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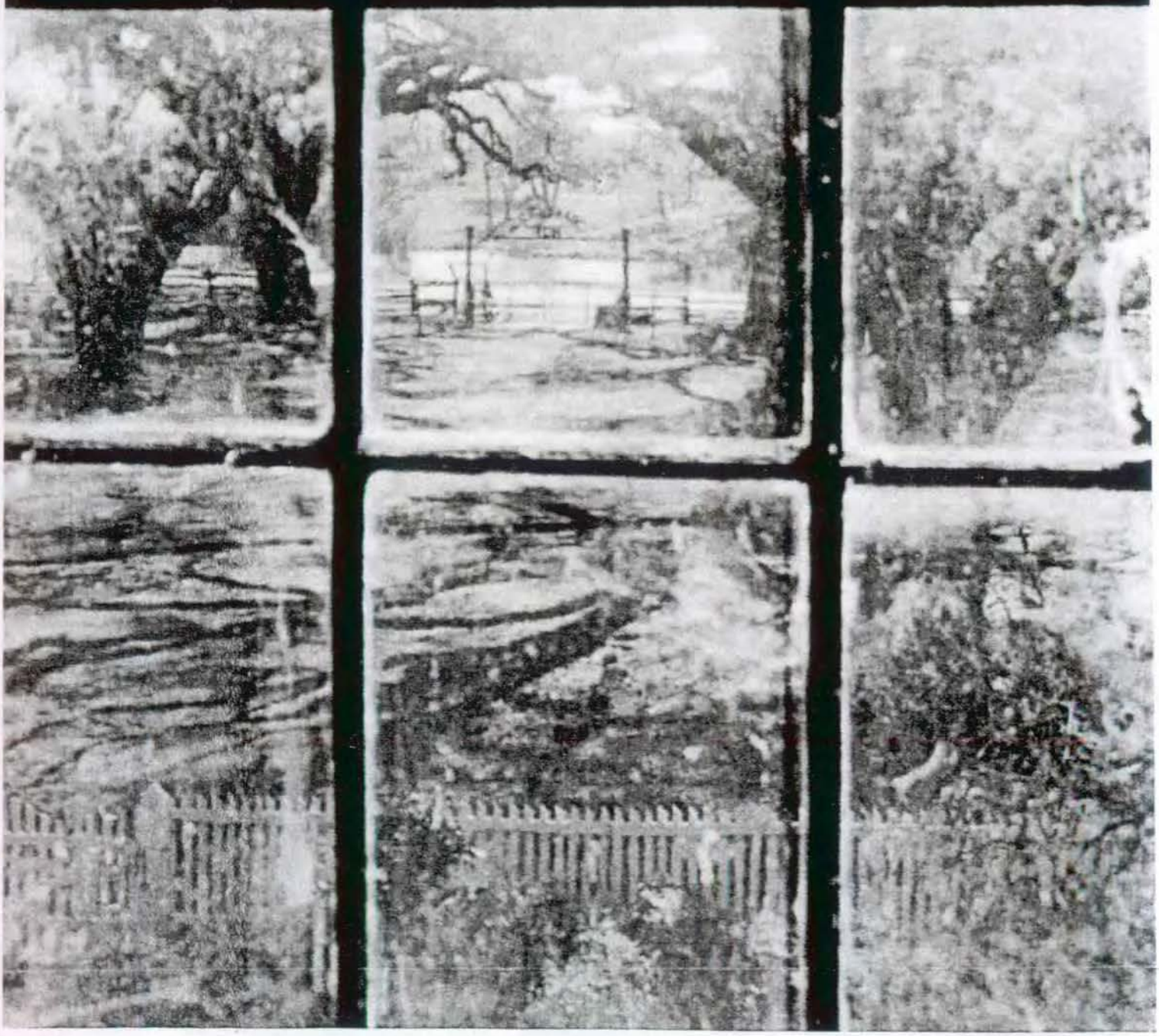
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Cane River Creole National Historical Park

Oakland Plantation

Cultural Landscape Report:

Part I



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CANE RIVER CREOLE NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK
OAKLAND PLANTATION
CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT
PART ONE

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and
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Color Scans
9/24/2004

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INTRODUCTION

MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

Cane River Creole National Historical Park [NHP] was established in 1994 to commemorate the long and complex history of early European exploration and settlement of the Red River Valley in northwestern Louisiana in the 18th century; the resulting interactions among the French, Spanish, African and Indian peoples; and the subsequent development and evolution of Creole culture and plantation life along Cane River up to the mid-20th century. Oakland Plantation is one of two plantation units within the park owned by the National Park Service [NPS]. As such it provides a center for the interpretation of both its own story and the history of the Cane River region.

The purpose of the Cultural Landscape Report is to research the history of the landscape at Oakland, both inside and outside the Unit's property boundaries, in order to evaluate the significance and integrity of the historic landscape, and provide direction for its treatment and use.

This report is one of a series of studies of the history of the property. Archaeological investigations were conducted between 1996 and 1999; the preliminary findings of an oral history project were reported in 1998; a thesis has been written on the history of the plantation between 1830 and 1880; and several Historic Structure Reports are in progress.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW AND STUDY BOUNDARIES

This first part of the Cultural Landscape Report focuses on the history of the Emanuel Prud'homme Plantation on the Isle Brevelle, from its establishment in the 1790s, through its subsequent growth and development, until the death of Emanuel's son Phanor in 1865. This was a large cotton plantation, which grew to include over 1900 acres of land on the banks of Cane River, plus another 1500 acres of land in detached parcels. It was operated with an enslaved workforce of about 70 hands, and by 1860 the plantation was home to nearly 150 people of African descent. The business of the plantation was disrupted by the Civil War, and the death of Phanor Prud'homme coincided with the end of that war and the emancipation of the slaves.

In 1873, the land was divided between Phanor's children, and most of the land on the right hand bank of the river became part of Oakland Plantation. This property was to be owned and managed by four more generations of Emanuel Prud'homme's family until 1997, when its center was acquired by the NPS. The Oakland Unit now comprises approximately 45 acres. While this contains the Main House and a fine collection of historic plantation buildings, it represents only 2% of the antebellum plantation landscape. Therefore the research for this Cultural Landscape Report looks beyond the

boundaries of the Unit to include the much larger area that was once part of the Emanuel Prud'homme Plantation. The focus is on the land beside Cane River that formed the main plantation; mention is made of outlying properties, but only in so far as the ownership of these affected the operation of the main plantation.

OUTLINE OF THE REPORT

An understanding of the evolution of the plantation landscape requires some appreciation of its regional setting and historical context; these are described in Chapters One and Two. Natural systems played and important part in the history of the settlement of the region, particularly the humid subtropical climate, the geomorphology of the Red River floodplain, and the richness of its alluvial soils. French settlers introduced the plantation system based on slave labor to the region. This economic and social system had its origins in the mercantilism of European colonial powers, but, ironically, planters had little success until the close of the colonial period. Success came with the expansion of the cotton trade at the end of the 18th century, and in the 19th century the Cane River region became a major center of cotton production.

A narrative history of the Emanuel Prud'homme Plantation during the lifetimes of Jean-Pierre Emanuel and his son Pierre-Phanor is presented in Chapter Three. The account is based on research in the Prud'homme Family Papers. This extensive collection of documents is a rich source of information on the agricultural operations on an antebellum cotton plantation. It includes day-by-day accounts of agricultural activities over several years. A transcript of the record for 1860 is provided as an appendix to this report. Unfortunately, the collection also has deficiencies, for example, there is a dearth of maps of the plantation landscape. And it must be remembered that the Family Papers present the landscape entirely from the viewpoint of the owner and overseer; there is no record of the landscape as seen through the eyes of an enslaved worker.

In Chapter Four, the landscape characteristics of the plantation at the end of the antebellum era are discussed. The description is pieced together from an analysis of the written record, the archaeological findings, and the evidence found in various 20th century maps and photographs, and in the present-day landscape. A Period Plan accompanies the discussion, which shows landscape features for which there are adequate evidence to indicate form and location.

A description of exiting conditions at the Oakland Unit is presented in Chapter Five. This is organized under the same headings as the discussion of historic landscape characteristics, and refers to features both inside and outside the Unit. It is illustrated with a plan, a 1998 aerial photograph, and by photographs taken by the research team.

Chapter Six contains preliminary conclusions and recommendations. Our intent is to provide some guidance for planning for the reception of visitors, on-going preservation maintenance operations, and the development of interpretation programs. Although a full evaluation of the significance and integrity of the historic landscape must await completion of Part Two of the Cultural Landscape Report, a preliminary assessment is

possible based on agreement that the period of significance extended into the late 1950s and early 1960s. The appearance of the landscape at that time is well documented in aerial photographs and is recalled by living members of the Prud'homme Family. Recommendations are made for restoration of the historic circulation routes and pattern of enclosures within the Unit's boundaries. In addition, suggestions are made about the variety of resources inside and outside the Unit's boundaries that could be employed to interpret the landscape characteristics of the antebellum plantation.

At the end of the report, a list of references is provided, plus a guide to sources that should be used in the preparation of the narrative history in Part Two of the Cultural Landscape Report that will take the story of Oakland from 1865 to the 1960s.

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

The landscape that we see today in the area around Oakland is the product of both remarkable historical continuities and radical changes. The important continuities include continuities in ownership, habitation and land use. The radical changes include shifts in river flow, property boundaries, and social and economic organization. The result is a complex tapestry in which multiple strands of history are interwoven.

The Oakland landscape has national significance as an illustration of the evolution of a cotton plantation from its colonial origins, through successive stages of growth, division and reorganization, until the end of the sharecropping era in the mid 20th century. It represents a celebrated regional variation of the Southern cotton plantation, one that was developed by French Creole planters in the fertile floodplain of the Red River in northwestern Louisiana. The Emanuel Prud'homme Plantation is both a typical and an exceptional example of this regional type. It is typical in many aspects of its agricultural history, but it is exceptional in the richness of the historical record. This record is found not only in the voluminous Prud'homme Family Papers, but also in the records of an extensive oral history project, and in the fabric of the buildings and landscape preserved at Oakland.

Over the past 40 years, however, the historic record provided by the landscape has become difficult to read. Within the boundaries of the Oakland Unit, this is due to a period of disuse and comparative neglect. Outside these boundaries, it is due to changes wrought by the modernization of agricultural operations. The establishment of Cane River Creole NHP provides an opportunity to preserve and restore some of the historic characteristics of the landscape within the Oakland Unit, and to use this site to interpret the story of the larger landscape around it.

CHAPTER ONE:
THE REGIONAL SETTING

NATURAL SYSTEMS

Oakland Plantation is situated in the Cane River Creole National Historical Park, in Natchitoches Parish in northwestern Louisiana. The Park is located in the lower Red River Valley about 100 miles from the river's junction with the Mississippi. The human history of the region has been strongly influenced by the operation of its natural systems including the humid subtropical climate, the peculiarities of the river and its floodplain, the fertile soils, and the diverse vegetation and wildlife that made the region their home.

The Climate

The humid subtropical climate of the Cane River region is influenced by its location close to the Gulf of Mexico. This warm climate played an important role in the development of plantation agriculture. "Louisiana really has a two-season climate. Winter begins with the first polar front in the fall and ends with the last in the spring. Between the two lies the summer season."[1] The average length of the growing season, that is the time between the last killing frost of spring and the first killing frost of fall, is around 240 days in this part of the Red River Valley. The last frost comes on or after March 26th and the first frost comes on or after October 24th in nine out of ten years.[2] This determines the agricultural calendar and makes the area highly suited to the growing of cotton. Winters are mild; in January the average daily minimum temperature is 37.9 degrees F, and the average daily maximum is 61.0 degrees F. But the region is open to arctic air masses that move down the Mississippi Valley in winter and cold spells are common. In two years out of every ten, there are minimum temperatures below 16.0 degrees F. Summers are hot and humid, with average daily maximums above 90.0 degrees F during June, July, August and September. The sun shines 70% of the daylight hours during these months and the air is moist with an average relative humidity of 60% in mid-afternoon, rising to 90% during the night. This makes heavy manual labor outdoors difficult and even dangerous during the summer months, which was one reason European settlers forced slaves of African origin to work the fields.

The region receives an average of about 50 inches of rain per year. The winter and spring months from December to May are the wettest. Summer rainfall is very variable and much of it comes from thunderstorms. Usually, August is the driest month. Periods of drought are common in summer and are exacerbated by the high temperatures. Hurricanes from the Gulf sometimes bring torrential rains, particularly in late summer. Hurricane winds have moderated by the time the system reaches this far inland, but the

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[1] Kniffen and Hilliard, 1988, 19.
[2] Ibid., 22; USDA Soil Conservation Service, 1990, 136-137.

region is subject occasionally to tornadoes. All these uncertainties make weather a prime concern for all trying to make a living from the land.

The Red River and its Floodplain

The Cane River is an old channel of the Red River. The Red River is the southernmost west-bank tributary of the Mississippi. From its headwaters on the Llano Estacado this river stretches over 1200 miles and drains over one tenth of the continent.[3] It was an important route for early explorers and American settlers pushing westwards, but its value as a navigable channel has always been compromised by its sinuosity and its fluctuating water levels. In addition at various points along the river, flooding and bank erosion had created a series of logjams. Immediately north of the Cane River region lay the largest of these obstructions – the Great Raft. This was a huge logjam that affected about 150 miles of the river, with about a third to a half of that length dammed by waterlogged driftwood.[4] According to the native Caddoan people, the raft had been there for many generations before the arrival of Europeans. Although discontinuous and changing from year to year, the logjam impeded navigation and caused widespread flooding in adjacent low lands. The Great Raft made the site of Natchitoches at the northern end of the Cane River the head of navigation for all but the most determined travelers. This slowed the spread upstream of French colonists in the 18th century and American settlers in the 19th century. In 1828 the Congress of the United States appropriated funds for its removal. The project began in 1833 under the direction of Captain Henry Miller Shreve of the Army Corps of Engineers. Much of the raft was removed in the next few years, but it began to reform again. Complete removal required repeated efforts and was not completed until 1873.[5]

Downstream from the Great Raft, the Red River cuts through two lines of low hills, the Nacogdoches Wold and, thirty miles to the south, the higher and more rugged Kisatchie Wold. Between these ridges the river flows across a floodplain, which is about ten or twelve miles wide, and is enclosed to the east and west by hills rising about 200 feet above the plain. As it flows across this plain the river divides into several channels, one of which is the Cane River. In historic times the main flow of water has migrated from west to east. At the western edge of the plain, at the foot of the Kisatchie Hills, the Old River occupies the channel that carried the main flow of the Red River until the 1760s.[6] In the center of the plain, the Cane River occupies what was the main channel in the second half of the 18th century and early part of the 19th. In 1832, probably as the result of channel alterations during a major flood, the main flow of the river began to shift into a channel on the eastern side of the plain called the Rigolet de Bon Dieu. A flood in 1849 probably caused further channel alterations that completed this process.[7] The name "Red River" was eventually attached to the channel with the main flow of water, so in the early years of the 19th century the Cane River was known as the Red River, and then the

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[3] Tyson, 1981, 9.
[4] Kniffen and Hilliard, 1988, 61.
[5] Tyson, 1981, 88-102.
[6] Mills, 1977, 50.
[7] Chaffin, 1988, 97.

Rigolet de Bon Dieu came to hold that title in the second half of the 19th century. The migration left the Cane River as a backwater, which because of low water levels was only open to navigation by steamboats in winter and spring. Then in 1914, the Army Corps of Engineers converted the upper stretch of the Cane River into a lake by building earthen dams. One separates the lake from the Red River above Natchitoches, and another impounds the water near the junction of the Cane River and the Old River.[8] Eventually, after a major flood in 1927, the Army Corps of Engineers built large levees to confine the Red River in its eastern channel.[9] As a result of these major engineering works, the river and its floodplain are now far less changeable than they used to be.

Between the channels of the Old River, the Cane River and the Red River, the floodplain is further divided by a series of minor streams or bayous. One of the important hydrological characteristics of the floodplain is that rainwater tends to drain away from the main channels towards the bayous. Direct flow into the main channels is prevented by the natural levees that line their banks. The bayous eventually convey the water into the main channels, but in the flat bottomlands water movement is slow, and the bayous form a complex network of meandering drainage ways with "islands" between them.

