction of his home. Under the direction of master builder James Bedell the house developed into a two-story porticoed mansion with eight giant Tuscan columns across the facade and a veranda at the second-floor level. Walls were brick and the gable roof contained three dormers and two interior chimneys. A classical cornice encircles the house at the eave line, and the rear facade contains a three-bay arcade surmounted by an open porch, both typical of Louisiana cottages. No major changes were made after the Civil War. *Private*

African influence is found pervading all the other cultures from the earliest times. It is as intricately linked with the mansions as with the slave quarters, for their labor made the entire system possible. Rhythms heard in the 1700s are still heard in the music of today. The slaves brought their music and dances with them from Africa, and these continued to play an important role in their lives in the New World. At many plantations, slaves were allowed to give "balls" on holidays, and in New Orleans they gathered on Sundays in Congo Square (now Beauregard Square) for similar entertainments. The music of the bamboula (a drum made of goat skin) and the banza (a crude bass fiddle) was helped out by clapping hands and stamping feet. Later the dancing was prohibited because of its sensual nature, but it did not die — if modern styles are any indication.

Congo Square also is associated with the practice of Voodooism. Originally an African cult in which the powers of evil were worshipped in the form of a large snake, it sprang up wherever African slaves were imported and conditions were favorable. Voodoos of New Orleans were ruled in the 19th century by a series of kings and queens. The most famous was Marie Laveau, who flourished during and after the Civil War. Eventually public sentiment

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** Considered for National Historic Landmark recognition.

drove Voodoo into a secret status, but charms and powders can still be bought, and practices are now blended with rituals borrowed from established denominations.

African slave cooks contributed many of the recipes that now make New Orleans a capital of cuisine. "Free Men of Colour" fought at Chalmette, and the subsequent gradual extension of this term to all black peoples created a stage for later battles, and ultimately shaped a new destiny for the port city. The following is a list of sites and events pertaining to the African culture:

Beauregard Square	Formerly Congo Square. This is where slaves gathered on Sunday to dance and sing.
Preservation Hall	Jazz hall in French Quarter, catering to sincere jazz music fans.
Jazz Museum	In French Quarter. This museum contains displays, historical tapes, and live demonstrations of the history and evolution of jazz.
Bourboun Street	Living jazz nightly!
New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival (May)	Mainly Black music, but includes Cajun and folk.

Americans, the late arrivals to this cultural melange, were first represented by the bawdy rivermen and later by administrators of the Louisiana Purchase. Creole society, well entrenched, dictated that they settle in another area, hence the separate Garden District. Many new plantations began under Americans and rivaled those of the "old" South. Civil War battles and forts represent an American struggle, and today's sprawling city is a tribute to American ingenuity and progress, as well as a microcosm of all its ensuing problems.

The following is a list pertaining to the American culture:

**Garden District (American) 19th and 20th centuries	New Orleans' Garden District has remained a fashionable residential section since the 1830s. Homes along its streets represent all styles of architecture popular from

** Considered for National Historic Landmark recognition.

antebellum times to the present. Examples of Greek Revival, Georgian, Southern Colonial, Chateauesque, Gothic Revival, late Victorian, Steamboat Gothic, and even contemporary dwellings which conform to their surroundings are evident. Constructed generally of brick, houses in the district are covered with plaster or stucco on the exterior.
Multiple public/private

All Private
2340 Prytania (oldest house) 1839
1448 4th Street, Short House 1849
1415 3rd Street, Robinson House 1865
1331 3rd Street, Musson House 1850
1131 1st Street, Payne House 1849
1239 1st Street, Brenard House 1857
1331 1st Street, Morris House 1869

Chalmette National Historical Park 1815

Chalmette National Historical Park commemorates the Battle of New Orleans between American and British forces, January 8, 1815, in which Andrew Jackson won the greatest American land victory of the War of 1812. This victory, which proved to be the impetus for the rise of American nationalism, assured continued American jurisdiction over the Louisiana Territory and the ratification by both parties of the peace treaty. The park embraces a portion of the ground over which the battle was fought. The land is crossed by the Rodriguez Canal, the line of decisive action, where a series of historical markers identify the various sites of important battle events. A 100-foot high monument commemorates the action and memorializes the American soldiers who died in the battles here. Also, colonial home operation.
Federal/non-Federal







*Fort Jackson
1822

The failure of Fort Jackson, citadel of the lower Mississippi River, to stop the Union Navy, caused the Confederacy to lose New Orleans. Fort St. Philip, on the opposite bank of the Mississippi River, also played a part in the fight against Admiral David G. Farragut's fleet in 1862. An active military post until 1920, Fort Jackson is a bastioned pentagon of brick and, except for a few late 19th-century additions, it appears to be little altered from its original state.
Parrish park

*Fort St. Philip
1795

Fort St. Philip was erected by the French in 1795, during the administration of Governor Francisco Carondelet. When Admiral David G. Farragut attacked the fort in 1862, the Confederate-occupied post was garrisoned by 700 men. Fort St. Philip, with Fort Jackson, surrendered to the Union forces 10 days after the attack had begun. The fort was not regularly garrisoned after 1871. Today the site is in a primitive state and is difficult to reach.

This fort played a part in the battle of New Orleans and at that time was partially manned by Baratarians.
Private

Plantations (Creole, American, and African) symbolize the pre-Civil War economic system for Creole, American, and African cultural groups. The homes were built along the Mississippi River or major bayous, because the drier land was there, suitable for farming and the easiest transportation.

Before 1795, the main crop was indigo, and later, sugar cane. Cotton was better suited for higher land than found in this area.

Plantations reflect the life style of their former tenants. Some are as elaborate as the owner's vast fortunes could make them; some are rather simple. Each plantation has a unique personality, but all were united because they depended on large-scale farming that required many workers. Remoteness, large families, and extended visits by friends all required that a plantation be self-sufficient. Owners lived somewhat like feudal barons.

Some were like small factory towns of a later period. All date before 1865, because, with the liberation of the slaves and the economic and political upheaval of the postwar period, the economy that produced these mansions crumbled.

Today only a few plantation homes have working farms. Some houses fell into decay as crops failed, and the land was sold to factories. Oil refineries, chemical plants, sugar refineries, shipbuilding works, and other industries have consumed the land along the river for the same reason the plantations began there (see attached map). Some houses burned; some were swallowed by the river as it changed its path; others were torn down; and others simply decayed from neglect. None of the houses open for tours is still owned by the family that built it.

The following is a list of plantations:

**Destrehan 1780s	Built by the Creole planter and legislator, Jean Destrehan. Lafitte was a frequent guest of the plantation.
San Francisco 1849	Victorian house of Gothic architecture with wall and ceiling paintings by Canova, painter of the St. Louis Cathedral. Furnishings from the 18th century.
Texcuco 1850s	Raised cottage design-style brought in from the West Indies.
Houmas House	Back House 1800. Front House 1840. Named after the Houmas Indians that had a settlement here. Grounds and outbuildings are intact and the house is furnished with rare antiques.
Hermitage 1810	Named after Andrew Jackson's home.
Belle Alliance 1841	
Edward D. White House 1800	The White family home, where Justice White was born in 1845. Furnished with 18th century furnishings.

** Considered for National Historic Landmark recognition.

Oak Alley 1830s	This is one of the most beautiful plantations in Greek revival style. Period furnishings and excellent grounds.
**Evergreen 1840	
*Homeplace 1801	Homeplace Plantation House is a large French Colonial, two-story, raised cottage. A wide veranda or gallery surrounds the second floor. The ground floor walls and the piers supporting the gallery are brick, while the second-story walls are cypress timbers filled in with a mixture of clay or adobe and Spanish moss. Still in a good state of repair and very little altered since the time of its construction, Homeplace is considered to be one of the two best examples of the raised cottage still extant (the other is Parlange Plantation House). *Private; not accessible to the public*
Magnolia Lane 1784	The other best example of the West Indies cottage. First plantation to grow indigo and has an original slave cabin and other outbuildings. Jean Lafitte traded slaves here.
Derbigny 1840	Louisiana raised cottage design that is similar to some in the Garden District.
Seven Oaks 1830s	Example of plantations left to the elements and encroachment.
*Parlange Plantation House 1750	The Marquis Vincent de Ternant built the Parlange Plantation House, and upon his death the property passed to his wife, who later married Charles Parlange, a French naval officer. The house is one of the two best examples in the United States of a French Colonial plantation house of the two-story,

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raised cottage type. Ground-story walls are brick and the upper story is made of cypress timbers filled in with clay or adobe and Spanish moss. Prior to 1860 the hip roof was extended to the rear of the house and the rear gallery added. The house has never been restored.
Private

Barataria has Bayou Acadian culture and mixed settlers from the Caribbean and South America.

The following is adopted from Betsy Swanson's "History of the Lafitte-Barataria Region," prepared for the Jefferson Parish Environmental Development Board, May 16, 1973.

The name Barataria appears on maps as early as 1720, 2 years after the founding of New Orleans. They identify as the "Isle of Barataria" an area encircled by Bayous Villars, Barataria, Rigolettes and Perot, and Lake Salvador. A colonial chronicler of Louisiana associated the "island's" name with the fictional Barataria in Cervantes' *Don Quixote* "because it was enclosed by those lakes and their outlets, to form almost an island on dry land, as was that island of which Sancho Panza was made governor."

However, it has often been suspected that the region's pirates inspired the name. The French word *barraterie,* and the Provencal equivalent *barataria* mean any type of fraudulence, illegality, or dishonesty at sea.

Records show that from the 1730s, the French exploited Barataria for its oak and cypress for ship construction and before 1740, at least two canals, those of Claude Joseph Villars Dubreuil and Jean Baptist d'Estrehan des Tours, connected Barataria waterways with the Mississippi River to facilitate removal of lumber from the swamps.

The region was first settled by the French Acadians in 1755, and they found the environment favored pursuits such as fishing, trapping, and shrimping rather than their more traditional farming, but that the land could provide a livelihood, as it still does today. By 1781 Spanish Governor Galvez had located a group of Canary Island settlers in Barataria, providing them land and farming equipment. During the 19th century highly productive sugar plantations were located along the bayou. Also, many nationalities arrived via the Caribbean Islands and South America, settling here to fish and trap or to smuggle goods up the bayous brought into the area by privateers.

It was not until 1805 that Jean Lafitte organized these smuggling operations, combined with privateering. As a multipartnership with a definite hierarchy, the empire grew steadily until 1813. Lafitte's people, many recruited from the area's inhabitants, smuggled their contraband with impunity, because the citizens of the territory showed complete willingness to do business with the Baratarians, and the government was powerless to stop them. Besides, the land provided intricate, canopied waterways ideal for the purpose.

With the passage of this era, previous pursuits have returned and, along with oil exploration, sustain present inhabitants. Bayou villages still exist, ageless to the outside eye. Pirogues still ply the swamps where wildlife seeks refuge. Indian shell middens remain where smuggled goods were stored and auctioned, and a few plantations with sugar mill ruins indicate farming was tried even here. Cruise boats, leaving Canal Street Dock in New Orleans, take visitors past the Barataria villages. While glimpsing the rustic flavor of the lower regions, passengers also view the ongoing dredging, draining, industrial buildup, and subdividing that will eventually erode the traditional Baratarian culture.

Jean Lafitte Marsh. During Lafitte's time, dozens of bayous were used to haul contraband from Grand Terre headquarters to the Mississippi River. Four of these waterways are within or adjacent to the "Lafitte marsh": Lake Salvador, Bayou des Familles, Bayou Barataria, and Bayou Coquilles.

Bayou des Familles. This small bayou probably was used many times by the smugglers. It joined Bayou Barataria to the German Coast (i.e., plantations on the Mississippi above New Orleans). At present, all or part of it is choked with water hyacinth. Nonetheless, it lends itself well to historical interpretation, including pirogue building and poling, illustrating one segment of Lafitte's complicated transportation system.

At the point where Bayou des Familles, Bayou Coquilles, and State Highway 45 all come together is a large Indian shell mound, partly damaged by quarrying. Local tradition tells us that here on this raised dry ground, Jean Lafitte held auctions for the plantation owners, etc., along the Mississippi.

Bayou Barataria. This major bayou, like Bayou Lafourche to the west, was undoubtedly a major waterway for the Baratarians. Today it is part of the Intracoastal Waterway, with a large tonnage of shipping moving on it.

Bayou Coquilles. This small bayou originally joined Bayou des Familles to Lake Salvador. It no doubt offered an alternative route during the smuggling period. It is today a "dead" bayou, being cut off from Lake Salvador by the Kenta Canal and barely visible.

Grand Terre Island. Grand Terre is the most important single site concerning the history of Jean Lafitte and the Baratarians. In the 1805-15 period, Grand Terre provided the headquarters for all the operations and the port for all the trips. The maximum number of people employed is not known, but for the Battle of New Orleans, Lafitte was able to offer well over 1,000 men.

No trace of the establishment remains on the surface of the ground today. The only description yet found was written by a naval officer in 1814: "Their establishment on shore, which consisted of forty houses of different sizes, badly constructed, and thatched with palmetto leaves...." While not very impressive, this was the nerve center of what must have been America's largest business enterprise to that date.

Grand Isle. Some of the Baratarians lived on Grand Isle, adjacent to the Grand Terre headquarters. Louis Chigizola, one of Lafitte's leading officers, apparently lived there even before Lafitte came from Santo Domingo, and the family still lives there today. The oak trees that shelter the village from hurricanes are believed locally to have been planted by him, and the village cemetery contains his grave as well as the tombs of other early settlers. Possibly Louis' house (ca. 1850s) still stands, although this must be verified.

The Temple. Of the several storehouses that Lafitte had throughout Barataria, the site at the Temple is the only one that can be documented. It was located on Indian mounds or shell deposits (thus its name) at the tip of the peninsula between Bayou Perot and Bayou Rigolettes (Archeological Site No. A-17), and is identified on the United States Geological Survey "Barataria" quadrangle as Little Temple. It can be reached only by boat. Lafitte recorded that he had a storehouse at Petit Temple and another at Big Temple. While this site is believed to be Petit Temple, it must be noted that an 1818 map simply identified this place as the Temple. On the eve of the Battle of New Orleans, General Jackson ordered the installation of a battery at this location, with Jean Lafitte assisting the officer given this assignment; this was known simply as the Temple Battery.

Today the Indian developments have been completely destroyed. Oil storage tanks are said to stand on the site and nearby an oil well has been dug.

Barataria and Lafitte Villages. The village of Barataria is located at the confluence of Bayou Villars and Bayou Barataria, extending down both sides of Bayou Barataria. Nearby are the three historic sites next listed. The area still gives an idea of former days, although a new subdivision has been planned south of Barataria on the island. The village of Lafitte is not far beyond, and is south on Bayou Barataria.

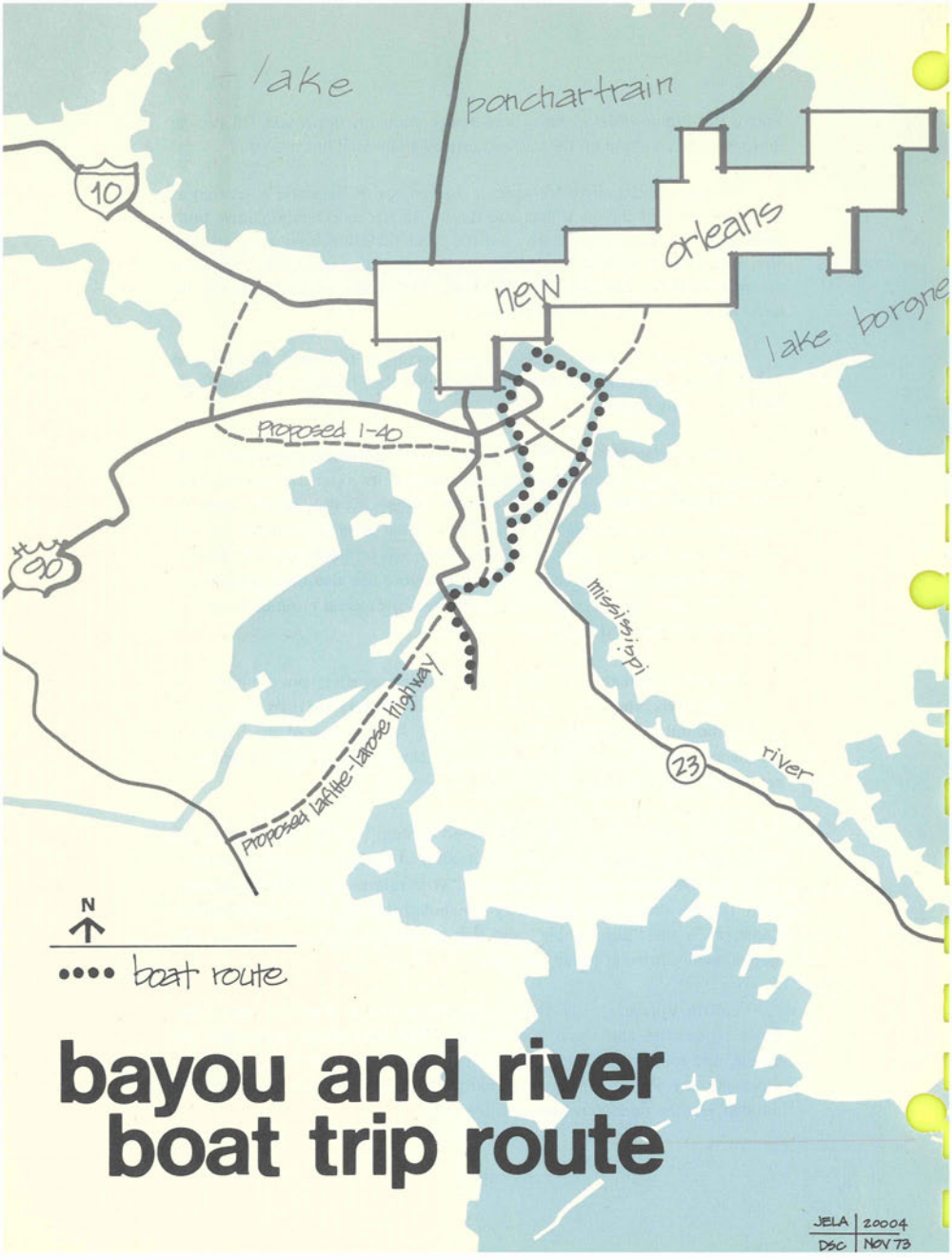
Sugar Mill Chimney. Here, the Berthoud brothers, William and James, owned a plantation with 155 slaves that they housed in 31 dwellings. Only a chimney remains.