Soils

The Cane River region's soils are formed on river alluvium, material brought down from the Great Plains of Texas and Oklahoma, and from this alluvium the soils derive their characteristic reddish color. The soils on the valley floor are generally very fertile, being rich in lime and mineral plant foods.[10] This together with the climate makes the floodplains potentially one of the most agriculturally productive areas in the continent.

The sorting of the sediments that occurred when floods spread from the various river channels has produced significant variations in the workability of the soils. Close to the main channels, the soils are yellowish red sandy loams, classified within the Roxana Series.[11] These sandy loams are friable and fairly easy to cultivate. They are relatively well drained, with a water table in winter lying about 4 to 6 feet below the surface. Further away from the main channels, in the lower lying backlands beside the bayous, the soils have greater clay content and are reddish brown in color. These soils are classified within the Moreland Series.[12] They are very dense and require considerably more effort to plow. They are also less well drained, with a winter water table sitting only 18 inches below the surface. These differences in texture and drainage were particularly important to farmers in the days before high-powered machines were available to work the land.

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[8] USDI NPS, Cane River Creole NHP General Management Plan and Environmental Assessment, 1999, 124.
[9] Ibid.
[10] USDA Bureau of Soils, 1921, 1441.
[11] USDA Soil Conservation Service, 1990, 109.
[12] Ibid., 106.

Vegetation and Wildlife

The natural vegetation of the valley floor was a forest in which a wide variety of hardwood species competed for dominance over all but the wettest areas. The distribution of species was strongly influenced by variations in soil and drainage.

Alongside the main river channels, the steep banks were called "battures" by the French settlers. These were occupied by light demanding species that could tolerate the unstable conditions. Typical trees included black willow and sandbar willow (*Salix nigra* and *Salix interior*), cottonwoods (*Populus sp.*), American sycamore (*Platanus occidentalis*), and sweetgum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*).[13] On the better drained soils of the natural levees, the "second-bottom hardwood forest" was dominated by sweetgum, various oaks including cherrybark oak (*Quercus rubra* var. *leucophylla*), overcup oak (*Q. lyrata*), and cow oak (*Q. prinu*), hackberrys (*Celtis occidentalis* and *Celtis laevigata*), American elm and winged elm (*Ulmus americana* and *U. alata*), pecan (*Carya illinoensis*), beech (*Fagus grandifolia*), and magnolia (*Magnolia grandiflora*). Some areas were kept open by natural or anthropogenic disturbances, and these patches were occupied by dense stands of river cane (*Arundo donax*).[14] Its importance in this area is indicated by the name Cane River and it encouraged settlement because it was much easier to clear than the forest. In the poorly drained areas, the "first-bottom forest" was home to tupelo gums (*Nyssa* species), swamp red oak (*Q. falcata* var. *pagodaefolia*), swamp red maple (*Acer rubrum*), red ash and pumpkin ash (*Fraxinus pennsylvanica* and *F. profunda*). Many of the trees of these forests had economic value, but by far the most valuable tree was to be found in the swamps. Along the bayous groups of bald cypress (*Taxodium distichum*), stood draped in Spanish moss.[15] European settlers soon learned that cypress was an exceptionally good building material, and sought to possess some swampland for its cypress timber as well as better-drained land for agriculture.

The floodplain forests with their abundance of mast producing trees were home to a wide variety of animals. The major predators once included bear, panther and wolf. Other species included white-tailed deer, opossum, skunk, swamp rabbit and gray and fox squirrel and a wide variety of birds. But the fur bearing animals of the forests and swamps were of greatest interest to the early European settlers. These included mink, fox, coyote, beaver, otter, and raccoon.[16] The swamps were also the haunt of alligators and a diverse population of snakes, lizards and amphibians. The Red River provided an important migratory route for waterfowl in spring and fall, and the swamps were home to wood ducks, egrets and herons. Within the rivers and bayous there were plentiful stocks of bass, crappies, catfish, sunfish, carp, shad and pickerel.[17]

In contrast to the varied forest of the bottomlands, the Kisatchie Hills were originally covered with almost pure stands of longleaf pine (*Pinus palustris*), with relatively few

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[13] Newton, 1972, 41.
[14] Ibid., 41-42.
[15] Ibid., 41.
[16] Kniffen and Hilliard, 1988, 87.
[17] USDA Soil Conservation Service, 1990, 76.

other species present except alongside streams.[18] While not as valuable as cypress, longleaf pine was the most important of the southern yellow pines and yielded both high-grade timber and resinous materials of particular use in boat building. These pinewoods were home to many of the same animal species as the bottomland forests. They provided good habitat for bobwhite quail, wild turkeys, coyotes, opossums, cottontail rabbit and white-tailed deer.[19] They were also home to species that were not common in bottomlands including red-cockaded woodpeckers.

EARLY SETTLEMENT

The Native American Presence

The natural vegetation and wildlife of the Cane River region were disturbed and altered over many centuries by the presence of Native American peoples. The region was the home of tribes belonging to the Caddoan linguistic group, in particular the Natchitoches.[20] These people practiced agriculture as well as gathering, hunting, and fishing, and they established villages. Although floods have obscured the archaeological record, there is evidence of several village sites in the valley. These settlements typically had a central nucleus, but houses were widely dispersed so that families could live close beside their agricultural fields. These clearings were not usually contiguous, and they might have been located more than a mile from the village center.[21]

Some clearance of the bottomland forests would therefore have occurred long before the arrival of Europeans, but little is known about the geographical pattern of these clearings along the Cane River. One of the effects of the arrival of Europeans was a reduction in Native American agricultural activities. Native peoples expanded their hunting activities instead, so they could obtain hides to trade with the new arrivals. In addition to this change in their economy, there was a sharp diminution in their numbers that almost certainly led to an abandonment of many agricultural clearings in the early years of colonization.[22]

The French Settlement at Natchitoches

Some of the earliest accounts of the Red River by Frenchmen emphasize the difficulties of travel. Pierre le Moyne, Sieur d'Iberville, was warned by native people that the river was not navigable, because of the logjams.[23] But Iberville then found that traveling overland through the region's swamps and canebrakes was even more difficult.

> "[April] The 2nd. It rained all night, till two o'clock in the morning. We could not make more than 11/2 leagues today on account of the bad roads through swamps, in water up to our bellies at least. We found six small streams that we had to cross

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[18] Kniffen and Hilliard, 1988, 81.
[19] USDA Soil Conservation Service, 1990, 76.
[20] Kniffen, Gregory, and Stokes, 1987, 47, 123.
[21] Ibid., 107-108.
[22] Ibid., 63-66 and 211.
[23] Le Moyne d'Iberville, 1981, 149.

> on small trees lying 2 feet under water. The country was so thick with canes that we could not force our way through. This has worn us out, as we have spent the last two nights in the rain, having found no big trees from which to rip bark for a shelter."[24]

The military post of St. Jean Baptiste was established below the Great Raft at Natchitoches in 1714. The motive for its establishment was a mixture of strategic and economic aspirations. The post was intended to stake French claims to the waters draining to the Mississippi, and at the same time to open a route for trade with the Spanish in their Provincia de los Tejas.[25] But early settlers and visitors also recognized the region's agricultural potential. In 1719, Benard de La Harpe gave the following optimistic estimate of the potential of an area about 80 leagues – 200 miles – above the military post.

> "The ground of these countries is flat; but a half league from the river there are slopes with prairies. The soils are black, although sandy; beside the river they are good for growing corn and other grains, tobacco, indigo and cotton; it is believed that wheat and barley would grow perfectly well. Wheat is sown in the month of March; the crop is gathered in the month of June. Corn is sown in April and gathered in July."[26]

Within a few years of their arrival, the French settlers had developed a village beside their fort. In its scattered layout of homes and clearings it probably resembled the layout of the nearby village of the native Natchitoches, from whom the French appropriated the name for their settlement. A map of the village was drawn in 1722 by J. F. Breutin.[27] It shows a scatter of "habitations" at the junction of the Old and Cane Rivers below a logjam in the main channel. Most of the habitations were located beside one of the river channels in accordance with the French practice of subdividing land in a way that gave each property owner some river frontage.

This system of land subdivision was introduced from Quebec, and it apparently had its origins in northwestern France. It is now usually called the arpent system, though an arpent was actually a unit of measurement employed in surveying the lots. The size of an arpent varied in different regions of France during the Ancien Regime, and it also depended on what type of land was being measured. That variety was imported to the colonies. In Louisiana an "arpent de Paris" was the norm; this was a square with sides measuring approximately 192 feet, giving an area equivalent to 0.846 of an acre.[28] The size of a landholding was described by the width of its river frontage. Eight arpents was a common size for a colonial land grant. The standard depth of a grant was 40 arpents, which is 7680 feet or approximately one and one-third miles. The great depth was intended to give settlers a variety of types of land. Lots extended from the natural levee beside a river to the swamps in the backlands. The levees provided land suitable for

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[24] Ibid., 149-150.
[25] Cummins, 1990, 26-27.
[26] De La Harpe, 1831, 186.
[27] Cummins, 1990, 28.
[28] Lachiver, 1997, 103; Kniffen and Hilliard, 1988, 122.

settlement and farming, the swamps provided stands of cypress. The resulting pattern of narrow deep lots fronting a river is characteristic of French agricultural settlements throughout Louisiana. The narrowness became accentuated over time, because when a property was subdivided it was always divided lengthwise to maintain the river access for all parcels.

In 1722 the inhabitants of the French settlement at Natchitoches numbered 54, and already the population included enslaved people. There were 28 slaves, of whom 8 were Native Americans and 20 were of African origins.[29] The French colonists found it difficult to enslave the native population, so they turned to the transatlantic slave trade, which was already supplying West Indian colonies.[30] In 1724 the slave laws, known as the Code Noir, which were already in operation in the West Indies, were introduced to Louisiana. They were to provide the legal framework for the treatment of slaves until the Civil War.[31]

The economy of the settlement was based on agriculture, hunting and trade. The settlers traded with the native peoples, and more surreptitiously with the Spanish who had established a settlement at Los Adayes about twelve miles to the west.[32] A record survives from 1722 of the goods sent from Natchitoches to New Orleans over some undefined period. These included indigo and tobacco, tallow, bacon and other meats, 1000 horses and 150 pack mules, plus 36,000 deer skins and approximately 1000 gallons of bear oil.[33]

Throughout the 18th century, the fortunes of the settlement and of the entire colony were affected by struggles between the European colonial powers. Under French rule the settlement grew slowly, and the agricultural economy of the colony was held back by difficulties in growing and marketing indigo and tobacco, the principal commercial crops. This is considered further in the next chapter of this report. In 1769 shortly after control of the colony had been transferred to the Spanish, the population of the district of Natchitoches was only 740.[34] More than half of the heads of households were farmers, but herdsmen and hunters were a significant part of the population. The Spanish colonial government was anxious to maintain the settlement as a barrier to inroads by the English, so it tried to encourage agriculture by providing a protected market for tobacco.[35] The government also promoted an expansion of ranching by granting large tracts of land in the hills to the west of Natchitoches. Despite these encouragements, the economy of the settlement continued to falter. In the 1790s the Lieutenant Governor, Carlos Luis Boucher de Grande Pre gave the following assessment of Natchitoches.

> "The population of this oldest settlement of the province, which had almost the same beginning as that of the capital, is reduced today to 780 whites of both sexes and all ages. Two hundred and twenty-two are fit to bear arms. There are 1,021

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[29] Malone, 1996, 10.
[30] Thomas, 2000, 7.
[31] Cummins, 1990, 31.
[32] Malone, 1996, 9-11.
[33] Ibid., 12.
[34] Ibid., 13.
[35] Cummins, 1990, 63-64.

individuals of color, counting both slaves and free. The products consist of some indigo, but the main production is in tobacco. Lack of industry among the growers during the last ten or more years has drastically reduced the cultivation of indigo, although the present crop is considerable. All the tobacco, without exception, is of superior quality because the inhabitants have taken greater care than formerly in its cultivation. The interior commerce of the post in agricultural products as well as that of the hunt may be estimated conservatively for the average year at 50,000 to 55,000 pesos; expenses and consumption of food at 115,000 pesos." [36]

The Isle Brevelle

Under Spanish rule the Cane River region downstream from Natchitoches began to be settled. One of the first grants of land at a distance from the town was made to Jean Baptiste Brevel, Jr. This Brevel was a man of French and Native American descent, and from him much of the area took its name.[37] In official documents, the Isle Brevelle became the name for all the land between the Old River and the Cane River.[38] However in the locality, the northern part of this was often referred to as the Grande Cote, or the Cote Joyeuse. About 12 miles below Natchitoches, a bayou originates close to the Cane River and wind southwestwards towards the Old River. This became known as Bayou Brevelle, and local people thought of the area between this bayou and the Cane River as the real Isle Brevelle. At the point where Bayou Brevelle originated beside the river, someone traveling south left the Cote and entered the Isle. The land that was eventually to become Oakland Plantation lies near the northern limit of this Isle Brevelle.

According to the recipient, the grant to Brevel was made in 1765. That seems doubtful, since in that year the colony was in an administrative limbo between French and Spanish rule. Nevertheless, the grant was probably made sometime in the 1760s, at about the time when the Cane River became the main channel of the Red River. This change would have made the banks of the Cane River more accessible and more attractive for settlement.

The Spanish made land grants that continued the French system of granting a certain number of arpents of river frontage. However the serpentine course of the Cane River made it difficult to divide the land in an equitable manner using this system. Lines measured at right angles to the river tended to produce pie shaped lots at every curve, with lots on the inside of bends being much smaller than lots on the outside. Sometimes a grant of 12 arpents, instead of 6 arpents, of frontage was made on the inside of bends.[39] But a more common solution was to grant land on both sides of the river to the same person. This reduced the distance the grant extended away from the river on each side, since 40 arpents remained the standard depth of each grant. However in this region of braided streams, it was not necessary to go a mile back from the river to reach a bayou, so

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[36] This is quoted in Miller and Wood, 2000, 16; they give the source as Kinnaird, 1967, but that is an error. We have not yet identified the correct source for the quotation.
[37] Mills, 1977, 50 –51. See also Flores, 1984, 19-20, for an account of Brevel's claims to have explored the upper reaches of the Red River in the 1760s.
[38] Ile Brevelle was the French term, Ile Breville was an alternative spelling.
[39] Kniffen and Hilliard, 1988, 129.

the grants still included a desirable variety of types of land. The resulting pattern of lots lacks the geometrical regularity of the classic arpent pattern, since there are few parallel lines and considerable variations in the shape width and depth of landholdings.

The French settlement of the Isle Brevelle and the Cote Joyeuse proceeded rather slowly, perhaps because of continuing difficulties in navigation due to the presence of log rafts, and perhaps because of a general lack of economic incentives. In 1790 there were just 27 "habitations."[40] The Spanish required the recipient of a land grant in Louisiana to clear his property to a depth of two arpents within three years, and where necessary to construct levees, roads and drains.[41] This required much labor, and in 1790 there were only 49 enslaved workers on the Isle Brevelle. Some stronger motive than a faltering agricultural economy based on indigo and tobacco was needed to make it all worthwhile. This motivation finally came in the 1790s when cotton unlocked the commercial potential of the region. The people who then settled beside the Cane River were mostly French Creoles from families in Natchitoches. But many colonial bloodlines were as braided as the valley streams, and included French, Spanish, Native American and African bloodlines.[42]

Thomas Freeman, leading the Freeman and Custis Expedition, left us the following impression of the area in 1806 after the Louisiana Purchase.

> "Almost immediately above these Indian villages [occupied by the Pascacagoulas], Red River divides into two branches; that to the right is about one third of the whole width of the river, retains the name of Red River, but is impassable, on account of the rafts of timber which are lodged in it. It separates from the other branch of the river, called Old river or Cane river, four or five miles above Natchitoches, forming an Island nearly sixty miles in length, and not more than five miles wide. The banks of these rivers are high and bold, presenting settlements occasionally on both sides. Twenty-four miles above the junction of the Petits Bon Dieux [sic] with the Old river, or as it is sometimes called, Cane river another branch falls in from the left hand or south side, which left the principal stream immediately below Natchitoches; it forms an island 32 miles long and 4 miles wide [Isle Brevelle]. The branch which here falls in on the left hand, takes, or rather continues the name of Cane river [today called Old River], and is the largest of the two, being 100 yards wide; but in consequence of the rafts and impediments which it contains, the other is used in navigation. It is the middle branch of the three, and is generally known by the name of Little River [today called Cane River]. The banks of the river are here 25 feet above the present surface of the water. At their junction there is a depth of 36 feet; a small distance above this, Little river is 70 yards wide, and 24 feet deep, and continues thence, from 40 to 50 yards wide, and 18 feet deep up to Natchitoches. From the confluence of little river with cane river, to Natchitoches, the land on both banks is generally cultivated, particularly the left bank, which presents a series of small plantations, each having one field in front, and extending back 80 to 100 perches

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[40] Mills, 1977, 53.
[41] Kniffen and Hilliard, 1988, 129.
[42] Malone, 1998, 12-13.

to the Cypress Swamps. The inhabitants are a mixture of French, Spanish, Indian and Negro blood, the latter often predominating, and live in small cottages on the banks and near the river."[43]

In the early years of the 19th century several very large plantations were developed beside the Cane River; but the small homesteads observed by Freeman continued to exist. Large planters were always a small minority of the population in a region that remained socially and ethnically diverse. The lives of the owners of the large plantations remained interwoven with those of their less privileged neighbors, the small farmers, tradesmen, and others who made up the majority of the free population, but increasingly large slaveholders came to dominate the economic and political life of the region.

[43] Quoted in Flores, 1984, 115-118.

CHAPTER TWO:
THE PLANTATION SYSTEM

ORIGINS

"[T]he antebellum southern plantation encapsulated two of the most potent forces in the South – the tremendous agricultural system that was the region's life blood, and the most disturbing element of southern life, the institution of slavery."[44]

Plantations were an important part of the mercantilism that motivated the European colonial powers to settle and exploit the Americas. Mercantilism was the economic counterpoint of the political absolutism that characterized the governments of Spain, Portugal and France, and to a lesser extent Great Britain and the Netherlands in the 16th and 17th centuries. According to this economic theory, a nation's wealth was measured in gold and silver and was dependent on a favorable balance of trade. Colonial possessions were to be suppliers of raw materials to the mother country, and markets for her manufactured goods. All trade with colonies was to be a monopoly of the mother country.

In accordance with these ideas, plantations were developed particularly in the tropical and subtropical regions of the New World to supply agricultural products unavailable in the European motherlands. The first plantations were located in the Spanish Caribbean islands and along the coast of Portuguese Brazil, and were devoted to the production of sugar. Their expansion was the driving force in the development of the transatlantic slave trade. The Spanish began to import slaves from Africa to Hispaniola, shortly after 1500, to replace the native population.[45] In British North America, the first plantations were established in Virginia in the 17th century to produce tobacco for the British market. The first African slaves arrived there in 1619, though for most of that century the plantations relied on indentured servants from Britain.[46] And in fact, the colonies that were later to make up the United States continued to play a minor role in the transatlantic slave trade compared to the colonies in South America and the Caribbean.

The plantation system was an early form of capitalistic enterprise, which in its commercialism, capitalism and specialization anticipated some of the characteristics of manufacturing industry in the Industrial Revolution. Many colonial farmers aspired to become planters, but plantations differed from family farms in a number of ways.[47] They were first and foremost commercial enterprises organized to make profits for investors rather than yield subsistence for families. They were specialized and focused on the production of staple crops for sale, whereas most family farms grew a diversity of subsistence crops. Plantations were highly capitalized, often with borrowed money, and they were expansionist in order to take advantage of economies of scale, so they became

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[44] Hilliard in Conzen, 1990, 104.
[45] Fogel and Engerman, 1989, 15.
[46] Gray, 1933, 308-9; Fogel and Engerman, 1989, 14.
[47] Hilliard in Conzen, 1990, 106-7.

much larger than family farms. Most plantations included some industrial buildings where a staple crop was processed. A major part of the capital was invested in their labor force typically made up of slaves, or, in Virginia, indentured servants. There were sharp social distinctions, therefore, between owners and their captive workforces, and the layout of most plantations reflected their hierarchical organization.

DEVELOPMENT OF COMMERCIAL AGRICULTURE IN LOUISIANA

The French colonization of Louisiana was motivated initially by strategic considerations, but almost immediately attempts were made to exploit its commercial potential. In 1712, Louis XIV made it a proprietary colony, at first under the control of Antoine Crozat, who was granted a monopoly on all imports and exports and authority to import slaves from Africa. Thereafter control was transferred to a succession of monopolistic companies, each of which attempted to encourage the development of commercial agriculture in the colony. Their efforts met with limited success, and following the collapse of the Company of the Indies the colony came under direct royal rule in 1731.[48] However the development of commercial agriculture continued to be held back by financial uncertainties and restrictive governmental policies. There were persistent difficulties in obtaining settlers from the home country, and there was a shortage of slaves due to governmental controls on the slave trade.[49]

Indigo was the main crop grown on plantations in Louisiana in the colonial period. The colony could produce good indigo, though it was only possible to get two cuttings per year rather than the four or more obtained in the Caribbean colonies.[50] Its production was concentrated on large plantations rather than small farms because capital was required to drain land and build factories to process the dye. By 1754 there were 47 plantations in Louisiana producing indigo in competition with the French West Indies.[51] After Louisiana was transferred to Spain in 1763, the planters had to compete with growers in Guatemala, where the indigo was considered to be of superior quality. Nevertheless the industry continued to expand, in part because of a greater availability of slave labor under Spanish rule. However in the 1790s, the industry declined due to the ravages of insects and disease, and a depression in the market price.[52]

The French had also promoted the growing of tobacco in Louisiana, in order to reduce the dependence of the motherland on supplies from Virginia. A considerable amount of it was grown around Natchez and Pointe Coupee on the Mississippi, with a smaller concentration of growers around Natchitoches.[53] But most of the growers were small farmers who grew tobacco because they could not afford the expensive drainage works necessary to grow indigo. Production had increased only slowly under French rule, despite the high reputation of some of the tobacco, in part because of persistent

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[48] Cummins, 1990, 25-38.
[49] Gray, 1933, 336.
[50] Ibid., 73 and 293.
[51] Ibid., 74.
[52] Ibid., and Kniffen and Hilliard, 1988, 136.
[53] Gray, 1933, 71.

difficulties in shipping and marketing. Under Spanish rule, the French growers were afraid they would have to compete with growers in Cuba, but the Spanish government agreed to purchase their crop, hoping to use it to supply the French market. When this price support was withdrawn in 1792 there was a sharp decline in production. According to one observer, tobacco growing around Natchitoches virtually ceased at that time.[54]

There were attempts to develop both sugarcane and cotton plantations in the colonial period, but both were held back by technical problems in processing the raw materials. Sugarcane plantations were hindered by difficulties in drying and granulating sugar.[55] The first sugar mill was erected around 1760, and the first shipments of sugar to France were made at about the time it lost control of the colony. Under Spanish rule, production almost ceased until Etienne de Bore, a future mayor of New Orleans, perfected a granulating process in 1795. However planters now had to compete with growers in Cuba who enjoyed considerable climatic advantages. It was the incorporation of Louisiana into the United States and the creation of a protected domestic market that made sugar plantations an attractive investment.[56]

In the case of cotton it was the problem of how to separate lint from seed that held back the development of plantations in the colonial period. Cotton was grown on a small scale in Louisiana throughout the colonial period but mainly to supply local needs. Several agricultural varieties of cotton had been developed from the wild species, but there were two main kinds available to farmers: a long staple, smooth seeded cotton known as sea-island, and a short staple upland cotton. The fibers of the long staple cotton were much easier to separate from their seeds. There were unsuccessful attempts to grow the long staple cotton in Louisiana, and planters found they could only grow upland varieties such as a white Siam type and a yellow variety from Nanjing.[57] Early gins employed rollers to separate lint from seed, and the invention of an improved gin of this type - by the same planter who built the first sugar mill - raised French hopes that cotton plantations could become profitable investments. But within a few years the colony was transferred to Spain, to the bitter disappointment of its French population.

> "...Just at the time when a new mine has been discovered; when the culture of cotton, improved by experience, promises the planter the recompense of his toils, furnishes persons engaged in fitting our vessels, with cargoes to load them."[58]

These hopes were no doubt exaggerated for political reasons. The real impetus for the development of cotton plantations came in the last two decades on the 18th century with a rapid increase in the demand for cotton by new textile mills in England. There was an eightfold increase in English cotton imports between 1780 and 1800.[59] At first this stimulated the development of the sea-island cotton plantations on Georgia's coastal islands, and then, in 1793, Eli Whitney's famous invention made it possible for upland

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[54] Ibid., 72.
[55] Cummins, 1990, 74.
[56] Olmsted, 1856, 663-4.
[57] Gray, 1933, 77 and 673.
[58] Louisiana Decree of the Superior Council, 1768. Quoted in Gray, 1933, 77.
[59] Gray, 1933, 678.

cotton to compete in the market. The new ginning technology was rapidly disseminated at the end of the colonial period, at first by unauthorized copies of Whitney's prototype, and then by various improvements on his idea. In 1801, there was a further technological advance with the invention of the screw press, which made it easier to bale ginned cotton for shipment. [60] So conditions were ripe for an expansion of cotton plantations by the time of the Louisiana Purchase.

As the number of plantations expanded, their distribution came to reflect the variety of topography, climate and soils within Louisiana. Sugarcane plantations dominated the bottomlands along the lower stretches of the Mississippi and Red Rivers. Sugarcane was potentially a more profitable crop than cotton, but its tropical character limited the areas in which it could be profitably grown. A 250-day growing season was regarded as the minimum necessary to produce sufficient sugar content.[61] This meant that cotton replaced sugar as the preferred crop north of Avoyelles Parish. Cotton requires only about 200 days to mature and the growing season exceeds this throughout Louisiana. All the major sugar and cotton plantations were concentrated alongside the rivers. Sugarcane growing was confined to bottomlands, but cotton could be grown on the bluffs and even in the hills. Cotton plantations soon claimed the best lands alongside the rivers in the upper parts of the state in order to take advantage of fertile soils and access to a means of transport.

Despite their serpentine courses, Louisiana's rivers had always provided the main transportation routes, and their importance was accentuated in the early 19th century with the introduction of steamboats. The development by Henry Miller Shreve in 1816 of a highly maneuverable shallow draft steamboat made the navigation of the Mississippi with its powerful currents, and the Red River with its shallows much easier.[62] However, on the Red River above Alexandria, steamboat traffic was concentrated in the wetter winter and spring months. Fortunately cotton was a product that could be stored without deteriorating until suitable conditions for its shipment became available.

The expansion of cotton plantations eventually led to the development of varieties of cotton suited to the region. The upland cotton that was grown nearly everywhere in the early years was difficult to pick and after 1811 became subject to a fungal disease called simply "the rot." It was replaced in the Mississippi Valley by a more disease resistant variety from Tennessee, but that variety had short and coarse fibers, so it was replaced in the 1820s by a variety of cotton brought from Mexico. An improved strain of this Mexican variety called "Petite Gulf" became widely used.[63] Several other varieties were then developed which shared its desirable qualities of disease resistance, relatively long fine lint, and ease of picking.

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[60] Sydnor, 1933, 18-2.
[61] Kniffen and Hilliard, 1988, 22-23.
[62] Ibid., 147.
[63] Sydnor, 1933, 184; Gray, 1933, 703.

THE PLANTATION SYSTEM IN THE ANTEBELLUM PERIOD

The Importance of Large Plantations

Land was plentiful and relatively cheap across the South, so the key to success as a planter lay in acquiring the means to work the land. Therefore success was measured more by the number of slaves owned than the number of acres. In the course of the antebellum period, an upper class of large slaveholders – owners of 50 or more slaves – came to dominate the agriculture and economy of the South.

> "These large slaveholders were an elite class, whose role in the political, social, economic, and, in particular, agricultural life of the Deep South on the eve of the Civil War was far more important than their mere number would indicate. In Louisiana, for example, the large slaveholders amounted to less than one-fourth of one per cent of the population but held 49% of the slaves, owned 42% of the improved acreage, and produced 43% of the corn, 49% of the cotton, and 76% of the cane sugar. Their wealth, valued at about a quarter of a billion dollars, was more than 35% of the state total, even in a state that contained by far the richest city in the South."[64]

The number of large slaveholders was very small. In Louisiana there were probably less than 1600 in 1860. Across the entire South, Gray calculated there were 10,993 large slaveholders, who constituted only 0.75% of the free population, but owned more than a quarter of all slaves.[65] Beneath this upper class, there were a larger number of small planters and farmers, who owned a few slaves, but the great majority of Southerners owned no slaves. In Louisiana, in 1860, 67.8% of the free population owned no slaves.

While the large slaveholders were of course the owners of the largest plantations, the size of their properties varied widely, and size was not a particularly good indication of wealth. In 1860, in Georgia the average size of the plantations owned by the large slaveholders was 2,676 acres, of which 1,027 were improved. In Louisiana, the average size was 2,204 acres, of which only 743 were improved.[66] But despite a smaller acreage of land under the plow, the average cash value of the Louisiana plantations was more than three times higher that of the Georgia plantations, indicating their much greater productive capacity.[67]

Although there were many differences between large plantations in different regions growing different staple crops, the differences were overshadowed by what they had in common. On these large holdings the plantation system reached its fullest development with the characteristic commercial focus, crop specialization and captive workforce. And it was these large slaveholdings across the South that fixed the image of the region in the minds of both its supporters and critics.

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[64] Menn, 1964, 1-2.
[65] Gray, 1933, 483.
[66] Menn, 1964, 69.
[67] Ibid., 72.

The Commercial Focus of Large Cotton Plantations

Cotton plantations in the antebellum period continued to reflect their origins in the mercantilist policies of the colonial period. Although no longer the colonial powers, Britain and to a lesser extent France continued to dominate the trade in cotton. In 1821, Britain imported 93,500,000 pounds of cotton from the United States, France imported 27,333,000 pounds and the rest of the World only 9,750,000.[68] As the century progressed, American cotton mills developed and the demand from other European countries increased, but, immediately before the Civil War, Britain's cotton mills still accounted for about half the World's consumption of the raw material.

A large share of the trade with Europe flowed through New Orleans and its importance grew as the plantation system spread westwards across the South. Most large planters in Louisiana sent their crop to cotton factors based in New Orleans. These merchants sold it for a commission of 2 ½ percent, and purchased provisions for the planters, charging a second commission at the same rate. In the colonial period some factors had dealt in slaves, but in the antebellum period most preferred not to involve themselves directly in this disreputable trade.[69] Factors were an important source of credit for planters, though many planters dealt with banks and also continued the old practice of endorsing notes for friends.[70]

Obtaining credit was an important aspect of operating a plantation. In the early years of the 19th century, the costs of establishing a cotton plantation were relatively modest, particularly when compared to the costs of setting up a sugar plantation. In 1826, a German traveler, Karl Anton Postl, estimated one could set up a cotton plantation in the Red River Valley for around $10,000. According to this account, the cost of 1500 to 2000 acres of fertile land was only $3,000, and ten slaves could be obtained for $5,000. Postl claimed a planter was assured of receiving an annual return of $300 for each slave that he owned. With proper management and a bit of luck, he could recoup his initial investment in five years.[71] As the antebellum period progressed, larger amounts of money were required to establish or expand a plantation as the costs of labor, land and the necessary industrial equipment rose. Gray made the following estimate of the size of the investment represented by a typical large cotton plantation in about 1850.

> "For a large plantation devoted to upland cotton – say, in the Mississippi alluvium – 60 hands may be considered the typical size of the labor force. In that region, where the proportion of children and aged slaves was small, such a plantation contained about 120 slaves in all. At an average value of $400 the capital invested in slaves amounted to $48,000. For this number 1,000 acres of arable land and 600 of reserve woodland were required. Estimating the cleared land at $35 an acre and the uncleared land at $10 an acre, the entire investment in land amounted to

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[68] Gray, 1933, 691.
[69] Ibid., 713.
[70] Davis, 1943, 20 – 23.
[71] Crete, 1981, 31. The stated land costs are low, other sources indicate the cost of land at between $5 and $10 per acre in the northern part of the region; see Gray 1933, 898.