Fleming Plantation. Next to the former Berthoud Plantation is the Commagere, the Fleming Plantation House and its extensive ground, that was originally 3,700 acres. The present owner of this large, rambling, wooden structure is Douglas Fleming. The original parts of the house are said to have been built in 1826. The lower floor was probably open originally, but is now enclosed. A gallery, facing the bayou, has also been enclosed. A large wing was added about 1836. Extensive landscaped grounds lie to the south of the house and touch Bayou Barataria.

Berthoud Cemetery. Near the above two sites, on the shore of Bayou Barataria, stands a large Indian mound. Whites have used the vicinity of this mound as a cemetery for many years. At least one of the Berthoud brothers is buried on top of the mound. On All Saints Eve a traditional candlelight ceremony is observed here.

Jean Lafitte wrote that in 1811 he erected "a shop" at the "Big Temple."He stated that the Temple "was an old mound of oyster shells where auction sales were held one mile from Barataria."With reference to the discussion of Petit Temple above, it is tentatively concluded that the mound at Berthoud Cemetery is the "Big Temple" and that as early as 1811 some Baratarians were already settled at today's village.

Lafitte Village. Located on Bayou Barataria at the confluence with Bayou Rigolettes and about 4 miles below Barataria village, is another old village, and some of its earliest residents are descendants of Lafitte's people, especially the Perrin family. The Lafitte Cemetery is built on an Indian midden, but the midden is barely visible today.



bayou and river boat trip route

JELA | 20004
DSC | NOV 73

Voyager and Mark Twain River and Bayou Cruise. This 5-hour cruise runs daily at the cost of $6.00 for adults and $3.00 for children. It goes up the Mississippi River to the Algiers locks, through the Intracoastal Waterway to Bayou Barataria, down to the Barataria village, then back up to the Mississippi via the Harvey Canal. In 1972, over 33,000 people took the Voyager trip. Probably double that went on the Mark Twain, a much larger boat.

Evaluation

Strategically located at the mouth of the Mississippi River, New Orleans and its environs were from the early 1700s to 1815 a cockpit of imperial rivalry between France, Spain, England, and later, the expanding United States. To this region came people bearing the banners of the competing powers – colonists, soldiers, and political refugees cast from their homes by the shifting fortunes of that rivalry. Here, too, ships brought slaves whose labor produced field products that fueled the booming commerce.

Thus did New Orleans become a crossroads of culture during that dynamic century. It was a cosmopolitan place where language and way of life were different from bayou to bayou, from village to village, from street to street.

The people were Creole, German, Cajun, and African. They were tied together by economic interdependence and by the delta environment – a region of both constraints and opportunities. Yet they were culturally diverse because of different origins. Starting with its inherent culture pattern, each group shaped and was shaped by the natural environment, a process compounded by interaction between the groups themselves. From this dual process evolved a cultural mosaic that has received international interest: many of its sites are already recognized as established national historic landmarks and its traditions are well recognized by abundant foreign tourism. Today elements of that cultural diversity still exist – in a bayou village, in the music of living languages that hark back to the 18th century, and in the rhythms that liven the streets of the city.

In no other part of the United States are so many representations of cultural diversity to be found: Sites and buildings to be saved; lifestyles to be perpetuated. All of this is threatened as sustaining environments – man-made and natural – tremble before the impacts of technology and burgeoning development.

But how can this cultural resource be communicated? Can Jean Lafitte be used as a symbol? Reading the titles in a Lafitte bibliography, one finds

romantic descriptions of Jean Lafitte: Gentleman Rover, Pirate, Patriot, Smuggler, Privateer, and Sea Robber. Was he all or any of these things?

Lafitte himself admitted fully to being a smuggler. At that time in Louisiana, and earlier in the French and Spanish regimes, the populace looked upon smuggling as a proper way of life. Only in the eyes of the new American government was smuggling a crime.

Lafitte denied emphatically that he was ever a pirate, in the strict meaning of the word. He ensured that all his ships' captains were licensed – by Carthagena, and his policy was to attack only Spanish and British ships as authorized. Even the Continental Congress of the United States at one time authorized privateering and when recommending pardon for the Baratarians, General Jackson was careful to call them "privateers." The Old World had its privateering heroes, such as Sir Francis Drake, and Lafitte was undoubtedly the greatest of these to be born in the New World.

The matter of Lafitte's smuggling large numbers of slaves is disturbing to today's reader. Yet Louisiana was then a slave-based culture, and the sugar plantations welcomed his human contraband. Lafitte himself never purchased slaves in Africa; the people his men captured on the high seas were already slaves. Also, in his last years (and long before the Civil War) he apparently set his own slaves free; his wife became active in the abolition movement; and Lafitte recognized that the institution of slavery could not endure. In this, he was far ahead of many of the good citizens of America.

Lafitte's role in the Battle of New Orleans also provides a tool toward understanding the people of New Orleans and Louisiana. These were French and Spanish colonists who happened now to be under an American administration whose permanency was threatened by the British. Claiborne and Jackson had to force the citizens (through martial law) to give support. With Lafitte, they bargained.

But what is more important, Lafitte contributed in a major way – men and material – toward Jackson's success in the Battle of New Orleans. An authority on this subject has stated that Jackson probably would have won the battle without Lafitte's assistance, but that the British probably would have won had Lafitte contributed his resources to them.

In the end, the Battle of New Orleans, participated in by the Baratarians as well as by others, became the turning point in the people's attitude towards their new government (then only 11 years old). For the first time, they felt like Americans, and a new era began.

In summary, it may be concluded that Lafitte and the Baratarians provide the means (the handle, so to say) of reaching out toward and into the culture, and way of life, of the people of Louisiana.

SUMMARY EVALUATION OF THE JEAN LAFITTE MARSH AS A PARK SITE

Assuming a park would preserve and interpret the multiple resource values of Barataria, the present site of authorized Jean Lafitte State Park is well suited to these purposes. Within it or in its immediate vicinity are all the following:

Access

State Highway 45 passes along the higher, east side of the site, and the proposed realignment of this route will provide even more efficient access both from New Orleans and also from western points. Boat access from New Orleans via Bayou Barataria is also provided, and travelers may experience this more historic mode of transportation while enjoying stories of the land en route. Existing waterways into the marsh via canals may be used to provide closer exposure to its scenes, perhaps via Lafitte skiff. Narrower channels can be explored by pirogues. Walkways along present roads and canal banks allow another mode of entry, as could boardwalks.

Developable Sites

Dry land above hurricane flood levels is available on natural levees along Bayou des Familles and Bayou Barataria.

Basically Undeveloped Area

The Mississippi Delta contains no pristine remnants – all areas are crossed with canals and pipelines and pocked with drilling channels. But this site is developed as little as any, and less than most. Few people reside within the area or live off it. A few houses are clustered in the northern portion of the Segnette Waterway.