> $41,000. Plows and harrows cost about $600. About four wagons were required, worth approximately $400. A common gin and gin house cost $500. The entire investment for implements amounted to $1,500. Thirty mules and horses, averaging $100 each, 5 yoke of oxen at $40 per yoke, with perhaps 50 head of cattle at $10 each, 250 hogs at $2 each, and 100 head of sheep or goats at $2 required an investment of $4,400 for livestock. The total capital account of such a plantation amounted to approximately $96,000."[72]

The profitability of such a plantation depended, of course, on the many factors affecting the growth of cotton each year, and the prices obtained when each crop was sold. When upland cotton plantations had begun to spread in the 1790s, prices for exported cotton had exceeded 25 cents per pound.[73] These high prices encouraged the switch to cotton from other crops and allowed a period of necessary experimentation with alternative varieties and cultivation techniques. Prices declined in the first decade of the 19th century, and fell below 11 cents in 1811, principally due to trade uncertainties while Britain and France were embroiled in the Napoleonic Wars. During the War of 1812, no cotton could be shipped to Europe, but immediately after the war the price skyrocketed, reaching over 33 cents per pound in 1817. From that high point, prices declined to around 12 cents per pound in 1825. Thereafter the price fluctuated around that level, sometimes rising four or five cents above it and at other times dropping four or five cents below.

The decline in prices compelled planters to seek out more efficient means of production, and to realize the importance of careful management. Over the years significant advances were made in reducing costs. In 1823 there were complaints in a Louisiana newspaper that the prevailing price of 15 cents offered "no stimulus to increased cultivation."[74] But twenty years later in 1842, Governor Hammond of South Carolina declared that whereas planters in his state could not grow cotton "with a living profit" when prices were at 8 cents per pound, planters in the Gulf States could make a profit when prices stood at 6 cents per pound.[75] However, in the same year, planters attending a convention in Mobile declared that cotton could not be produced at less than 8 cents per pound.[76]

The 1840s were difficult years. An agricultural depression was initiated by a financial panic in 1837, which then lasted through most of the following decade largely because of an overproduction of cotton that kept prices low. In 1844 the prices paid in New Orleans for middling cotton varied between 4.4 and 6.3 cents per pound.[77] Recovery came at the end of the decade, and the last decade before the Civil War was a time of rising prosperity, which prompted renewed expansionism and speculation. During the 1850s there was a marked increase in the concentration of slave ownership into the hands of the largest owners, particularly in the areas most suited to large scale specialized production.[78]

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[72] Gray, 1933, 541-2.
[73] Data on cotton prices is taken from Sydnor, 1933, 183-4, and Gray, 1933, 681-3.
[74] Louisiana Herald, Alexandria, Nov. 19, 1823, quoted in Gray, 1933, 698.
[75] Address delivered before the South Carolina Institute, Nov. 20, 1849, quoted in Gray, 1933, 709.
[76] Gray, 1933, 709.
[77] Sydnor, 1933, 183.
[78] Gray, 1933, 533.

Crop Specialization and Self Sufficiency on Large Cotton Plantations

Growing cotton was the first priority of large cotton plantations. It was an "all year" crop, which demanded much care and attention and left little time for other crops. According to the 1860 agricultural census returns, the most productive plantations were in Louisiana, where the average production of a large plantation was 413 bales.[79] The most productive regions in the State were a group of Parishes along the Mississippi and a group along the Red River.[80] In the first region, large plantations produced, on average, 525 bales of cotton, while on the Red River a plantation produced, on average, 331 bales.[81] However, these figures must be used with caution as they are based on only one year's production figures. According to the census enumerators it had been a good year along the Mississippi for growing cotton, but a poor year along the Red River. It was estimated that the crop in the Red River Parishes was down about 50%.[82] One should conclude that the two regions had a similar cotton growing potential, which was unequalled elsewhere in the South.

In these favored regions, specialization in cotton growing had clear advantages. It focused agricultural activities on the commercial crop for which the area was most suited, and it facilitated an efficient use of the labor force, draft animals and farm equipment. Accordingly, plantations in these regions were specialized, but this did not mean they grew only cotton. Many planters were cautious about becoming too reliant on other regions for food to feed their workers and draft animals, so it was considered good practice for a plantation to grow at least corn sufficient to meet its own needs. In the prime cotton growing regions, about 10 acres of cotton were planted for each field hand, but, in addition, there would be about 6 acres of corn.[83] The other food crops that were commonly grown included sweet potatoes, Irish potatoes, cowpeas and beans. In 1860, a large plantation in the Red River cotton region produced, on average, 4,066 bushels of corn, 560 bushels of sweet potatoes, 65 bushels of Irish potatoes, and 179 bushels of peas and beans.[84] In addition plantations in this region produced a significant amount of oats, an average of 95 bushels, to supplement the peas and beans as fodder crops.

Most large plantations kept some livestock in addition to their draft animals. These were expected to fend for themselves in the sections or the plantations that had not been cleared for cultivation, and their condition was notoriously poor.[85] Hogs, semi-wild razorbacks, were the most numerous animals, and these provided most of the protein in a slave's diet. Large plantations in the Deep South had an average per unit of 142 hogs, but

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[79] Menn, 1964, 106. Note the census returns recorded crops produced in the 12 months previous to June 1860, so it was the 1859 cotton crop that was being recorded.
[80] The Mississippi River Parishes were Concordia, Tensas, Madison and Carroll. The Red River Parishes were Natchitoches, DeSoto, Caddo and Bossier.
[81] Menn, 1964, 106.
[82] Ibid., 98.
[83] Gray, 1933, 708; Davis, 1943, 31.
[84] Menn, 1964, 118, 120.
[85] Gray, 1933, 836.

in Louisiana the average was only half that number.[86] A few cattle would be kept to supply dairy products and beef for the planter's family. The average number was 44 per large plantation in the Deep South.[87] In Louisiana, many of the cattle were long-horned descendents of stock introduced by the Spanish to Mexico, and though these "swamp cattle" were large and well adapted to being draft animals, they were very poor milkers.[88] Some planters also kept sheep, primarily for their wool. The average number per large plantation was 40, and there was surprisingly little variation from state to state.[89]

The degree of self sufficiency achieved by large plantations varied from place to place, but it is generally conceded that large cotton and sugar plantations in Louisiana produced a smaller proportion of their food needs than plantations elsewhere.[90] This is explained by the economic advantages of focusing on their commercial crop, and by the ease with which food supplies could be imported from the Upper South by river. However there were significant variations between regions within the state, and plantations in the Red River cotton region were the most self-sufficient.[91] This may be attributed to the relative inaccessibility of this area compared to the regions alongside the Mississippi.

The degree of self-sufficiency achieved by plantations also varied over the years. In the early years of the century, most plantations had slave artisans weaving cloth and making shoes, tools and other items for the plantation. However, increasing availability and cheapness of factory made products reduced the need for such home manufactures, and self-sufficiency in this area declined as the century advanced.[92]

The Captive Workforce on Large Cotton Plantations

The enslaved workforce represented the largest investment of capital on most large plantations; only on some plantations beside the Mississippi was the land more valuable than the slaves. The price of people used as slaves in Louisiana during the early decades of the 19th century varied greatly. Obviously the price of each person reflected a planter's assessment of his or her potential, involving such qualities as age, sex, strength, skills and disposition. But prices generally followed rises and falls in the price of cotton. One rough guide often quoted is that a young man valued as a field hand was worth in dollars the price of cotton in cents multiplied by 100, so when cotton was selling for eight cents per pound, a good field hand would be priced at $800.00.[93] This ratio was true in the middle of the antebellum period, but slaves were generally cheaper in earlier years, and

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[86] Menn, 1964, 74. Note: in Menn's statistical analysis the Deep South States were Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana.
[87] Ibid.
[88] Gray, 1933, 846.
[89] Menn, 1964, 74.
[90] Gray, 1933, 447 and Menn, 1964, 135.
[91] Menn, 1964, 134. Note: self-sufficiency is judged by the amount of corn, vegetables and meat produced per person on each plantation.
[92] Gray, 1933, 456.
[93] Taylor, 1990, 165.

considerably more expensive later.[94] In the prosperous 1850s some planters were said to have developed "Negro fever" and speculation in slaves drove up prices to record levels.

> "Just prior to the Civil War slaves of all ages in the Southwest probably averaged about $600. Prime field hands sold for $1,500, $1,800, and $2,000, and in 1860 reached an average of $1,800."[95]

It required deep pockets to acquire a labor force of over 50 hands, and many planters became mired in debt. But Taylor, in a study of slavery in Louisiana, calculates that the institution was very profitable to the planter class, and steady expansion made economic sense. Using the same estimate of investment on large plantations as the one used by Gray, quoted above, Taylor calculated the return as follows.

> "Remembering always that estimates of costs are estimates, one may apply them to hypothetical plantations. The cotton plantation of 1,600 acres, 120 slaves amounting to 60 working hands, and necessary implements represented an investment of $96,000. At 2,000 pounds of lint cotton to the hand, the gross product per slave, at a price of eight cents, amounted to eighty dollars. To this should be added fifteen dollars for the natural increase, making a total of ninety-five dollars. Against this gross product should be charged twenty dollars for cost of maintenance, ten dollars for risk of premature death, a two-dollar allowance for youth and old age, and three dollars for medical care. The total debit per slave, less interest amounts to thirty-five dollars. Therefore the surplus over costs for each slave was $60.00 and $7,200 for 120 slaves. This amounts to a return of 7.6 per cent on total investment."[96]

On most plantations the number of hands, that is people who could perform a full day's work in the fields, was equivalent to about half their total slave population.[97] Workers would be classed as full hands, three-quarter hands, half-hands, or quarter-hands each year based on their strength. This then determined the amount of work expected from each of them. Older people were given special tasks; the older men were often employed as gardeners, wagoners and stock tenders, and the older women as nurses, child-minders, assistant cooks, weavers and spinners. Children were given light duties such as driving stock and carrying water. [98]Workers with special skills such as carpenters, blacksmiths, coopers, millers and boatmen were often excused from working in the fields except during the busiest times such as during cotton picking.

There were two ways of organizing work in the fields, the task and the gang systems.[99] The gang system was used more often for the main operations such as cotton picking. The hands were divided into groups and closely supervised by drivers and overseers as they worked. In its most notorious form, the maximum amount of work was exacted by frequent use of a whip. Under less cruel regimes, a driver would set the pace for the

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[94] Taylor, 1963, 38 – 39, 51 – 53.
[95] Gray, 1933, 666.
[96] Taylor, 1963, 104-105; Fogel and Engerman, 1974, 70. Note: Taylor's conclusions are supported by Fogel and Engerman's econometric analysis - they estimated the rate of return at 10%.
[97] Menn, 1964, 122.
[98] Gray, 1933, 553; Fogel and Engerman, 1974, 75.
[99] Gray, 1933, 554 – 556; Northup, 1968, 123 – 127; Scarborough, 1984, 80 – 82.

work, and only laggards would be disciplined. The task system assigned a particular amount of work to be done by each hand in a day. Theoretically it reduced the need for constant supervision and gave the better workers the opportunity to finish the assigned task before the end of the day. Planters compared the merits of the two systems and discussed appropriate definitions of various tasks in their agricultural journals. Some planters disapproved of the task system as promoting idleness and hasty, poor quality work. On most plantations various combinations of the two systems seem to have been used.

Work in the fields lasted from sun-up to sundown. The workers were sent to the fields at sunrise and sometime later there might be a brief pause for breakfast in the fields. At midday, there would be a pause for dinner. Some plantations had cooks that prepared meals for all hands, but on most plantations workers brought their own food to the fields. Work resumed after dinner and continued until sunset or later in busy times if there was moonlight. Sunday was a day of rest, and gave an opportunity for workers to tend their own garden plots. On some plantations, time was also allowed on Saturday for this purpose. A holiday was given at Christmas, and sometimes on other special occasions.[100]

A complex body of state laws on slaveholding governed the status and treatment of slaves. In Louisiana, these laws continued to be based on the Code Noir promulgated by the French in the colonial period.[101] Laws addressed a wide range of issues including hours of work – masters were required to pay slaves for work done on Sunday – and the right to a "peculium" – possession of goods subject to the master's consent.[102] Many planters allowed their slaves to raise vegetables and livestock for sale, but limited contact between their slaves and outsiders by handling the marketing of these items themselves. Freedom of movement was forbidden, and laws restricted assemblies of slaves including attendance at religious meetings.

Despite the problems of securing labor from an unwilling, captive workforce, the efficiency of slave labor as measured by yields per hand increased during the antebellum period.[103] Some of the improvement can be attributed to the development of better varieties of cotton, and the employment of more draft animals and better plows, but nonetheless, it raises interesting questions about the efficiency of the plantation system.

Condemnations of the Plantation System

The development of the plantation system had been accompanied by a growing condemnation of slavery in both the United States and Europe. In the 18th century, human bondage had been seen by many as incompatible with the ideals of both the American and French Revolutions. In 1777, Vermont was the first State to adopt a constitution that prohibited slavery. In 1794, the French National Convention abolished slavery in all

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[100] Davis, 1943, 50 – 51.
[101] Cummins, 1990, 31; Taylor, 1963, 22, 59, 106.
[102] Gray, 1933, 512 – 514.
[103] Ibid., 709.

French territories.[104] However, although Louisiana returned briefly to French rule in 1800, the prohibition had no effect in the colony, and it was revoked by Napoleon before the sale of the territory in 1803. In 1804, the American Congress prohibited the importation to Louisiana of slaves from abroad, and in 1808 made it unlawful to import them to any part of the United States. But these restrictions had little effect on the expansion of cotton plantations across the South. A covert foreign trade continued. Moreover, most of the increase in the slave population in the South was due to natural increase, and an internal slave trade supplied slaves from the Eastern Seaboard States to the southwestern states of Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama.[105]

As the abolitionist movement grew and the divisions between North and South deepened, the plantation system itself was vigorously attacked. The criticism was initiated by the system's use of slave labor, but it went further and condemned virtually all parts of the agricultural system. It was described as economically inefficient; it was censured for leading to the exhaustion of soils; and it was seen to produce enrichment of a very few large slaveholders at the expense of many smaller planters and farmers plus, of course, the enslaved people themselves.[106]

One of the most perceptive and widely quoted commentators on the character of the plantation system and the landscapes it produced was Frederick Law Olmsted. In 1852, at the behest of the editor of the New York Times, Olmsted began a series of journeys across the South. He wrote a total of 75 articles for the newspaper and later developed these into four books. Of these, the most read are "A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States, with remarks on their economy," published in 1856, and "The Cotton Kingdom: A Traveller's Observations on Cotton and Slavery in the American Slave States," published in 1861. Olmsted opened the first book with a frank declaration of his critical attitude to the region. Speaking in the third person, the author admitted that the book had a fault.

> "He is aware that it has one fault – it is too fault-finding. He is sorry for it, but it cannot now be helped; so at the outset, let the reader understand that he is invited to travel in company with an honest growler.
> But growling is sometimes a duty; and the traveler might well be suspected of being a "dead head," or a sneak, who did not find frequent occasion for its performance, among the notoriously careless, makeshift, impersistent people of the South."[107]

Olmsted was too good a journalist to allow himself to be blinded by preconceptions, and his writings are widely admired for the shrewdness of the observations and his efforts to be fair-minded. Nevertheless, he emphasized that many of the landscapes that he saw in his journeys were squalid, and he attributed much of the squalor to the inequalities produced by the plantation system. The system he believed was inherently inefficient and wasteful because of its dependence on slave labor.[108]

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[104] Fogel and Engerman, 1974, 33.
[105] Gray, 1933, 658 – 661; Taylor, 1963, 35 – 37.
[106] Fogel and Engerman, 1974, 159 – 160.
[107] Olmsted, 1856, ix.
[108] The condemnation is summarized in the first chapter of The Cotton Kingdom, 1 – 27.

While not defending the use of an enslaved workforce, later historians have debated the degree to which rejection of slavery carries with it condemnation of all other aspects of the agricultural system. Lewis Gray in his monumental study "History of Agriculture in the Southern United States to 1860," published in 1933, agreed that the spread of the plantation system was associated with wastefulness, but he believed there was a more fundamental cause of the prodigal attitude toward natural resources. "In the South the great abundance of land in proportion to population is the primary explanation for the extensive and exploitative character of cultivation."[109] Moreover, he argued that the westward shifting of population militated against the development of a more diverse economy in the older settled areas of the South. He concluded:

> "...the process of expansion, rather than the institution of slavery, was mainly responsible for the industrial demoralization of the older regions. Slavery, however, retarded the development of the compensating conditions – immigration and industrial diversification – which in the North alleviated the "growing-pains" of agricultural expansion. Hence we have the near-paradox of an economic institution competitively effective under certain conditions, but essentially regressive in its influence on the socio-economic evolution of the section where it prevailed."[110]

More recently, Robert Fogel and Stanley Engerman have questioned much of the conventional wisdom about the plantation system in a revisionist study entitled "Time on the Cross: The Economics of Negro Slavery," published in 1974. They note that Olmsted both overestimated the number of workers on plantations and underestimated the value of what they produced. Dismissing Olmsted's conclusions, they argue that the plantation system was remarkably efficient, contrary to Olmsted's opinion, because of its ability to take advantage of economies of scale.[111] They assert that many, including the abolitionists, consistently undervalued the performance and skill of its African American workforce. Plantations, they suggest, were forerunners of the highly organized industrial systems of the second half of the 19th century.

> "Just as great plantations were the first large, scientifically managed business enterprises, and as planters were the first group to engage in large-scale, scientific personnel management, so, too, black slaves were the first group of workers to be trained in the work rhythms which later became characteristic of industrial society."[112]

Because ethical, social, economic and political arguments are intertwined, the plantation system will continue to have a disputed history.[113] There is however one observation

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[109] Gray, 1933, 446.
[110] Ibid., 942.
[111] Fogel and Engerman, 1974, 193 – 194.
[112] Ibid.,08.
[113] Many of Fogel and Engerman's conclusions remain controversial. Other important works on the plantation system and slavery include: Blassingame, John W. The Slave Community: Plantation life in the antebellum south. New York: Oxford University Press, 1979.; Fogel, Robert W. Without Consent or Contract. Technical papers: The rise and fall of American slavery. New York: Norton, 1992.; Genovese, Eugene W. Roll, Jordan, Roll; The world the slaves made. New York: Pantheon Books, 1974.; Gutman,

recorded by Olmsted about which there is general agreement. Upon reaching the bottomlands of Louisiana and Texas, he realized that it was there that the plantation system reached, for good or ill, its greatest efficiency and most profitable form.

> "I have been on plantations on the Mississippi, the Red River, and the Brazos bottoms, wheron I was assured that ten bales of cotton to each average prime field-hand had been raised. The soil was a perfect garden mould, well drained and guarded by levees against the floods; it was admirably tilled; I have seen but few Northern farms so well tilled; the labourers were to a large degree, tall, slender, sinewy, young men, who worked from dawn to dusk, not with spirit, but with steadiness and constancy. They had good tools; their rations of bacon and corn were brought to them in the field, and eaten with efficient dispatch between the cotton plants. They had the best sort of gins and presses, so situated that from them cotton bales could be rolled in five minutes to steam-boats, bound direct to ports on the gulf. They were superintended by skilful [sic] and vigilant overseers. These plantations were all large, so large as to yet contain much fresh land, ready to be worked as soon as the cultivated fields gave out in fertility. If it was true that ten bales of cotton to the hand had been raised on them, then their net profit for the year had been, not less than two hundred and fifty dollars for each hand employed. Even at seven bales to the hand the profits of cotton planting are enormous."[114]

THE DOMESTIC LANDSCAPES OF LARGE COTTON PLANTATIONS [BIG HOUSE AND QUARTERS]

The buildings where people lived were typically surrounded by gardens and yards enclosed by fences that controlled the movement of animals and humans, regardless of whether these were the houses of the planter family, the overseer, or the enslaved people. These domestic landscapes shared some characteristics in common, although they were quite different in scale and appearance. Most included space for the production of foodstuffs. Most included pens or coops for small livestock. Most included a shade tree or two to protect inhabitants from the harsh semi-tropical sun. And most, from the most elaborate to the most humble, included some attempt to ornament the space with a blooming or fragrant plant.

The landscape of the Big House was characterized by a sense of order and neatness that indicated the social and economic standing of the planter. These typically large landscapes ranged from those directly inspired by manorial estates of Europe, with a high degree of design and ornamentation, to more vernacular adaptations that still spoke to the status and economic standing of the resident planter but were more informal and casual in

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Herbert G. The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom, 1750-1925. New York: Vintage Books, 1976.; Harris, William J. Society and Culture in the Slave South. New York: Routledge, 1992. Works on slavery in Louisiana include in addition to those already cited: Hall, Gwendolyn M. Africans in Colonial Louisiana: The development of Afro-Creole culture in the eighteenth century. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1992.; Malone, Ann P. Sweet Chariot: Slave family and household structure in nineteenth-century Louisiana. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992.

[114] Olmsted, 1861, 13 – 14.

nature. Regardless, the arrangement of elements within the domestic landscape was based upon utility.

Whereas the layout and organization of the agricultural portions of the plantation landscape were largely determined by the requirements of the cash crop under cultivation, the organization of the domestic landscapes of the plantation, those of the planter's house, as well as other residential structures of the landscape, were influenced to a large degree by the cultural background of the planter and his family. The Louisiana cotton plantations of the Florida parishes settled by planters of English descent, for example, are distinctly different in both their architectural language and domestic landscape appearance from those of the Natchitoches area with settlers of French and Creole heritage. The French had different ideas about how domestic life should be lived, and these cultural distinctions resulted in differences in the floor plans of their houses, and in the appearances of their gardens and yards.

A distinguishing feature of French and Creole architectural plans was asymmetry, or the lack of an ordering central axis, and this lack of formality in plan extended to the layout of their ornamental grounds. Whereas many English house plans were organized by a central hallway, French houses had no interior halls, and the galleries that surrounded much of the house served as anterooms to the interior spaces. These galleries often wrapped around three or all four facades of the Big House, providing outdoor living areas protected from direct sun or rain. Much of daily life was lived on these galleries.

There were clear relationships between the functions of the house's interior and the outdoor spaces that connected to the house. The public spaces of the house were on the front, and were typically reached by visitors arriving by carriage down a tree-lined avenue or allee, disembarking and walking through an ornamental garden or parterre, up a flight of outdoor stairs onto a gallery, and from there into the parlor. The kitchen and other service functions of the Big House were typically on the back of the house or in detached outbuildings behind the house, and opened onto the yard or working space of the site. Here small animals were caged or allowed to roam in the fenced area, food was processed and prepared for the kitchen, and clothes were laundered.

Located near the ornamental garden and the working yard that immediately surrounded the Big House were the kitchen garden and the fruit orchard. The kitchen garden was large enough to provide most of the food necessary for the planter's family and their guests. The orchard was nearby and included an assortment of fruit trees. These two specialized garden spaces were tended by gardeners, usually slaves, who were either skilled in gardening or not strong enough to work in the fields all day. The plantation mistress was typically responsible for planning and managing the production of these food crops.

There is no norm for the gardens and yards of other residences on the plantation, for example, that of the overseer, or a physician, as in the case of the Prud'homme Plantation. The spaces immediately surrounding these smaller houses would have been fenced and partially shaded, and there would have been some ornamental plantings. A

service yard would typically be located behind the house with perhaps a chicken coop. These residences might have individual vegetable plots and a fruit tree or two as well.

The quarters area of a large plantation was often more akin to an industrial or urban village than to a rural collection of dwellings. Usually quarters houses were organized along a lane or a series of lanes. If there were a large number of houses (twenty or so) the houses might be arranged in a grid pattern. Within this pattern each dwelling was surrounded by a fence so that residents could keep a few small animals to supplement their diets. There was also an allotment behind the houses for a vegetable plot. This varied from plantation to plantation. Sometimes the food was grown entirely for their own consumption; other times enslaved people were permitted to sell surplus produce.

Few documents describe the gardens and yards of these humblest of plantation dwellings, and scholarship is limited. Depending upon the enslaved peoples' backgrounds (African, American) their gardening techniques might reflect those of their original homelands or might mimic those of their owners.

In a social system that essentially negated the value of individual expression, it was in the domestic landscape that the particular personality and taste of the individual or collective family was visible, subtle though this expression might be.

CHAPTER THREE:

THE EMANUEL PRUDHOMME PLANTATION ON THE ISLE BREVELLE NARRATIVE HISTORY c1790 –1865

SOURCES

Two generations of Prud'hommes owned the plantation on Isle Brevelle before the Civil War. Jean-Pierre Emanuel established it. His son, Pierre-Phanor, helped him manage it and eventually became owner, seeing it through the disturbances of the Civil War. Finally, in the next generation, Jacques Alphonse and Pierre Emanuel reorganized it following the emancipation of the enslaved workforce, and eventually divided it between them creating Oakland and Ataho Plantations. The antebellum plantation, in French "l'habitation," was generally called by the name of the head of the family, so it was known as "L'Habitation Emanuel Prud'homme;" after his death it was sometimes referred to as "L'Habitation Phanor Prud'homme."

From Phanor onwards the Prud'homme family has retained an unusually large collection of family documents, correspondence, family accounts, legal papers, journals and notebooks. Much of this collection relates to the plantation on Isle Brevelle and this account is largely based on these documents. Many of the documents were written in French; in this report quotations translated from the French are printed in italics. The Prud'homme Family Papers provide an extraordinary amount of detailed information, but it must be remembered that the picture provided is very incomplete. Particularly unfortunate for this Cultural Landscape Report is the dearth of plans or maps showing the layout of the plantation. Most of the topographic description has to be deduced from the written record and it is often difficult to determine precise locations for landscape features.

An even more important caveat concerns the viewpoint adopted. Inevitably, the plantation is seen through the eyes of those who provided the written records. But the landscape of the plantation was made by several generations of enslaved workers. Their contributions were essential and their presence was one of the most important characteristics of this landscape. Yet, here as elsewhere, most of their story is unrecorded and their viewpoint is missing. It is difficult and perhaps impossible to guess what the landscape looked like through their eyes. So the picture presented is incomplete and strongly biased by the limitations of the documentary record on which it is based.

TIMELINE TO 1865

1736. Birth of Jean-Baptiste Prud'homme at the Poste St. Jean Baptiste des Natchitoches.

1758 Jean-Baptiste purchases 9 arpents of frontage near the Poste with an inheritance from his godfather.

1762 Birth of Jean-Pierre Emanuel, 3rd child of Jean Baptiste and his wife Charlotte Henriette Corantin Prud'homme.

1763 Transfer of Louisiana to Spain.

1780s Spanish authorities grant land to Prud'hommes in disputed area between Louisiana and Spanish settlements.

1784 January. Marriage of Jean-Pierre Emanuel to Marie Catherine Lambre.

1786 October. Death of Jean-Baptiste in Natchitoches.

1788 February. Death of Charlotte Henriette Corantin Prud'homme; settlement data records possession of 3 tracts of land and 24 slaves.

1790s Emanuel, according to family accounts, is working Rousseau tract 13 miles downstream from Natchitoches, although he does not yet own it. His home remains near the Poste where he cultivates a 51-acre tract.

1793 Eli Whitney applies for a patent for a new cotton gin. Rapid dissemination of pirated copies of his design leads to rapid adoption by planters and a great expansion of area devoted to cotton production throughout the South.

1797 Date of grant to Nicholas Rousseau of tract on both sides of river that will form the nucleus of the Emanuel Prud'homme Plantation on Isle Brevelle.

1800 Transfer of Louisiana from Spanish to French control.

1803 Louisiana Purchase.

1804 Foreign slave trade is forbidden in Louisiana, but widespread smuggling along Gulf Coast continues practice. English speaking slaves now imported from other states in the American South.

1807 Birth of Pierre-Phanor Prud'homme, 7th child of Emanuel and Catherine. Emanuel visits site of Hot Springs, Arkansas, seeking a cure for an eye ailment.

1808 US Congress prohibits foreign slave trade in all States.

1810 Population census: Emanuel reports owning 53 slaves.

1812 War between Britain and US disrupts cotton trade.
Certification of Emanuel's land claims, including ownership of the Rousseau tract.

1815 Cotton prices doubles at end of War of 1812.

1816 Survey of Rousseau tract records exact boundaries and size.

1817 Price of cotton reaches 33.9 cents per pound, its highest point in the period before the Civil War.

1818 Date of construction of the main house at Isle Brevelle according to family accounts.

1820 Population census: Emanuel reports owning 74 slaves.

1821 Emanuel and Catherine travel to France and have their portraits painted. Exchange of land between Emanuel and Benjamin Metoyer.

1826 Approximate date when the oak trees were planted to form the short allee between the main house and the river. During the '20s regularly scheduled steamboat traffic starts to operate on the Red/Cane River.

1829 Emanuel purchases 40 arpents on the Isle Brevelle from Balthazar Brevelle.

1830 Population census: Emanuel reports owning 96 slaves.

1831 Purchase of Jean Baptiste Rachal's Plantation by Emanuel. Louisiana restricts importation of slaves from other states after the Nat Turner insurrection in Virginia. Restrictions are repealed in 1834.

1832 Main flow of the Red River begins to leave the channel of the Cane River and follow that of the Rigolet de Bon Dieu.

1833 Shreve begins work to clear the Great Raft on the Red River above Natchitoches.

1835 Marriage of Phanor Prud'homme to Susanne Lise Metoyer. The couple began to live in a new house south of the main house. Approximate date of construction of second gin at the plantation. More land opened up for American settlement in the region by the removal of the Caddo Indians.

1836 Plantation produces 305 bales of cotton and Phanor records a profit of $23,489. Average export price of cotton is 14.2 cents per pound.

1837 Phanor's journals and accounts begin to record some of his activities and business transactions at the Isle Brevelle plantation, which he is managing for his father. This is the year of a financial panic that has a depressing effect on commerce generally, and initiates an agricultural depression that lasts for most of the 1840s.

1838 Emanuel purchases Jean-Baptiste Trichel's plantation above Natchitoches. Birth of Jacques Alphonse, 2nd child of Phanor and Lise.

1839 Plantation produces 560 bales of cotton. Phanor records a profit of $17,085. Average export price of cotton is 8.6 cents per pound.

1840 Population census: the population of Natchitoches Parish has doubled since 1830 and stands at 14,350. Emanuel reports owning 104 slaves, Phanor owns 40. Phanor buys 200 acres of land on the left hand bank of the river. He reports major damage to his cotton crop, probably associated with an invasion of armyworms into the Red River valley.

1841 Plantation produces 428 bales of cotton, and Phanor records a profit of $15,773.

1842 Plantation profits fall to $8,372.

1844 Birth of Pierre Emanuel, youngest son of Phanor and Lise Metoyer Prud'homme. Phanor purchases 650 acres on the right hand bank of the river and two quarter sections in the Kisatchie Hills. Plantation profits are only $6,983. The average export price of cotton drops to 5.9 cents, its lowest point in the antebellum period.

1845 Jean-Pierre Emanuel dies aged 83 years. Phanor reports the production of 427 bales of cotton and a plantation profit of $14,018; the average export price of cotton has risen to 7.8 cents per pound

1846 Phanor reports a plantation profit of only $3,939. Throughout the state a drought and a plague of armyworms has decimated the cotton crop. The plantation produces only 101 bales.

1847 The plantation's profit in this year is $9,494, based on the sale of 482 bales of cotton. The average export price is 7.6 cents per pound.

1848 Emanuel's widow Catherine dies aged 81 years. Her succession inventory lists their combined property, including 103 slaves. Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ends the Mexican War, and the US acquires new territories west of Louisiana.

1849 Record high water during floods on the Red/Cane River.

1850 Succession sale of Emanuel and Catherine's property; Phanor buys the plantation at Isle Brevelle and the Old Vacherie on Saline Lake, plus 46 slaves. In the 1850 slave census, Phanor reports owning 126 slaves, and in the first agricultural census, he reports producing 230 standard 400-pound bales of cotton. Price of cotton has risen to 12.1 cents.