Varied Natural Resources

Greatest diversity in the coastal zone occurs in its midsection, just where this site is. Too, the site includes a transect of all life habitats found in the area from bayou to natural levee to swamp to marsh to open water – so that there is also an abundance of plant, animal, and bird species compared to many areas. Fresh-water marsh communities, cypress-tupelo gum swamps, live-oak forests, and mixed lowland hardwood forests are all represented.

Varied Historical and Cultural Resources
Cajuns live nearby, in Barataria. The Fleming Plantation is there, too, with existing houses and sugar mill ruins. Shell mounds occur, yielding some pottery fragments. Only 10 miles away is New Orleans and its many historical monuments, including Chalmette National Historical Park.

Minimal Threats
Oil has been searched for on the site, but not found. The land is subsiding, but at rates moderate for the region, and the possibility of spreading water into the area from the Mississippi River exists. Land development is unlikely unless levees are constructed through the site, but alternate routes do exist. No roads are proposed to go through the site.

Integrity of Habitat
Animal species live basically in their natural elements within the site, although exotic nutria are present, and the canals have affected the flow of water and their banks have allowed shrubs and small trees to grow in what would otherwise be marsh. Nevertheless, salinities are in balance and the vegetation is generally stable. Environmental degradation due to intrusion of saline waters and subsidence is not excessive. Erosion remains a concern along the eastern shore of Lake Salvador, however, and degradation is inevitable in the long term under present land management.

Association with Lafitte
Lafitte used shell mounds, bayous, and villages in and near this marsh, and although no structures remain from those days, there are several in New Orleans.

Availability of Interpretive Demonstrators
Someone will have to pole the pirogues, pilot the Lafitte skiffs, and conduct tours through the plantations, and it is fortunate that a pool of potential personnel with appropriate cultural backgrounds now reside in adjacent towns.

Proximity to Source of Visitors
The site is only 10 miles from the New Orleans metropolitan area where over a million people live and over 3 million visit annually. In the event a bridge across the Mississippi River is constructed near or at the foot of Louisiana 45, proximity would be enhanced. Projections predict a doubling of population in the corridor served by that route. There is a need for a contact point at which a volume of regional tourists can be provided with information and interpretive services.





Given the complex of largely uncoordinated and mainly destructive social processes acting upon New Orleans and delta-region environments – cultural and natural – the general premise is:

> less preservation coordination means more destruction;
> more preservation coordination means less destruction.

The alternatives treated below occupy four points on a scale that ranges from no park proposal, and therefore no park instrument affecting preservation coordination, to a strong park proposal that could promote preservation through both a sufficient land base and an alliance of administrative instruments that would cross governmental jurisdictions and the line dividing public and private sectors.

ALTERNATIVE 1: NO PARK

Under this alternative, there would be no administrative instruments activated to effect a park in the Barataria region. The concept of a national cultural park would die by default. This inaction would not instantly abolish cultural and natural resources. In the near term, isolation would continue to protect portions of the natural resource base. Those cultural resources now under diverse administrative control could well survive for a fairly long period; but the erosion of the natural base would inevitably affect them.

Certain natural values could be protected in the Atchafalaya Basin, and recreational opportunities could be provided there and in Barataria by an organization such as the Louisiana Wild Life and Fisheries Commission.

No costs would incur to park-managing agencies; nor would any benefits – in the sense that such agencies have an active preservation mission.

The advantages of having a park base for synthesis and interpretation of cultural values would be lost. Tourists visiting New Orleans would continue largely to miss its multi-cultural potential. Nowhere would they find conveniently assembled and authentic information on resources and tours that would allow them to choose and sample the full spectrum of delta-region resources.

Interest in preservation of cultural resources would not be further crystallized; public and private efforts that have been expended toward a cultural park so far would have been in vain.

The opportunity to perpetuate the natural environment of the Lafitte park site – both as an intrinsically valuable natural area and as a setting for historical and cultural experiences – would be lost. The use of this area as an exemplar of enlightened management of a fragile, threatened environment – with potential multiplier effects throughout the delta region – would be foregone. There would be no symbol of preservation activity (as opposed to headlong development) upon which public opinion could focus.

Finally, lacking a park-agency land base, there would be no rallying point for region-wide interlocking and coordinating of private and public preservation interests. Under increasing development pressures, divide and conquer would be the rule of the region.

ALTERNATIVE 2: JEAN LAFITTE STATE PARK

A State-operated park on the already authorized site (about 3,000 acres) would incorporate the most important segment of marsh and would provide a setting for elements of the Lafitte story. Administration would be solely by the State, with probable support from such programs as the Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund.

Development as proposed by the Louisiana State Parks and Recreation Commission would fulfill several functions and provide facilities for many activities: interpretation of the natural marsh and appropriate elements of the Lafitte story, picnicking, overnight cabins, camping (primitive, trailer, and group), arboretum, animal enclosures, boat docks, and marina. Boardwalks would provide access into watery zones, and there would be a pirate's island, tower, and museum in the central core.

Such a park would be valuable, and it is fortunate that the people of the region foresaw the need for parklands and pressed for the authorizing legislation. It is also fortunate that they chose the best acreage for a park and resisted the temptation to develop the land with roads, levees, housing, and industry.

Positive benefits of such a park would be the provision of much-needed recreational facilities for residents of New Orleans-Barataria, opportunity for

nature study, deferment of the inevitable fate of the immediate ecological resource, and an introduction to the historic Lafitte on a pertinent site.

The limited scope of the proposal, however, indicates that many opportunities would be lost or met only in part. The site lacks the natural boundaries and size that would ensure maintenance of the natural marsh environment and avoid esthetic disturbance from technological and development pressures. Neither would the State park proposal, standing alone, provide the institutional mechanisms to extend environmental awareness and encourage enlightened land management in the delta region, including preservation of cultural resources.

Without a region-wide approach to land-management problems, the integrity of the marsh would be eroded incrementally and, in time, the park area would be lost to subsidence. Moreover, the Lafitte marsh area alone does not have sufficient cultural resources to merit a cultural park designation. Lacking strong ties to substantial cultural resources elsewhere in the region, the State park would be basically a natural/recreation area with tertiary historical/cultural associations.

In summary, a Lafitte State Park would be better than no park at all; it could be viewed as a first-stage element of a later extended-park concept. But this limited-scope proposal would not have the clout necessary to spur region-wide preservation activities; it would not serve as a synthesizer for delta-wide visitor and tourist use; it would be a local park resource unable to meet cultural park criteria — even locally.

ALTERNATIVE 3: NUCLEAR JEAN LAFITTE NATIONAL CULTURAL PARK

A 3-unit area of the National Park System, operated by the Federal Government, would be established under this alternative. The principal land base would be some 7,000 acres of the Lafitte marsh area, including the proposed State park site. The integrated units of this park would serve the following functions:

The Barataria sector:

Focuses on the man/environment interrelationships of the deltaic region.

Natural history/aboriginal backgrounds.

Barataria/Lafitte theme center (privateering-smuggling, commerce, subsistence).

The deltaic region today, including tangible and intangible survivals, the value of estuarine areas, threats to both natural and cultural diversities.

This alternative would incorporate a larger marsh area than alternative 2, thus strengthening possibilities for maintenance of natural-area integrity, at least for a while. The expanded marsh area-and-environs would include additional historical/cultural sites associated with Jean Lafitte in the town of Barataria. The Cajun fishing community on the north shore of Bayou Barataria would be a private-use enclave with, the community willing, a "cultural protection zone" status. The Fleming Plantation and associated structures would be incorporated, as would the Berthoud Cemetery. There would be no camping or active-recreation facilities provided. Rather, the entire area would be used for cultural theme interpretation, nature study, conducted marsh tours, and the like. The Louisiana Wild Life and Fisheries Commission would be encouraged to enlarge the Salvadore Wildlife Management Area to include Couba Island and those undeveloped zones north of the proposed boundary, thereby increasing the natural buffer zone without reducing the area's value for hunting and fishing.

French Quarter visitor facility:

In center of Creole-culture resource.

Serves as coordinating center for visitors (tours, literature, orientation programs, etc.) and focus for liaison with other cultural-resource administrators.

The facility in the French Quarter would dispense information on the national cultural park and on thematically associated cultural resources administered by others. Envisioned would be a cooperative relationship with other agencies that would provide some thematic direction on a region-wide basis. Tours of the marsh area would be coordinated from this center.

Chalmette National Historical Park:

Setting for the Battle of New Orleans story.

Strong emphasis on the battle's unifying influence in forging an *American* army from a culturally diverse population; participation of Baratarians symbolizes this unity.

Chalmette would remain much as it is, though administratively reorganized to reflect its integration within the larger park operation. Interpretation would be restructured for more emphasis on the Lafitte period when New Orleans was "Americanizing" – especially in the context of the Battle of New Orleans.

This scheme would provide more park values – greater land area for the natural sample, more cultural-historical sites, and enhanced interpretation. It would, however, be more costly in terms of capital investment and operations than either of the previous alternatives. It would also remove more land from potential development, but little of this land is appropriate for development.

The major shortcoming of this nuclear park proposal is that it is a limited-scope approach that would be too isolated administratively and operationally to act as a catalyst for region-wide preservation coordination. Ties with other agencies and institutions would be tenuous and voluntary, and would not constitute an institutional fabric able to withstand development pressures. As with the previous alternative, the marsh would eventually sink below the park.

ALTERNATIVE 4: EXTENDED JEAN LAFITTE NATIONAL CULTURAL PARK

This alternative would build upon the nuclear base described in alternative 3. The additives making up the extended park would include: associated but non-National Park Service administered cultural resources; an institutional framework known as the Jean Lafitte National Cultural Park Board, which would integrate nuclear and extended cultural resources by administrative association and by region-wide coordination of interpretive programs and visitor-use arrangements; and a Delta-Region Preservation Commission that would provide a point of consolidation for all groups concerned with environmental conservation.

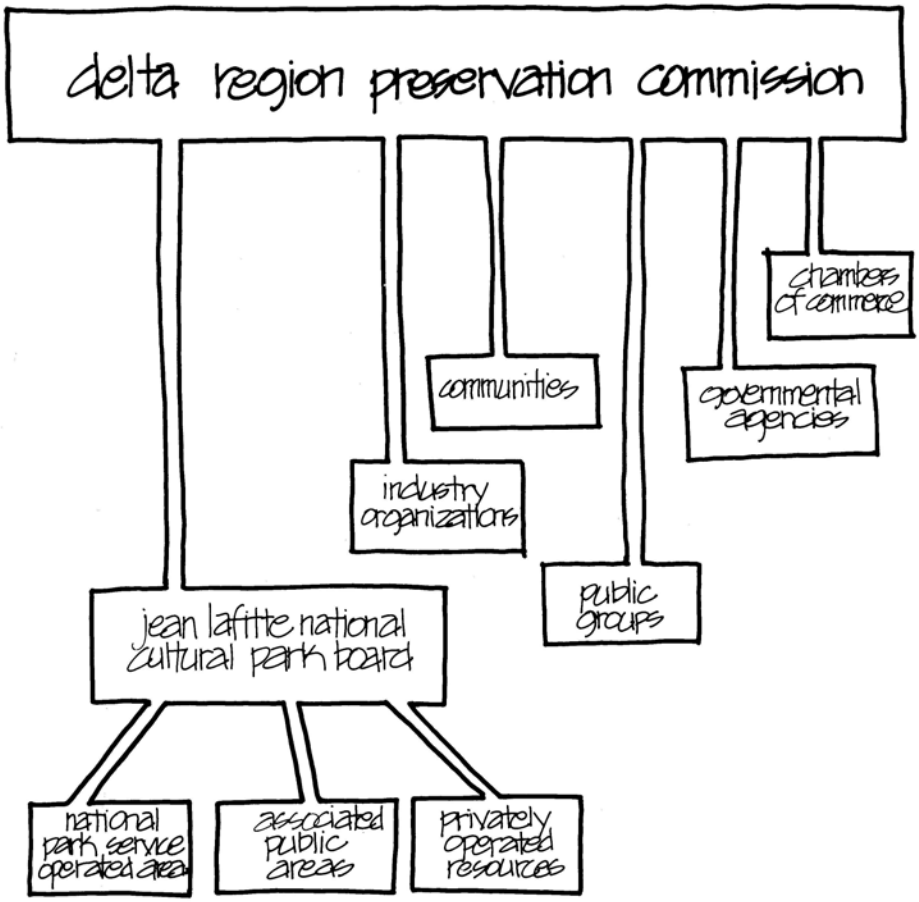
Groupings of resources in the extended/associated category include:

French Quarter and Garden District of New Orleans.

Forts in the delta region.

Plantations.

EXTENDED CONCEPT OF JEAN LAFITTE NATIONAL CULTURAL PARK



Acadian towns and villages (St. Martinville area).

Cultural events and happenings.

These resources – tied together by orientation programs, tours, literature, etc. – would be the exploration hinterlands of the extended national cultural park. Each element of this category would be interpreted to emphasize singular sub-themes of history, economics, culture, architecture, political-military affairs, etc.

Interpretation would not isolate these singular themes from the general interpretive context. Rather, it would utilize specialized resources for specialized interpretive functions catering to various visitor interests.

Interpretive programs would be holistic: cause and effect, process, and the sweep of historical/cultural events spawned by the cosmopolitan settlement milieu. Such treatment would encourage both backward and forward projection from the critical 1800-1815 historical period. In this way, valuable resources that might not have been prominent at that time (but spawned that period or grew from it) could still be associated. This period flexibility would encourage a broader preservation constituency associated with and supportive of the national cultural park, and it would carry interpretation forward, through cultural/historical evolutions, to today's living cultural scene.

Management of the extended cultural park would center in a Cultural Park Board, a professionally staffed consortium of all cultural resource owners, managers, sponsoring groups, and associated cultural communities. Board headquarters and staff offices might be provided in the National Park Service French Quarter facility, or, if more appropriate and expressive of the associative spirit of the undertaking (with the National Park Service a peer, not a directing associate), Board offices could be located as a separate establishment. Functions of the Board and its staff would be to provide coordinating direction of operations, training and technical assistance to associates, interpretive integration, and criteria and standards to ensure quality of operations and integrity of resources.

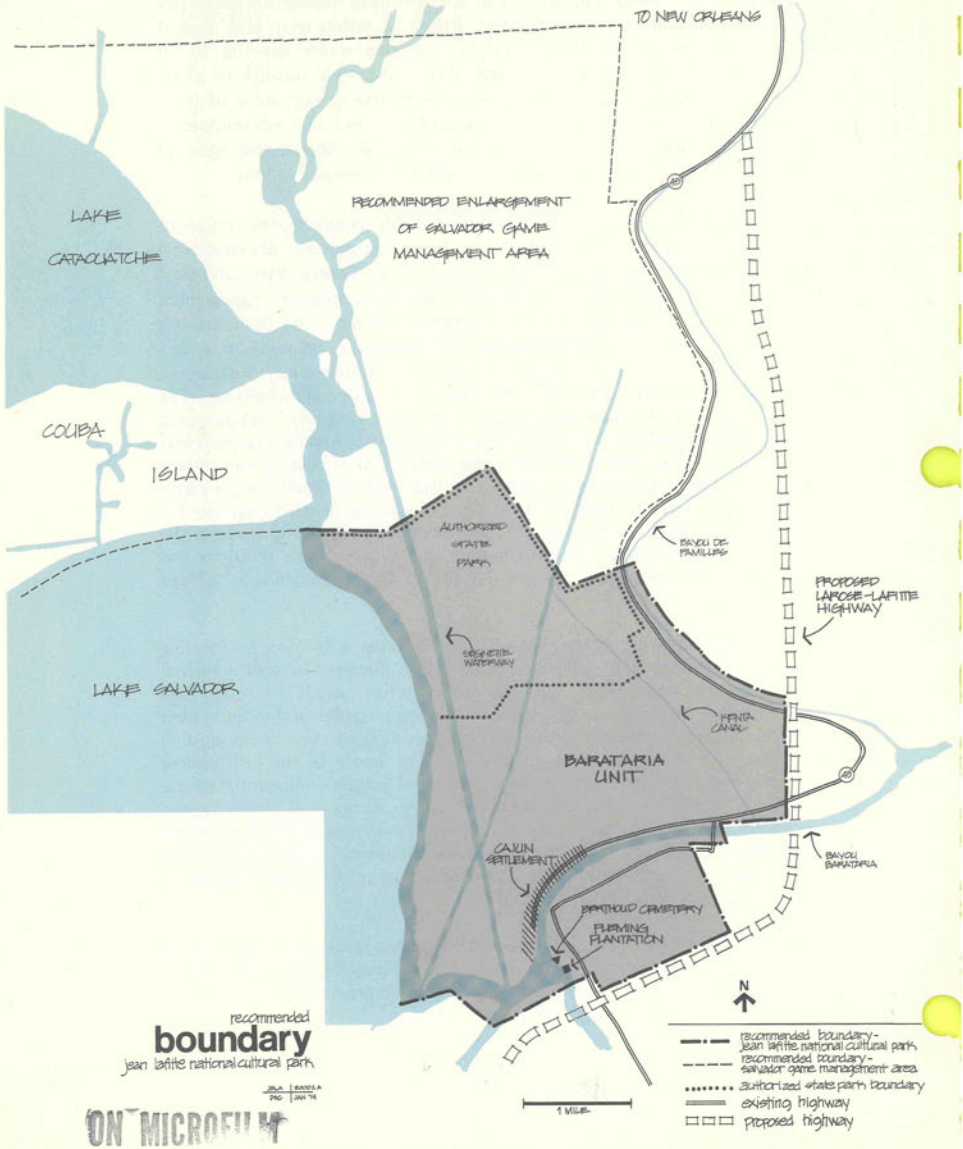
Benefits of the Board management concept are obvious in terms of visitor use. All significant delta-region resources would be part of the national cultural park, and visitors would have a central reference point for information, interpretation, and use of the resources. Associate members of the national cultural park would assume obligations upon becoming members (e.g., adherence to standards and criteria), and they would reap great benefits in terms of associate status in a national park complex, with shared talent pools and technical assistance, and coordinated visitor-use programs to protect the resources and make them known and available.