1852 Death of Susanne Lise Metoyer Prud'homme.

1853 Lise's succession inventory records family property, which now includes 3200 acres of land in Texas. The plantation has on hand the equivalent of 500 standard 400 pound bales of cotton.

1855 Phanor tours the North and later marries his first wife's sister, Marianne Cephalide Archinard. Seneca Pace is employed as plantation overseer. The plantation produces 495 bales of cotton. The average export price of cotton is 9.5 cents per pound.

1856 Town of Natchitoches incorporated.

1858 Sawmill at Gongreville in Pine Woods becomes part of plantation.

1859 Construction of new gin house on the right bank at Isle Brevelle; gin machinery installed in the following year.

1860 Slave census, Phanor reports 147 slaves. Second agricultural census, Phanor reports that his plantation produced 698 standard 400-pound bales of cotton. Average export price of cotton is 11.1 cents per pound. A doctor takes up residence at the plantation.

1861 Louisiana secedes from the Union, War between the Union and Confederate States. Outbreak of typhoid fever kills five workers on the plantation. 300 bales of cotton weighing around 600 pounds each produced.

1862 Changes in the crops planted on the plantation – corn acreage triples. Capture of New Orleans by Union Navy disrupts cotton trade. Pace leaves to join Confederate Army, replaced as Overseer by Phelps, then McNeely. 232 bales of cotton stored on the plantation.

1863 No cotton planted – nearly all acreage devoted to food crops. Plantation is evacuated during the Union Army's Teche Campaign in April and May. At the end of the year, sugar boiling rather than cotton picking is the main activity.

1864 Union Army's Red River Campaign causes extensive damage, new cotton gin is burned, Main House plundered, and one quarter of the enslaved

workforce leaves with the Yankees. But most of the plantation's buildings and livestock, and even some of the stored cotton escape destruction.

1865 The old agricultural routine is reestablished on the plantation despite fears of lawlessness, as the Confederacy is defeated. Freedman's Bureau created by act of Congress in March. Pierre Phanor Prud'homme dies in October aged 59 years. End of an era in the South coincides with the transfer of the plantation to a new generation.

JEAN-PIERRE EMANUEL'S PLANTATION ON THE ISLE BREVELLE

The Prud'homme Family

The history of the Prud'homme family in Louisiana began with the arrival of Emanuel's grandfather, Jean-Pierre Philippe Prud'homme, from the province of Dauphine in southeastern France. According to family accounts, he came to Natchitoches as a soldier in 1716.[115] This was just two years after the establishment of this military outpost by the French in 1714. The Breutin map of Natchitoches, drawn in 1722, indicated that Prud'homme lived just outside the fort at that time and did not have a waterfront lot.[116] In 1725 he married Catherine Meillier who had immigrated to New Orleans from Paris.[117] The family that issued from this union remained embedded in French culture and traditions through several generations.

Throughout the antebellum period, family members used the French language in nearly all their internal communications and records and most of their correspondence with those outside the family. This French identity was preserved over several generations by marriages to members of other French Creole families in the Red River region. Like others in this society, the Prud'hommes were to exhibit a strong loyalty to their family.[118] This loyalty was reinforced by a Catholic faith that preached the sanctity of family bonds. It was also supported by pride in an Ancien Regime code of personal honor and social courtesy, which counterbalanced the competitive individualism of the American frontier.[119] Perhaps less typical of French Creole society as a whole was the Prud'homme's delight in country living. The family maintained town houses in Natchitoches, but several generations chose the Isle Brevelle, 13 miles downriver, as the location of their primary homes. The stability of the family in this place fostered a process of continuing investment in the plantation over several generations. Breedlove points out that such a commitment was unusual in the antebellum South.

> "The sort of permanence and continuity the Prud'hommes experienced and embodied were a phenomenon unknown to most antebellum Southerners. Gavin Wright elucidated the more prevalent reality, that the fabled Southern love for native soil was by and large more fallout from the Civil War. Prior to that,

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[115] Mills, 1988, 666; Mrs. J. Alphonse Prud'homme, 1979, 1.
[116] Cummins, 1990, 28.
[117] Ibid.
[118] Malone, 1998, 5.
[119] Caruso, 1966, 361.

slaveholders tended to move frequently, along with their major investments, to hoped-for greener pastures."[120]

This commitment to the land could not have been sustained if it had not been allied to shrewd entrepreneurial abilities, that is the energy to organize, manage and assume the risk of the plantation as a business. Jean-Baptiste Prud'homme, a son of Jean-Pierre Philippe and the father of Jean-Pierre Emanuel, began this entrepreneurial activity in 1758. While practicing as a physician in Natchitoches, he bought nine arpents of frontage land near the Poste. He used an inheritance from his godfather to make this investment.[121] Jean-Baptiste died in 1786. In a census taken the next year, his widow reported owning 14 arpents of river frontage in three tracts of land and 24 slaves.[122] By this time Emanuel, their eldest surviving son, had married Catherine Lambre and set up his own household. In the census they reported owning 10 arpents of frontage land in two tracts and 15 slaves.[123] The Prud'hommes had become planters, as yet on a small scale, but their investment in land and slaves had begun.

A note on spelling: Jean-Pierre Emanuel's second and preferred name is found in the historical record spelt with both one and two 'm's. The former seems to predominate, perhaps reflecting the Spanish version 'Manuel,' so it is used in this report.

The Rousseau Tract

The Spanish authorities had granted the land that was to form the core of Emanuel's plantation on Isle Brevelle to Nicholas Rousseau. According to family accounts, Emanuel began working this land 19 years before he actually purchased it.[124] The date of purchase has not been determined. Again, according to family accounts it was 1792, but that is questionable. Certainly in the 1790s Emanuel was buying land. He was living in Natchitoches and working his land beside the river opposite the Poste.[125] His name together with that of his brother Antoine appears in the Natchitoches Parish Court House records several times in that decade in connection with the buying and selling of land and livestock.[126] But the record of the purchase of the Rousseau tract has not been located. With the change in government after the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, Emanuel was obliged to apply to the U S Government for confirmation of his ownership of land granted by the colonial authorities. In his application Emanuel gives the date of the original grant to Rousseau as 18th January 1797.[127] If this date is correct, it casts doubt on the family account that the land had been acquired in 1792 and worked for 19 years before that date. Of course, it might be a mistake, in which case a date of 1787 seems likely. That date would accord slightly better with the family account.

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[120] Breedlove, 1999, 47; citing Gavin Wright, Old South, New South: Revolutions in the Southern Economy Since the Civil War. New York: Basic Books, 1986.
[121] Mills, 1988, 666.
[122] Malone, 1998, 26.
[123] Ibid.
[124] Mrs. J. Alphonse Prud'homme, 1979, 2.
[125] Breedlove, 1999, 6.
[126] Thomas, 2000, 23-25.
[127] Emanuel Prud'homme Land Claims, 1812.

Emanuel applied for confirmation of claims to seven tracts of land. The first and most significant was the Rousseau tract. He made the claim as follows.
"Emanuel Prud'homme claims a tract of Land on Red river in the County of Natchitoches, containing 20 acres on each side of sd. River in front, with the Depth of 40 acres, by virtue of a Deed of Conveyance from Nicholas Rousseau to whom the same was originally granted by concession dated 18th January 1797."[128]
The next claim was to an adjoining piece of land described as follows.
"Also claims a tract of Land on the left [crossed out] - both [inserted] - side of said River descending [crossed out] containing 6 acres in front – on each side of sd river [inserted] – with the depth of 40 Acres, by virtue of Deed of Conveyance from Conga a free Negro, who purchased from Dominique Rachal, to whom the same was originally granted by concession dated 27th November 1787."[129]

It should be noted that the geographic references, although confused, followed the convention of designating the left or right bank by assuming the observer was facing downstream or "descending." In the historical documents one does not find references to east or west banks, presumably because of the serpentine form of the river. But one finds references to the "near side" or "this side" and to the "far side" of the river. These assumed the observer was standing on the right bank where the main house was located. "Above" and "below" were used to indicate locations upstream and downstream from the main house, and "front" and "back" referred to locations close to or away from the banks of Cane River.

The other claims were located elsewhere in the region and included tracts on the left hand side of the river across from the town of Natchitoches, and land on Lake Saline west of Natchitoches in Winn Parish.[130] In February 1812, the Commissioner of the Western District of Orleans Territory confirmed Emanuel's claim #B1850 to the Rousseau tract and #B1815 to the contiguous tract.[131] Probably, the other claims were also confirmed at the same time.

In 1816, claim #B1850 was surveyed.[132] The survey corrects any misleading impression given in the claim of its size and shape. Emanuel's claim said the tract was on each side of the river and 40 acres deep. As explained earlier, 40 arpents was a standard depth for French and Spanish land claims, so here Emanuel had merely substituted acres for arpents. It isn't clear from the claim whether the stated depth applied on each side of the river or was a total for both sides. When the claim was certified in 1812 the size of the tract was given as 1600 arpents, so clearly it was assumed that each side had a depth of 40 arpents. Arpents were then converted to acres using the standard conversion for the Territory and the size of the claim certified at 1354.04 acres.[133] The 1816 survey shows

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[128] Ibid.
[129] Ibid.
[130] Ibid.
[131] Correspondence: Marshall Carver to Lester Hughes, 1958.
[132] Plat, Emanuel Prudhomme, Surveyed by Joseph Irwin, Jan. 1816. State Land Office, Baton Rouge.
[133] Correspondence: Carver/ Hughes, 1958.

the tract was about half that size, being about 40 arpents deep in total. There were 554.35 acres on the left hand side in Section 44, and 162.39 acres on the right hand side in Section 104, giving a total of 716.74 acres.[134] The contiguous claim, Section 40, added about another 100 acres to this total.

The 1816 surveyor noted how the various corners of the surveyed tract were marked. All of the corners were marked by posts, except for those on the eastern boundary. The northeastern corner lies in the River Ataho, and although this bayou was noted as being dry at the time the point was left unmarked. The southeastern corner lay beyond the bayou and was marked by a blaze on a white oak tree. One can conclude that this area still retained its forest cover while the other corners had been at least partially cleared by 1816. According to Malone, the Rousseau tract was in an area that had been called "Limping Village" in early records.[135] The name suggest a Native American presence, so parts of the tract may have been cleared for agriculture before it was granted to Rousseau.

The Establishment of the Plantation

The Prud'homme Family has taken pride in Emanuel's leadership in the development of cotton plantations in the Red/Cane River region. According to family accounts, he was the first to grow cotton on a large scale in the region; starting at the time he acquired the Rousseau tract.[136] Cotton had already been grown in the Parish, for it appears as an item in the settlement records of several families, but it was only grown on a small scale.[137] In choosing to grow cotton as his primary commercial crop, Emanuel was in the vanguard. Sydnor in his "Slavery in Mississippi" quotes the following from a Natchez newspaper of September 1802, under "Prices Current" in the New Orleans market. " Cotton, per cwt, 19 to 20 dols. brisk." "Tobacco, per cwt, 3 dols. dull."[138] The advantages of shifting from tobacco to cotton were obvious, but most planters in the early years of the 19th century could also see major risks in growing a new crop and committing resources to supplying a new market. Emanuel was prepared to take those risks. In the early years he must have learned how to grow cotton and experimented with varieties suitable to the region. He must also have invested in the newly invented equipment required to gin and bale the crop for shipment. And the shipments of cotton would have gone by flatboats and keelboats to New Orleans in the years before steamboats made their appearance around 1820. And all the time he would have had to keep an anxious eye on the weather. Fortunately, as already noted, high prices for cotton in the 1790s and again after the War of 1812 richly rewarded the enterprise of the first cotton planters, and successful planters like Emanuel rapidly ascended into the ranks of the planter aristocracy.

At the same time as Emanuel was acquiring land he was purchasing people as slaves. In 1790, according to Catholic Church tax rolls, he had 36 slaves.[139] The increase since the

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[134] The acreages are those given by Carver; the 1816 survey figures were slightly different, namely 524.50 plus 175.50, totaling 700 acres.
[135] Malone, 1998, 26.
[136] Mrs. J. Alphonse Prud'homme, 1979, 2.
[137] Malone, 1998, 92.
[138] Sydnor, 1933, 181, quoting the Natchez Mississippi Herald Sept. 28, 1802.
[139] Malone, 1998, 29.

1787 census may be due to the purchase of some of his parents' slaves. The Natchitoches Court House records give some details of his continuing purchases during the 1790s. But the most interesting documentary evidence is in the baptismal records of the Catholic Church of St. Francis des Natchitoches.[140] Baptism into the Catholic Church was required by the Code Noir of the colonial period,[141] and Emanuel continued this practice in later years. In 1804 for example, Emanuel had 15 slaves baptized. Six of these were infants below the age of four, the children of people who were presumably already in Emanuel's possession. The remaining nine were young people between the ages of 12 and 17 years, of which eight were boys and one was a girl. Each of these young people was identified as a "Guinea Negro."[142] This almost certainly means they were newly arrived from Africa. The term Guinea was used to refer to a long stretch of the coast of West Africa. A more precise place of origin for each person is now probably impossible to determine.[143]

In 1804 the importation from overseas of people to serve as slaves was made illegal in Louisiana. But thereafter smuggling was widespread and an illicit trade continued for many years.[144] Emanuel continued to acquire slaves, but some of these probably came from other slave states in the Upper South such as Tennessee and Kentucky. In later years an increasing number of the people baptized have English rather than French names, and some are identified as "English Negroes."[145]

In 1810, the number of people owned as slaves by Emanuel had increased to 53, in 1820 it was 74, and in 1830 he owned 92.[146] These numbers place him among the principal slaveholders in the Parish. In 1830, only two other planters had more slaves. By that time two of Emanuel's sons had set up their own plantations and were also large slaveholders. The eldest son Jean-Pierre Baptiste owned 87 slaves, and the second son, Louis Narcisse, owned 80.

By the time Emanuel built the house that still stands at the former center of his landholdings, his plantation must have been well established. According to the Prud'homme family, the main house, which they called simply "la maison" was built between 1818 and 1821.[147] In 1818, Emanuel was 56 and his wife, Marie Catherine Lambre Prud'homme was 55. According to the family, there was an earlier house, but this had been built lower to the ground and perhaps nearer to the river and was threatened by floods. The new house was raised on brick pillars six feet above the ground. It seems likely that most of the materials for the house came from the tract on which it stood. The

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[140] These have been translated by Elizabeth Shown Mills and analyzed by Malone, 1998, 27-28, and Thomas, 2000, 29.
[141] Cummins, 1990, 31.
[142] Thomas, 2000, 29; Malone, 1998, 43.
[143] Taylor, 1963, 10. On the African origins of Louisiana slaves see also Hall, Gwendolyn Midlo. Africans in Louisiana: The Development of Afro-Creole Culture in the Eighteenth Century. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1992.
[144] Ibid., 35.
[145] Thomas, 2000, 30-31; Malone, 1998, 38.
[146] Malone, 1998, 40-41.
[147] Mrs. J. Alphonse Prud'homme, 1979, 2.

frame was made of hand-hewn cypress, mortised and pegged. The walls were filled with bousillage, and the piers were built with hand-made bricks. The form of the house was typical of French colonial architecture in Louisiana. Originally the raised cottage had a square four-room plan, with a large hip roof extending over a gallery on all four sides. A brick chimney was built between each pair of rooms, and the steeply sloping roof was covered in cypress shingles.[148] Dormers were built into the roof but the attic space was left unfinished and seems always to have been used for storage.

The choice of site for the main house indicates the importance of the river in the operation of the plantation. Houses were built close to rivers since they provided the principal means of transportation. But a question arises as to why Emanuel chose the right hand bank, when in these early years most of his land lay on the other side of the river. The answer probably lies in the river's current and the pattern of shallows and deeps. Being on the outside of a gentle curve, the right hand bank probably offered the best place for a landing. The swing of the river's current against this bank would have maintained a deeper channel and facilitated the mooring of boats.[149]

The main house would not have stood alone. A collection of agricultural and industrial buildings essential to the operation of the plantation must have been in existence by 1818. However the first mention of these in the historical record comes in the 1830s.