Association with the national cultural park would of course be voluntary. The Board's influence and value as an administrative mechanism would not be based on line management power. Rather, it would serve as a pool of talent and physical-resource capability offering direct benefits to all associates. Associates would assume their obligations because of these benefits, and they would remain associates to ensure continuity of these benefits. Thus the institution would perpetuate itself as a self-reinforcing functional entity, not as an instrument of power. Should this ideal be perverted, associates would drop out and the institution would fold.

The Delta-Region Preservation Commission would include representatives of the National Cultural Park Board; the larger cultural and environmental preservation community of the New Orleans region; Federal, State, and local governmental bodies having preservation and environmental management responsibilities; and business and industrial interests. The Commission's charter would give it responsibilities and authorities adequate to ensure enlightened public participation in regional environmental management decisions that would affect cultural resources or their natural settings. The Commission would be an advisory body, not a governing one: Its power as a watch-dog and advisor would stem from the enlightened public opinion that it would generate and its influence as a coordinator of that opinion to the end of enlightened decisions. Essential to this mode of functioning is a paid professional staff to keep track of regional developments, to furnish the Commission with useable data on those developments, and to perform the communications liaison that would take the Commission's positions and advisories to the public forum. (A sort of loosely organized "United Nations" for the delta.)

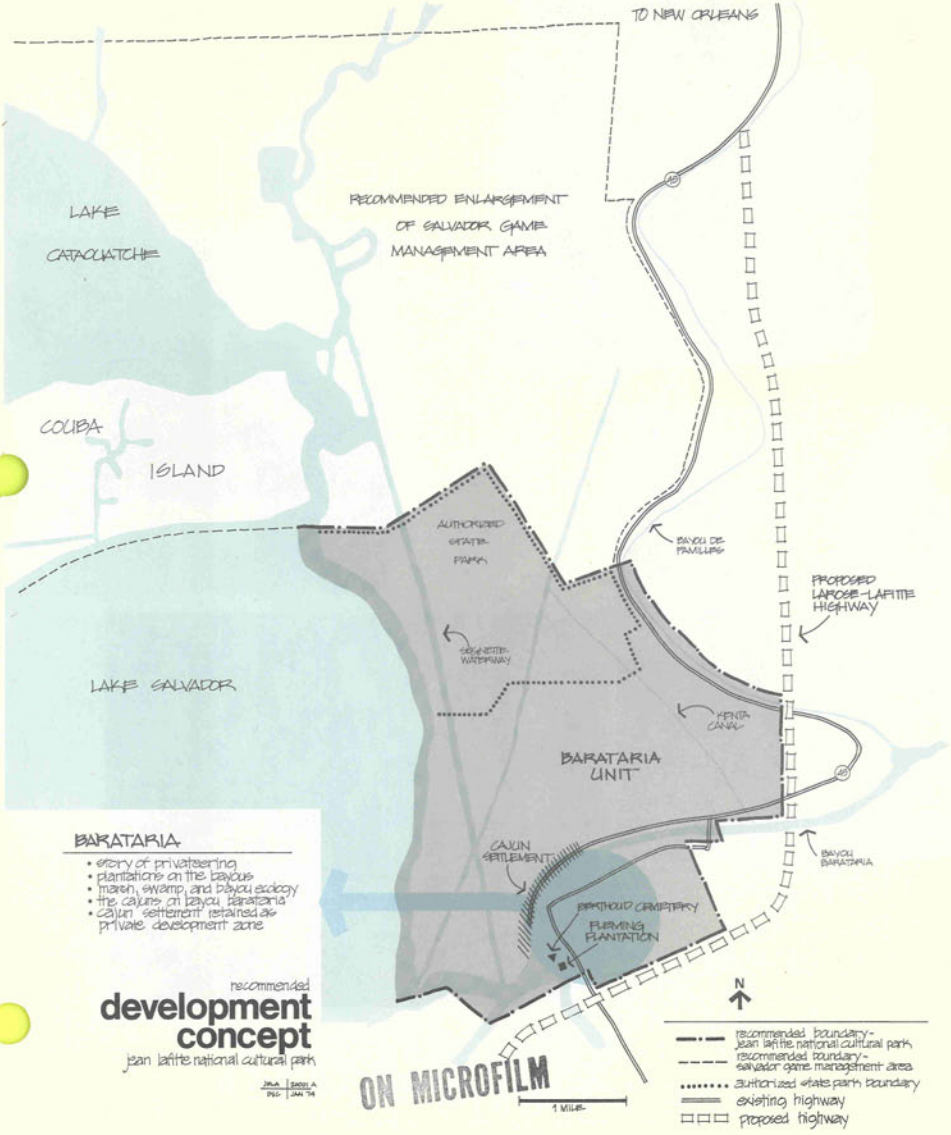
The Commission is an idea waiting to be filled with people. Existing agencies, groups, and individuals whose like interests in environmental conservation now result in fragmented effort would, through the Commission, have a place to bring those interests together and to unite their efforts. The Commission would not be superimposed upon these existing elements; it would be made up of them. This would be the institutional arrangement that could grapple with the level of problem represented by the ongoing subsidence of the Barataria area. Lacking such a level of coordinated concern, the national cultural park, even in its extended/Board form, would be like a tail trying to wag a dog. The Commission, then, becomes the essential institutional mechanism that lends the aura of long-term feasibility to the national cultural park concept.

Both the Park Board and the Regional Commission would need to be treated in any legislation relating to the Jean Lafitte National Cultural Park. Basic authorization for such institutions would have to provide for their funding subsidization to allow their professional staffing.



recommended
boundary
jean lafitte national cultural park

ON MICROFILM



BARATARIA

- story of privateering
- plantations on the bayous
- marsh, swamp, and bayou ecology
- the cajuns on bayou barataria
- cajun settlement retained as private development zone

recommended

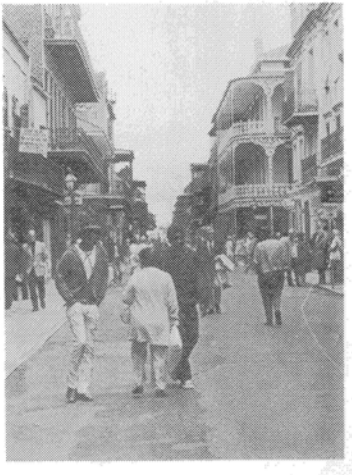
development concept

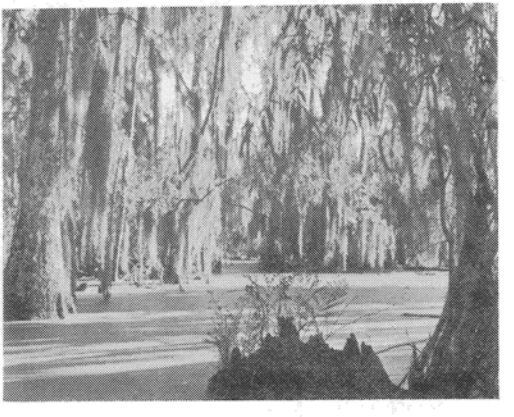
jean lafitte national cultural park

ON MICROFILM









RECOMMENDATION: EXTENDED JEAN LAFITTE NATIONAL CULTURAL PARK

Alternative 4 is the most feasible alternative. In summary review, here are the weak-to-strong evaluations of the alternatives:

ALTERNATIVE 1: NO PARK

An endorsement of a status quo marked by destructive dynamics. Acceptance of the inevitable loss of the Mississippi Delta Region as a cultural context and as a rich, life-supportive environment (unless other institutions can reverse present processes).

ALTERNATIVE 2: JEAN LAFITTE STATE PARK

Would serve some park needs of the localized region and improve quality of life during the interim until regional resources are exhausted. Then it would subside — literally and figuratively — with the rest of the delta.

ALTERNATIVE 3: NUCLEAR JEAN LAFITTE NATIONAL CULTURAL PARK

Would accomplish the same basic goals as the State park, but in greater depth and for a wider audience, during the remaining life of the delta. Then it too would die. Because national parks are intended to exist in perpetuity, foreseen termination of this park concept makes it infeasible.

ALTERNATIVE 4: EXTENDED JEAN LAFITTE NATIONAL CULTURAL PARK

Recognizes the need for a region-wide systems approach to environmental conservation — cultural and natural — in the delta region. Provides land base and institutionalized constituencies adequate for such an approach and adequate for visitor use of preserved resources. Cost outlays would be significant, but reasonable considering the benefits the national cultural park would generate among its associates and regional sponsors.

Accordingly, alternative 4 is the recommendation.

It is further recommended that, should Departmental and Congressional approval of this proposal be forthcoming, that there be initiated immediately a new-area study with master plan, environmental assessment and impact statement, and subsequent legislative support data. Tentatively, these studies have been programmed for Fiscal Year 1974.



barataria marsh area

ON MICROFILM

ON MICROFILM

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EVALUATION: EXTENDED JEAN LAFITTE NATIONAL CULTURAL PARK

To qualify as a unit of the National Park System, an area must pass three "tests": it must have national significance, suitability, and feasibility. Subordinate criteria within each of these groupings are established for each kind of national park area. Those for natural, historical, and recreational areas are presented in "NPS Criteria for Parklands" (see bibliography), while those for cultural areas are in "Criteria for National Cultural Parks" (see appendix). The former are long-established; the latter were approved by the Secretary of the Interior on June 17, 1971, following their recommendation by the Advisory Board on National Parks. (The "NPS Briefing Book – 1973" formally adds the cultural park category to the natural, historical, and recreational areas: "In recent years a new category of parks has been authorized by Congress for inclusion in the National Park System. Cultural parks will preserve folkways of the past as well as establishing sites for contemporary programs.")

Thus, the cultural park category anticipates this feasibility study, and established criteria had already been derived from a still-earlier assertion in a formal concept paper *that:* it is a national responsibility to preserve evidences of *way of life*, whether of lost or still-living cultures. The rationale for adding another park category was, in summary paraphrase, as follows: Each human-group adaptation to the world produces unique values, traditions, and tangible products that lend diversity to the general human experience. Such diversity – sensory, affective, and logical – has intrinsic value. A cultural species is as much to be enjoyed, wondered at, learned from as a biological species. Culture pools may be as valuable, pragmatically, as the gene pools of biology. We may find instructive analogs in other culture patterns that bear on our own search for quality life – even survival. Finally, if it is worthwhile to preserve the material products of a culture – as museums and historic sites attest – then, in all logic, it *must* be worthwhile to encourage perpetuation of the still-functional groups of people, i.e., the living cultures, that made those things.

At a more mundane level, it was recognized that national cultural parks could perform certain needed functions more appropriately than could traditional categories. Perpetuation of cultures and their natural and man-made contextual environments demands elements of activism and experimentation beyond the range of earlier park management approaches.

The approved criteria provide objective bases for evaluating the *national significance* of cultural expressions. All six criteria are pertinent affirmations of such significance in this park proposal. Integrity of sites, structures, and communities encompassed by this park proposal varies from place to place. In some places there exists direct threat from "the erosive effects of contemporary technology and its economic forces" (e.g., proposed highway, levee, and housing developments in the Barataria sector). But, in aggregate, the resource base possesses ample integrity for this new-park concept. This assertion is reinforced by a major premise built into the park proposal: This park – in a context of cooperative-administration and regional-commission assistance – would be a vehicle for preservation and reclamation of the resource base. It would be an active agent in retaining and regaining resource integrity.

The *suitability* of this park proposal, as to land-base sufficiency, depends on a sort of seed-money principle. The seed is the nuclear base administered by the National Park Service – including Chalmette National Historical Park (142 acres), a visitor center in the French Quarter (insignificant acreage), and the Barataria sector (7,000 acres). Having established this nucleus, it would then be possible to activate the cooperative-administration and regional-commission elements of the proposal, both having significant potential for land-base preservation (e.g., cooperatively administered sites), for protection of cultural resource settings (e.g., commission influence on land-use planning/zoning), and for development of appropriate public-use concepts (e.g., joint planning and technical interchange, interpretation, transportation systems, carrying capacities, off-site visitor facilities, and sensitive visitor use of cultural resources).

Assuming timely activation of these complementing elements, the proposed land-base nucleus is suitable for *initiating* the proposal.

Long-term suitability depends on the catalytic or multiplier effect of the nuclear cultural park. If the model provided by the nucleus successfully stimulates and mobilizes a cooperative, regional preservation/reclamation approach, major cultural resources of the New Orleans region can be perpetuated.

Based on the existence of organizations dedicated to such purposes in New Orleans (see appendix – "area contacts"), it is apparent that this proposal can be successfully implemented to encourage perpetuation of major cultural resources. The existing organizations, which today lack the coordinated scope that a Regional Commission would provide, have nonetheless won significant cultural conservation victories, as in the freeway/Vieux Carre issue.

Certainly the proposal is *feasible:* it meets the purpose of a national cultural park. In fact, it is hard to imagine that the cultural park concept was conceived without this proposal in mind! Furthermore, achievement of the park purpose through the cooperative, regional-commission elements of the proposal would produce spin-off benefits relating to other social and physical needs of the region.

Why a national cultural park as opposed to another category? The resource inventory demonstrates that many nationally significant historical resources would be included in this proposal (either directly administered by the National Park Service or associated with the national cultural park). This proposal, modified to meet the more specific historical-area criteria, would probably qualify in that category. Moreover, such a designation would fill a gap in the National Park System Plan, History (2b4. French Exploration and Settlement, Gulf Coast). *But,* modifications for historical-area classification would limit this proposal's range by inhibiting options and flexibilities essential to the cooperative/regional approach. Built into the national cultural park idea is an active social-agent function (not only preservation of discrete physical resources, but also reform of social processes for purposes of reclamation and perpetuation of physical *and* living cultural resources). To the more traditional aspirations of historical-area management, this emphasis is strange if not alien.

As to the natural and recreational categories, the national significance of resources and values contemplated by this proposal are marginal or unestablished. The limited sector of delta wetlands may be the best available sample of this ecosystem type, but it does not possess exemplary integrity of a quality to meet natural-area criteria. Recreational opportunities are many, but they are not of the explicitly physical type emphasized by the recreational-area criteria. Rather they are adjuncts of or vehicles for interpretive programs – many of which must be subdued to preserve cultural park atmospherics.

For these reasons, the national cultural park category is deemed most fitting. No other category could conceivably stimulate the popular sensitivity for the whole delta environment that is prerequisite to saving it.

A Caveat on Culture-Group Assistance

Living culture groups are complex systems of values, traditions, and material elements. They are too complex for direct manipulation by outsiders – even the best-intentioned ones. The Federal Government, acting through the instrumentality of a national cultural park, should not be involved in the delicate business of trying to mold, stop in time, or otherwise tinker with the way of life of, say, a Cajun village.

If the environmental context that has shaped and has been shaped by the culture group is healthy, so the culture group can continue to function, it will probably live on – evolving certainly, but retaining its substantive characteristics. If the heritage environment is destroyed or radically altered, the cultural syndrome will become dysfunctional and will be discarded. Efforts to perpetuate a culture in that circumstance would be sheer fakery.

So how to help? If people fish for a living, do not become preoccupied with the intangible cultural soul of the people. Make sure the environment will support fish. The culture will perpetuate itself.