In 1821 Emanuel and his wife were in Paris. There they had their portraits painted. Each portrait is marked on the back "Paint au Paris 1821."[150] Emanuel is posed holding a boll of cotton, an indication of his pride in the source of his wealth and possibly a reference to his role in introducing its culture to the Red/Cane River region. The Prud'hommes acquired furniture for their house while in Paris, and, according to the family accounts, rooms were soon added to the north side of the original structure after their return from France.[151] A few years later, the main house was given its formal landscape setting. It was probably in the 1820s that the allee of live oaks, Quercus virginiana, was planted leading from the river to the house. At the end of this allee, in front of the house a small boxwood parterre was installed, probably around 1835.[152]

Clearly, by the 1820s Emanuel and his wife had become wealthy planters and were able to celebrate their status. The building of "la Maison" signaled the maturity of the plantation, however, the process of expansion was to continue. In 1821, there had been an exchange of land with Benjamin Metoyer. Metoyer owned adjacent land, and in the exchange Emanuel obtained land on the right hand bank in exchange for a piece on the left hand bank.[153] In 1829 Emanuel purchased land on the Isle Brevelle from Balthazar Brevelle for $3,500. Two years later he acquired for $3,000 land from Jean Baptiste Rachal. This tract was on both sides of the river.[154] A survey showing the boundaries of

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[148] Miri, Historic Structure Assessment Report, Main House, 1998; National Register Nomination 1979.
[149] Gregory and Moran, 1996, 81.
[150] Mrs. J. Alphonse Prud'homme, 1979, 2.
[151] Ibid., 2.
[152] Ibid., 3.
[153] Breedlove, 1999, 48.
[154] Ibid., 48-49.

these properties has not been found, but they added substantially to Emanuel's holdings particularly on the right side of the river.

The Plantation in the 1830s and 1840s

Phanor Prud'homme

The documentary record of activities on the plantation reveals that by the mid 1830s responsibility for day-to-day management was borne by Emanuel's son Pierre-Phanor. The record begins in 1836. A 'Cotton Book' from that year records the quantity of cotton picked per day by each hand over a seven-week period.[155] From 1837 to 1842, Pierre-Phanor Prud'homme kept two journals recording activities on the plantation.[156] In addition there are several "Comptes Courants" with accounts for the years 1837 to 1849,[157] and two "pocket notebooks" kept between 1841 and 1845.[158] Taken together these documents allow us to piece together a picture of the operation of the plantation towards the end of Emanuel's life.

Phanor had been born in 1807, the sixth child and third son of Emanuel and his wife Marie Catherine. In June 1835 Phanor had married Susanne Lise Metoyer, the daughter of Benjamin Metoyer, and the next year they had started a family. In 1836 it is clear from his accounts that Phanor was playing the major role in the management of Emanuel's plantation. By this time Emanuel was 74 years old and Phanor's older brothers, Jean-Pierre Baptiste and Louis-Narcisse were established on their own plantations. It is not clear at what date Phanor had assumed responsibility for the day-to-day management of the plantation, but his financial records suggest he had been playing a significant role since 1831.[159]

Accounts

The 1830s were prosperous years for the plantation, but Phanor's accounts recorded a decline in the fortunes of the family during the agricultural depression of the 1840s. In 1836, when the plantation produced 305 bales of cotton, only a middling sized crop, it returned a profit of $23,489.[160] The average export price of cotton for the United States in that year was 14.2 cents per pound,[161] and the calculation of profit in these years was based entirely on the sale of cotton. The next year a much larger crop totaling 406 bales brought a profit of only $18,829, but in 1838 a profit of $21,400 was received from 326 bales. In 1839, although there was a bumper harvest amounting to 560 bales, the average price had fallen to 8.6 cents per pound and the recorded profit declined to $17,085.[162] In

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[155] Cotton Book, 1836, P. F. P. folder 267.
[156] Journalier, 1837-1839, P. F. P. folder 268; Journalier, 1839-1842, P. F. P. folder 269.
[157] Compte, 1837-1841, Compte, 1842-1848, Compte, 1836-1849, P. F. P. folder 163.
[158] Notebook, 1843, Notebook, 1841-1845, P. F. P. folder 477.
[159] Compte, 1837-1841, 16.
[160] Compte, 1836-1849, 4.
[161] Sydnor, 1933, 183.
[162] Compte, 1836-1849, 4.

1841 a production of 428 bales brought a profit of $15,773.[163] The number of bales produced the next year was not recorded but the average export price for cotton had dropped to 6.2 cents per pound and the plantation's profit sank to $8,372.[164] It remained around this level for the next two years. In 1844, the export price of cotton sank to its lowest level, just 5.9 cents per pound. In 1845, the year of Emanuel's death, the average price recovered slightly to 7.8 cents per pound, and the plantation recorded a profit of $14,018 from the sale of 427 bales.[165] However, the following year was disastrous, as both weather and insects decimated the cotton crop across the state. The plantation produced only 101 bales and returned a profit of only $3,939.[166] Fortunately in 1847 conditions improved. 482 bales were sold and a profit of $9,494 was obtained.[167]

Phanor kept a record of the profit made each year because his income was based upon it. The remuneration that Phanor received for running the plantation was in two parts. Each year he received a salary of $1500.00. In addition he took a share of the profits. His share was calculated according to the number of slaves that he owned and contributed to the operation of the plantation. In 1840, for example, he owned 26 of the 100 hands working on the plantation, so he took 26% of the profit, which worked out at a sum of $3,577.06.[168]

Land

Despite declining profits, Phanor and his father continued to acquire additional land. The land transactions are not detailed in Phanor's journals or accounts, but Breedlove has identified some of the major purchases from her research in the Natchitoches Court House records. The picture is probably incomplete, but, not surprisingly, it suggests some coordination between father and son in their purchases. In 1838 Emanuel bought the Trichel Plantation, a 400-arpent tract above Natchitoches.[169] Meanwhile, Phanor was acquiring additional tracts nearer to the main plantation. In 1840 he purchased 250 arpents, about 200 acres, downriver for $8,000.[170] This tract was located on the left hand bank below his father-in-law Benjamin Metoyer's plantation. After Emanuel's death it was listed as one of his properties, so it must have been bought on his behalf, or transferred to him later. A few years later in 1844, Phanor bought 650 acres on the right hand bank for $4,667.[171] This tract was acquired from the Levasseur family, and adjoined his father's land; it lay immediately downstream and therefore could be worked as part of Emanuel's plantation. Many years later in 1873, after Phanor's death, his son Alphonse made a careful survey of his father's property. It was decided at that date that

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[163] Ibid., 8.
[164] Ibid., 8.
[165] Ibid., 12- 13.
[166] Ibid., 15-16.
[167] Ibid., 21.
[168] Compte, 1837-1841, 8.
[169] Breedlove, 1999, 50.
[170] Ibid., 49.
[171] Ibid.

this Levasseur tract comprised only 309.85 acres rather than the 650 acres stated in the sale documents.[172]

In 1844 Phanor also purchased land outside the fertile valley bottom. He purchased two quarter sections in the Kitsatchie Hills to the west of the river.[173] Phanor's accounts reveal that in addition to the outright purchase of land, the family was renting additional land. The rent paid for most of these pieces was small. For example, in 1843 the family paid $30 to Marcelin Tauzin for the rent of a piece of land near Natchitoches, and in 1844, $75 was paid to Ambroise Sompayrac for the rent of another piece of land. However, in 1845 a substantial sum was paid to the U S government. Phanor records two payments, one of $700.00 and another of $225.00, but he doesn't indicate where the rented land was located.[174]

Enslaved Workers

The number of enslaved workers on the plantation increased significantly in the 1830s but not during the lean years of the 1840s. In his accounts for 1839 Phanor records the purchase of ten slaves, for whom he paid $10,000.[175] Most, if not all of these people were to remain Phanor's property, and the next year his share of plantation profits increased accordingly. In 1840 there was a total of 144 slaves on the plantation, of whom 100 were counted as working hands; 74 of them belonged to Emanuel and 26 to Phanor.[176] After this the numbers change only slightly. In 1841, Phanor purchased 9 slaves for $7000, "*comprising the family of Toussaint.*" In the 1836 Cotton Book the overseer recorded Tousant as the name of one of the hands, so there might have been some relationship. However this purchase was not reflected in a change in overall numbers. The accounts for the year list 69 hands under Emanuel's name and 30 under Phanor's. Again in 1842 he bought "*a family of negroes*," this time for the sum of $4,339.22, paid in two installments to the succession of J.B.Lemoine.[177] And again the purchase does not affect overall numbers. This might be because there were corresponding sales of slaves that offset these purchases and were recorded elsewhere.

The 1836 Cotton Book lists 90 hands by their Christian names. The names are both French and English in character with only a few that seem to be African. The Prud'hommes were continuing to baptize the workers' children. Phanor referred to this in his journals,[178] and in his accounts he noted a payment of $8.10 "*to Cure Figary for baptism of 7 little negroes.*"[179] Occasionally in his journals Phanor refers to an individual hand by name. For example, in March 1837 he listed a collection of tools he had given to "*Solomon the Carpenter*," and mentioned a plow he had entrusted to "*the Mulatto*

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[172] Partition of Land 1873, Natchitoches Parish Courthouse, Notarial Record Book 65.
[173] Breedlove, 1999, 50.
[174] Compte, 1836-1849, 9.
[175] Ibid., 5.
[176] Breedlove, 1999, 11; Compte, 1836-1849, 6.
[177] Compte, 1836-1849, 8.
[178] Journalier, 12/13/1838.
[179] Compte, 1836-49, 10.

Bysainte."[180] But most of his entries referred to his workforce in general as "*the negroes*."

Overseers

The day-to-day supervision of the workforce was the responsibility of a hired overseer. The payment of overseers was included in a summary of expenses incurred on behalf of the plantation during the previous six years, which Phanor noted at the start of his 1837 accounts.[181] This summary does not give any names. J. F. Culbertson compiled the Cotton Book for 1836, so he must have been the overseer in that year. In 1837 someone called Johnson replaced him. Phanor referred to "*L'economeJohnson*" in his journal,[182] and in his accounts he recorded paying him $900.[183] It seems likely that there was a series of overseers through the years. According to Scarborough's study of the role of overseers on Southern plantations, a frequent change was the rule rather than the exception.[184] In 1838, '39 and '40 the overseer was C. H. Russell, who received wages of $900 each year.[185] In 1841 the same wages were paid, but the record does not name the overseer. The next year the wages were reduced to $700 per annum, presumably because of the decline in the plantation's profits.[186] In 1843 the sum of 552 piastres was paid to Andre Guisset for his service as overseer, perhaps reflecting service for less than a full year.[187] After Emanuel's death, a member of the family, Adolphe Prud'homme, became the overseer. In 1846 and '47 he was paid $800 for his services.[188]

Provisions for the Workers

Although Phanor had delegated the supervision of the slaves to an overseer, his accounts and journals provide insights into the management of the workforce. In 1846 the accounts listed the provisions purchased for the workers. The largest expenditure was for 70 barrels of pork, which cost $1200. This was more than half the total sum spent on provisions.[189] Pork and cornmeal were mainstays of the slave diet. Throughout the antebellum period in Louisiana, according to Taylor, the usual daily allowance per adult was a half-pound of pork and a quart of corn meal.[190] But while many plantations tried to be self sufficient in corn, few tried to produce all their own pork. Emanuel's plantation was no exception. Although there were hogs on the plantation - in October 1839, Phanor noted that the workers had gathered cowpeas for his hogs[191] - the numbers must have been small. In 1850, the first agricultural census recorded only 40 swine on the plantation.

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[180] Journalier, 3/17/37 and 3/18/37.
[181] Compte, 1837-41, 16.
[182] Journalier, 3/23/1837.
[183] Compte, 1837-1841, 1.
[184] Scarborough, 1984, 38 and 125.
[185] Compte, 1837-1841, 3.
[186] Compte, 1842-1848, 5.
[187] Ibid., 23.
[188] Compte, 1836-49, 10 and 20.
[189] Ibid., 16.
[190] Taylor, 1963, 107.
[191] Journalier, 10/23/1839.

That number was no greater than the average for all farms, large and small, in the Parish.[192]

The plantation produced most of the other items in the workers' diet, with the exception of molasses and salt. In 1846, a total of $66.25 was spent on molasses.[193] Isle Brevelle lay outside the main sugar producing areas of Louisiana, but it was possible to grow sugar there, and some molasses was probably produced. However, home production was clearly insufficient to meet requirements. Salt was cheap, it cost only $4.80, and was available from salt-works in nearby parishes. To these essentials, two other items were added, tobacco and whiskey. In 1846, $79.05 was spent on the former and $30.49 on the latter. They were probably issued to the hands as part of a system of inducements and rewards for work well done.

The workers grew their own corn and vegetables, some of it on plots set aside for the purpose. In May 1839 Phanor noted "*Gave the morning to the Negroes for the sweet potatoes.*"[194] This was the general practice on plantations since it had obvious practical advantages from a planter's viewpoint.[195] Less widespread and more controversial was the practice of allowing slaves to cultivate crops and raise livestock to sell for their own profit. This was allowed at this plantation, with Phanor handling the cash transactions on his slaves' behalf and making careful notes of the sums involved. For example his journal opened in 1837 with a list of nine people on whose behalf he had sold corn at $1.25 per bushel.[196] Later a longer list of sellers of corn included the names of 32 hands, so the practice was not restricted to a privileged few.[197] In his accounts for December 1839, Phanor records payments in that year totaling $512.80 to the hands for their corn.[198] Some of the slaves owned livestock. Phanor notes the marking of their cattle at the same time as Prud'homme cattle were being branded. In March 1838, for example, he records branding 31 cattle owned by his father and himself, and another 12 owned by slaves.[199]

Hands also produced some of their own clothing. Clothing was an item on the 1846 list of provisions, but the expenditure was for "*cotonnade courantes, etc.*" This was probably cotton cloth that was to be made into clothes by some of the slaves. The total expenditure was $434.90, a relatively modest sum to clothe about 100 people. Some finished garments were probably provided as well. Phanor recorded distributing "*livery*" when the weather turned cold, and giving out coats to women for their children.[200] Shoes were another item of expenditure. In 1846 the plantation spent $159.10 on shoes. Phanor recorded giving out shoes, first to house servants and then to field hands at the end of 1839.[201] Some plantations had slaves who were skilled shoemakers. We know this was

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[192] Seventh Census 1850, Agricultural Productions.
[193] Compte, 1836-1849, 16.
[194] Journalier, 5/11/1839.
[195] Sydnor, 1933, 30-36; Taylor, 1963, 106.
[196] Journalier, 1837-1839, 1.
[197] Ibid., 15.
[198] Compte, 1837-41, 4.
[199] Journalier, 3/16/1838.
[200] Journalier, 9/23/1838, and 10/28/1838.
[201] Journalier, 11/16/1839 and 12/15/39.

the case here in the 1850s so it might have been true earlier. In that case the expenditure for shoes, as for clothes, would have been mainly for materials rather than finished items.

The 1846 list of provisions for the workers included $80.38 for medicines. The health of enslaved workers was a cause of economic concern for planters, since a sick or disabled worker was a bad investment.[202] There was a hospital at Emanuel's plantation where sick workers could be treated. However the reference to it in Phanor's journal indicates it was a building that served a variety of purposes. In October 1839, it was being used to store a bumper crop of cowpeas.[203] Concern for the health of slaves was a constraint on an overseer's use of corporal punishment to maintain discipline and raise a worker's output.[204] However, Phanor's journals give no information on how slaves were disciplined on Emanuel's plantation.

Growing Cotton

The lives of owners, overseers and slaves were dominated by the calendar of farm operations. That calendar was organized around the planting, cultivation and harvesting of cotton. Phanor's journals show that he was developing considerable expertise as a cotton grower by means of careful observations and record keeping. For example, in April 1839 he made the following observations.