APPENDIXES

A: GLOSSARY

B: LEGISLATION

C: BIBLIOGRAPHY

D: TEAM MEMBERS, AREA CONTACTS, AND CONSULTANTS

A: A BARATARIA GLOSSARY

Cultural Park – only a few years old and still in the process of evolution, the concept for a cultural park embraces traditional National Park Service functions of nature preservation, historical preservation, and recreation, and involves these with socio-economic conditions of an area in such a way that the whole provides a coherent story of a people on a land. It is environmental, presenting the overall ecological forces in the area and relating the resultant society's structure to them, as well as presenting their diversions and entertainments. A cultural park recognizes the validity of culture in the anthropological sense, but does not rank cultures except that some may inspire interest from a broader base. Cultural parks include the influence of ethnic groups and trace the contributions each has brought from former homelands. Interpretation is a vital element of a cultural park, even more so than for other kinds.

Creole – a Louisianian of French and/or Spanish descent, has an urban connotation.

Cajun – a person descended from the French "Acadians" displaced to the Louisiana bayou country from Nova Scotia following the Seven Years War.

Bayou – distributary of a river, bounded by natural levees, through which water is channeled by repeated divisions into the swamps, then marshes of a delta, and ultimately into the ocean.

Natural levee – higher ground along a bayou or river, over which flood waters pour, dropping their load of silt as they spread out from the channel and lose carrying capacity.

Swamp – lower land with cypress trees, flowing water, situated between natural levee and marsh.

Marsh – wet low ground along a bayou or river, over which flood waters pour, dropping their load of silt as they spread out from the channel and lose carrying capacity.

Pirogue – a dugout canoe used in swamps and marshes.

Lafitte skiff – a shallow-draft powered boat operating in the bayous.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 14, 1972

House OKs Study For Lafitte Park

States-Item Bureau

WASHINGTON — The House yesterday approved an interior appropriations bill containing $40,000 to study the feasibility of establishing a Jean Lafitte National Cultural Park in Jefferson Parish.

The House passed by a vote of 367 to 3 the $2.5 billion interior appropriation for the fiscal year beginning July 1. The bill, including the $40,000 allocation to the National Park Service for the study, next goes to the Senate.

Rep. Hale Boggs of New Orleans said he was able to convince the House Appropriations Committee to include the park item in the appropriations bill without the usual authorization and accompanying delay. Funding for federal agencies is conventionally agreed to by the House and Senate in authorization bills before the final congressional step of appropriation.

The park service will study the feasibility of creating a 20,000 acre park in the bayou and marsh Barataria area adjoining Lake Salvador about 15 miles south of New Orleans.

The park would preserve the natural values of the region and would make possible such outdoor recreation as camping, boating and sport said Boggs.

The proposed park could be reached from New Orleans by state Highway 45, Boggs said. He said the Louisiana Highway Department plans to improve the highway.

The year-long study of the park by the National Park Service will be coordinated with local and state agencies, saidBoggs.

93D CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 10665

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

OCTOBER 2, 1973

Mrs. BOGGS introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs

A BILL

To authorize the establishment of the Jean Lafitte National Historical Park in the State of Louisiana, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the Secretary of the Interior (hereinafter referred to as the "Secretary") is authorized to designate not to exceed acres in Jefferson Parish, Louisiana, within the area designated on the map entitled "Jean Lafitte National Historical Park", numbered and dated . The Secretary may acquire lands, waters, and interests therein within the area so designated by purchase, exchange, or transfer, with the consent of the head

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of the administering agency and without monetary consideration, from any other Federal agency. When the Secretary determines that property has been acquired in an amount sufficient to constitute an efficiently administerable unit, he shall declare the establishment of the Jean Lafitte National Historical Park by publication of a notice to that effect in the Federal Register. Pending such establishment and thereafter the Secretary shall administer property acquired pursuant to this Act in accordance with the Act of August 25, 1916 (39 Stat. 535), as amended and supplemented, and the Act of August 21, 1935 (49 Stat. 666), as amended.

SEC. 2. There are authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act, but not more than $ for the acquisition of lands and interests in lands and not more than $ for development.

United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

OCT 12 1972

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Your Committee has requested a report on H.R. 11056, a bill "To authorize a study of the feasibility and desirability of establishing a unit of the national park system to commemorate the unique values of the Barataria region of Louisiana, and for other purposes, to be known as the Jean Lafitte National Cultural Park."

Because the Secretary now has authority to conduct the study that would be authorized by H.R. 11056, we believe that enactment of this bill is not necessary.

H.R. 11056 directs the Secretary to study, investigate, and formulate recommendations on the feasibility and desirability of establishing as part of the national park system, an area in the Barataria region of the State of Louisiana, to commemorate "the unique natural values and unique cultural values which have been shaped by history and the environment" in the area and to preserve and interpret "the cultural heritage, historical resources, and recreational opportunities of the area". The bill requires that other interested Federal agencies, and State and local bodies and officials be consulted, and that the study be coordinated with applicable outdoor recreation plans, highway plans, and other planning activities relating to the region. The Secretary is required, within 1 year after the effective date of the Act, to submit to the President and the Congress a report of the findings and recommendations of the National Park Service, as approved by him; the report is to include recommendations as to scenic and historic site preservation or marking. The bill authorizes $40,000 to carry out its provisions.

The Barataria area is located south of New Orleans on the Gulf Coast, and is in large part a tidal area of overgrown cypress. The area has historical associations with Jean Lafitte, a buccaneer who aided the Americans during the War of 1812, and with the French Cajun culture. There is at present a State park authorized in the area, but the park has not yet been funded for acquisition or development.

Because statutory authority now exists under the 1936 Parkway and Recreation Study Act (16 U.S.C. 17k-n) that would authorize the Secretary of the Interior to study the Barataria area, to determine if a portion of the area is suitable for inclusion in the national park system, we see no need for the enactment of H.R. 11056. The appropriations bill for the Department of the Interior for the fiscal year 1973, which was signed by the President on August 10, 1972, to become Public Law 92-369, contained an appropriation of $40,000 for a "Feasibility study, Jean LaFitte Park, Louisiana". Such an amount would be adequate to carry out the study, and no further congressional action is needed.

The Department would not restrict a study of the Barataria area to determining whether a national cultural park could appropriately be located there, but would consider the full range of possible recreational and conservation uses in the area. The language of the House report on Interior appropriations bill, which directs a feasibility study for "Jean LaFitte Park, Louisiana" is adequate, we believe, to permit the Department to consider this broader range of options.

It should be possible to complete the proposed study in approximately a year, which is in accord with the time limit set by H.R. 11056.

The Office of Management and Budget has advised that there is no objection to the presentation of this report from the standpoint of the Administration's program.

Sincerely yours,

Assistant Secretary of the Interior

Hon. Wayne N. Aspinall
Chairman, Committee on
Interior and Insular Affairs
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C.

92D CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 11056

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

OCTOBER 4, 1971

Mr. BOGGS introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs

A BILL

To authorize a study of the feasibility and desirability of establishing a unit of the national park system to commemorate the unique values of the Barataria region of Louisiana, and for other purposes, to be known as the Jean Lafitte National Cultural Park.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That, for the purpose of commemorating the unique natural values and unique cultural values which have been shaped by history and the environment in the Barataria region of Louisiana, and to preserve and interpret for the benefit of the American people, the cultural heritage, historical resources, and recreational opportunities of the area, the Secretary

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of the Interior (hereinafter referred to as the "Secretary") shall study, investigate, and formulate recommendations on the feasibility and desirability of establishing as a part of the national park system, an area in the State of Louisiana, in the Barataria region, which may best accomplish the foregoing objective, to be known as the Jean Lafitte National Cultural Park.

SEC. 2. As a part of such study other interested Federal agencies, and State and local bodies and officials shall be consulted, and the study shall be coordinated with applicable outdoor recreation plans, highway plans, and other planning activities relating to the region.

SEC. 3. The Secretary shall submit to the President and to the Congress within one year after the effective date of this Act, a report of the findings and recommendations of the National Park Service, as approved by him. The report of the Secretary shall contain, but not be limited to, findings with respect to the scenic, scientific, historic, and natural values of the land resources involved, including specifically, recommendations as to scenic and historic site preservation or marking.

SEC. 4. There are authorized to be appropriated not to exceed $40,000 to carry out the provisions of this Act.

ACT No. 100

House Bill No. 658. By: Messrs. Beeson, Lauricella, Schwegmann, Dwyer and Blue and Senator Mollere.

AN ACT

To authorize and request the creation of the Lafitte State Park in Jefferson Parish and to place said park under the direction of the State Parks and Recreation Commission.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

Section 1. The State Parks and Recreation Commission is hereby authorized and requested to create the Lafitte State Park, which shall be under its direction, operation and control.

Section 2. All laws or parts of laws in conflict herewith are hereby repealed.

Approved by the Governor: July 2, 1966.

A true copy:

WADE O. MARTIN, JR.
Secretary of State.

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