> *"Begin to thin the cotton. A long drought. The cotton is drying out in lots of places. Corn superb. Last year, I began to thin the cotton on the 28 April. I regret it. I notice that the seeds of cotton that find themselves outside of the furrows formed by the Spanish plough are growing with much more vigor, because the roots find more soil; whereas the seeds thrown into the furrows of the Spanish plough find themselves almost always covered by a certain amount of earth which nearly always forms a crust. It breaks and leaves them nearly always with their roots exposed to the heat, at least when there are no longer others, or the seed finds itself unearthed disturbing all the earth that will support it and the cotton dries out.*
>
> *I think it will be preferable to simply pass a harrow with very heavy teeth of strong wood, which can reach two furrows and simply throw the seeds on the furrow without opening it. Especially for the cotton de Bonn Buire I want to try next year."*[205]

The cotton "*de Bonn Buire*" was probably a variety developed by selection from Petit Gulf, the commercial name of Mexican cotton. Phanor mentioned planting "*Petite Gulf*" and "*Grande Terre*" in April 1839.[206] According to a contemporary account, few of the varieties developed from Mexican cotton remained in favor for many years before being replaced by another selection.[207]

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[202] Taylor, 1963, 122.
[203] Journalier, 10/23/39.
[204] Scarborough, 1984, 93; Taylor, 1963, 201.
[205] Journalier, 4/25/1839.
[206] Journalier, 4/1/1839.
[207] Lyman, 1868, 119-127.

Many of Phanor's journal entries recorded his concerns about the effects of weather conditions, particularly too much or too little rain. On the 20th September 1838 his entry reads:

> *"The cotton opens with difficulty; the negroes pass through the fields quickly. The cotton bolls are large up to the tops of the stalks. A long drought just at the moment the cotton began to open has greatly diminished hope for the harvest. The cotton has matured too early. The rain gave strength back to the cotton which impedes it from opening."*[208]

The depredations of insects and other pests were also cause for concern. In September 1840 he complained, *"There is a strong drought. Not one leaf of cotton. The caterpillars have eaten it all."*[209] The caterpillars may have been armyworms, which were becoming a major problem on Red River cotton plantations at this time.[210]

Planting, cultivating and picking cotton was a laborious business. Field hands worked long hours, six or seven days a week, and sometimes the work went on into the night. At the beginning of the cotton-planting season, Phanor noted *"Began to plant cotton on this side. Finished at midnight. Covered the cotton."*[211] Although it was usual practice on plantations to allow a day of rest on Sundays, in 1836 cotton picking continued seven days a week on Emanuel's plantation. No doubt the overseer closely watched the performance of the workers, but Phanor makes no reference to this. However, when the time for picking came, the overseer carefully recorded the performance of each picker. In the 1836 Cotton Book 90 hands are named and the weight of seed cotton picked each day by each worker is recorded. Nearly all the hands were required to pick cotton. Some workers with special skills such as Solomon the Carpenter, and some of the domestic servants were kept out of the fields certain days, but they were expected to pick cotton when other duties allowed. For example, a domestic servant called Venus who according to later accounts was a cook did not pick cotton on weekdays, but was in the fields on Saturdays and Sundays.

Over a seven-week period the average weights picked by the hands are well below the 150 to 200 pounds commonly given in textbooks as the standard expected.[212] The low weights may be due to deficiencies in the crop, perhaps a late beginning to the harvest, rather than a failure of the workers to meet expectations. Weights are much higher in October where the record ends. In the week of October 3rd, Charles, the best male picker, averaged 164 pounds per day and Elar [or Elen], the best female picker, averaged 157 pounds.[213] In October 1839, Phanor wrote *"Began to gather my corn with the weaker*

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[208] Journalier, 9/20/ 1838.
[209] Journalier, 9/7/1840.
[210] Gray, 1933, 704; Northup, 1968, 145. Caterpillars remained a problem, and ten years later Lestan Prud'homme in his journal noted planters' fear of an invasion of caterpillars, see Lestan Prudhomme Journal 7/20/1850.
[211] Journalier, 3/22/1837.
[212] Taylor, 1990, 145.
[213] Cotton Book, 10/3/1836.

pickers. Saved 20 good ones to pick cotton. The rest with B. Tombereaux."[214]
Tombereaux may have been an employee, but his role on the plantation is not known.

Growing cotton was subject to many uncertainties and the size of the crop varied from year to year. Phanor's accounts recorded the number of bales produced on the plantation in seven of the years from 1836 to 1849. In the 1830s, the smallest recorded crop was the 305 bales produced in 1836, and the largest the 560 produced in 1839.[215] As far as is known, there was no great expansion between these years in the acreage cultivated, so the increase of about 70% represents an increase in yield per acre. In the 1840s, there were even greater variations from year to year. In 1845 the plantation produced 427 bales, the next year only 101, and then in 1847 a total of 482.[216] A drought and a plague of armyworms destroyed much of the cotton crop in Louisiana in 1846.[217]

Other Crops

Cotton provided nearly all the income generated by the plantation, but other crops were important for feeding both the workers and the draft animals. Corn was the second most important crop. It was supplied to the workers in the form of meal and fed to the animals as grain. Corn was grown on the heavier soils leaving the lighter soils for cotton. For example, Phanor refers to planting it around a swamp on the left hand side of the river. Most of the corn was grown on the right hand side indicating less of the land on this side was suitable for cotton. In 1839 107 cartloads were gathered from the right hand side and only 9 from across the river. Phanor was proud of his corn, referring at one point to "*my famed corn with 8 ears.*"[218] And in a pocket notebook he noted how to select the best for seed corn.

> "*To improve the crop of corn, it is necessary, in the autumn, to choose the earliest and most beautiful ears of corn and carefully conserve them for planting. They can be gathered by hand as soon as the cicatrix or place of injury becomes white. Weave them together and take them into a place where the air circulates freely all winter.*"[219]

In some years the plantation produced a surplus, which was sold. In 1846, 106 sacks of corn were sold, bringing a return of $227.95.[220] In that year when only a small amount of cotton was produced, the additional income must have been welcome. But the sale of corn was always a very minor part of the plantation's profits in the 1830s and '40s. As noted above he allowed the hands to grow some corn as a source of cash income and sold it on their behalf.[221] On his own behalf he seems to have sold surplus corn fodder produced from the stalks and leaves; for this he received a dollar a bale and sometimes more.

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[214] Journalier, 10/30/1839.
[215] Compte, 1836-49, 4.
[216] Ibid., 13 –21.
[217] Gray, 1933, 704.
[218] Journalier, 3/21/1839.
[219] Notebook, 1841-1845, 3.
[220] Compte, 1836-49, 16.
[221] Journalier, 1837, 11and Journalier, 1838,40.

The other field crops mentioned in the journals were sweet potatoes, cowpeas, oats, pumpkins and grass for hay. Phanor reported that he obtained excellent crops of cowpeas and hay, but a disappointing crop of sweet potatoes.[222] Sweet potatoes and pumpkins were planted in mounds;[223] the cowpeas were planted along fences.[224] In 1839, hay was made from Guinea grass, now called Johnson grass, apparently as something of an experiment as Phanor noted that his horses consumed it well.[225] To his delight he got three cuttings from the grass in that year, filling his storehouses with fodder.[226]

Draft Animals and Equipment

The accounts and journals provide some information on the types of animals and equipment used in the fields. The plantation used mules, oxen and horses as draft animals. At this time Phanor was increasing the number of mules. His accounts record a number of purchases; in October 1839, for example, he bought six mules for $580, and the next year he found a bargain and bought another ten at $25 each.[227] Oxen were preferred for the cultivation of heavier soils and work in the swamps, but large-scale planters were finding that mules could work the cotton fields more efficiently than oxen or horses.[228] Drovers would bring herds of mules into Louisiana from the Upper South each summer, and most planters took the opportunity of a passing herd to purchase likely looking animals.

Ploughs were used both to prepare the fields for planting and to cultivate the row crops. Phanor recorded buying six new ploughs in March 1837 and another six in February of the next year. The first ones were described as "*Bruges ploughs no.2*" and cost $5.75 each.[229] He mentioned using Spanish ploughs during planting,[230] but as noted above he was critical of the results in the cotton fields.[231] He makes one reference to another plough with a moldboard of wrought iron.[232] During planting, the workers followed behind the plough teams with their hand tools. "*Began to plant the corn; harrowed the earth, ploughed with the Spanish plough, planted and covered using a pick behind the people planting.*"[233]

Phanor mentions horses quite frequently in his journals and accounts, and they were obviously an important part of the livestock on the plantation. For example, in July 1838 he received 15 horses from Opelousas in the south of the state, paying $30 each for nine

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[222] Journalier, 10/23/1839; 5/29/1839; 11/10/1838.
[223] Journalier, 3/12/1839.
[224] Ibid., 3/21/1839.
[225] Ibid., 4/25/1839.
[226] Ibid., 7/24/1839.
[227] Compte, 1837-1841, 3, and Compte, 1842-1848, 1.
[228] Garrett, 1990.
[229] Journalier, 3/12/1837.
[230] Ibid., 3/7/1838.
[231] Ibid., 4/25/1839.
[232] Ibid., 3/22/1838.
[233] Ibid., 3/7/1838.

of them and $35 for each of the other six. He then sent six of them to one of his brothers to be broken in.[234] Later that year in an auction, he bought a horse for $60 and a breeding mare for $45. He does not explain what any of the horses were used for, but no doubt most were used for pulling carts and perhaps one or two of the most expensive for pulling carriages. Phanor kept his breeding mares and their colts in a pasture he called the "savane."[235] Grazing in this "savane" was improved by broadcasting clover[236] and oak trees were planted to provide shade.[237] In later years, Phanor kept a Stud Book in which he recorded the offspring of his breeding mares.[238] At the beginning of this book he pasted a clipping from a newspaper published in 1826. The clipping gave the following advice.

> "Keep colts in pretty good order, not too fat, until they are two years old, then break them "gently." Keep them in lots, it does not matter as to size, taking care not to allow them to see other horses more than possible. Grass lots are best, and short grass…"[239]

Other Livestock

In this period there were around 100 sheep on the plantation. In 1837, Phanor records a count of "*97 sheep and 7 lambs, not including the two to fatten.*"[240] Sheep were sheared each March and seem to have been kept primarily for their wool. Phanor notes giving carding implements to two slave women.[241] So some of the wool was processed on the plantation, but no doubt most of it was sold. In 1846 Phanor recorded the sale of one bale of wool for $35.30.[242] It is not clear where the sheep were kept, but it seems likely that they stayed all year in enclosed pastures, as there is no mention of them being marked and allowed to wander freely.

In contrast to the sheep, cattle were allowed to roam freely in the "pays bas." These were marshy areas along the bayous. As cattle were allowed to range, they had to be marked. Phanor noted the branding of cattle in March 1838 and April 1839. He provided a count in November 1840, "*Counted 143 oxen, cows, and fattened calves. Did not count the draft oxen.*"[243] A few months later he wrote, "*Let the following animals out into the pays bas: 150 horned cattle with the mark MP and PPP.*" In addition he listed 34 individual horses, including breeding mares and colts, and a few 'he-mules' that were released to range freely in the swampy ground.[244] Sometimes cattle were sent to Isle Brevelle from a "*vacherie*" or ranch. He noted receiving 13 on one occasion and 17 on another.[245] These

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[234] Ibid., 7/10/1838.
[235] Journalier, 1/18/1842.
[236] Ibid., 7/3/1840.
[237] Ibid., 1/2/1839.
[238] Stud Book, 1847-1857 P. F. P. folder 462.
[239] Ibid.
[240] Journalier, 7/30/1837.
[241] Journalier, 2/18/1840; 4/5/1840.
[242] Compte, 1836-49, 16.
[243] Journalier, 11/19/1840.
[244] Ibid., 2/2/1841.
[245] Ibid., 10/2/1839; 10/7/1840.

probably came from the vacherie that Emanuel owned on Saline Lake in Winn Parish. In August Phanor bemoaned a lack of rain at the vacherie, while noting that "*the river is lowering quickly.*"[246] So the impression is given that the vacherie is in the Cane / Red River area rather than further away. The use made of the cattle is not made clear in Phanor's journals. Obviously some were slaughtered and consumed on the plantation. Hides seem to have been the main saleable product. In 1846 the plantation sold 45 hides, but the income was small, only $58.11.[247]

Phanor made few references to pigs in his journal, but in his pocket notebook he recorded ideas for improving their care. The following note is an example. "*When pigs are sick and the nature of their illness is not known, it is good to give them ears of corn soaked in tar and rolled in sulfur. This frequently stops the sickness.*"[248]

Fences and Ditches

The presence of livestock on the plantation meant areas had to be fenced. Phanor mentioned enclosing areas and building fences in several places. In January 1839 he recorded making a fence of logs between the farmyard and the savane beside the bayou.[249] In July of the same year, he noted making 4000 planks or rails to enclose meadows on two sides of a lake.[250] This must have been a reference to the lake that still exists beside Bayou Brevelle. The next month he was using more rails to fence around a meadow or hayfield on the house side of the river and another on the other side.[251] Lastly, in August 1841, Phanor mentioned working on the enclosure of the plantation yard.[252]

Phanor also referred to the ditches that drained his fields. In March 1837 he employed a gang of Irishmen to dig large drains on both sides of the river. One drain was to be 140 rods in length, that is 770 yards, and the other 122 rods, that is 671 yards. In his accounts he noted paying these Irishmen $212.20 for these ditches.[253] According to Taylor, many Louisiana planters preferred to hire Irish laborers for heavy ditching and clearing work, so as not to endanger the health of their valuable slaves.[254]

Woods and Swamps

Ditches for draining the fields ran away from the river towards the bayous. On the right hand bank of the river the ditches ran to the Bayou Brevelle, and on the left hand side

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[246] Ibid., 8/17/1839.
[247] Compte, 1836-49, 16.
[248] Notebook, 1841-45, 1.
[249] Journalier, 1839,1.
[250] Journalier, 7/-/1839. In his journal Phanor used the word "gres" for some of the areas that were being fenced; we can find no translation that makes sense in the context, so we think the g is a p, giving "pres" meaning meadows or hayfields.
[251] Journalier, 8/3/1839.
[252] Ibid., 8/-/40.
[253] Compte, 1837-1841, 1.
[254] Taylor, 1963, 84.

towards the Bayou Ataho. The uncleared swamps along these bayous supplied some of the wood needed on the plantation for fencing, construction and fuel. The major source of timber was one or more stands of swamp cypress referred to as the "cypriere." Felling cypress in these stands was an important winter activity, and Phanor noted in the January of most years that some of his "*negroes*" were sent to work there for several days or even weeks. The cypriere yielded a range of products. In March 1837, Phanor recorded taking 12 posts of cypress to Natchitoches, together with 3980 feet of boards.[255] In the same month he noted giving tools to Solomon, his carpenter, and buying a set of pulleys, some cables and carpenter's tools.[256] This suggests there was a building project underway in town. The boards probably came from a sawmill. In his accounts for May 1837, Phanor recorded payment for 4000 feet of boards to a sawmill.[257] It is not clear where this mill was located, but it does not seem to have been owned by the Prud'hommes. Other purchases of sawn timber were recorded in succeeding years.

In January 1838, he noted sending 16 "*negroes*" with Harper to make shingles at the cypriere. Shingles were called "hinnies" and were one of the most important products of the cypriere. Harper would have been an employee and perhaps had special responsibilities at the cypriere. The next year, 23 slaves left for the cypriere on the 2nd of January and returned three weeks later with "*262 bundles containing 200 hinnies each = 52,400.*"[258] It is not recoded where these shingles were to be used, and they might have been intended for sale. Nearly three years later, in December 1841, Phanor noted, "*The negroes have come back from the cypriere. Saw they had 60, to 75,000 hinnies.*"[259] This time it is likely that the shingles were for the Prud'homme's own use as three weeks later Phanor noted, "*Began the extension of the house.*"[260] This might be a reference to an extension to the main house, such as the garconniere or bachelors quarters, or it might be a reference to a separate structure.

Buildings on the Plantation

A cottage had been built south of the main house sometime in the 1830s, probably by Phanor after his marriage in 1835. The exact date of construction is not known, but it was in existence by the time of the 1840 population census.[261] The new house might have been made necessary by the growth of Phanor's family; in 1842 Lise gave birth to their fourth child. In February 1842, one month after the work had begun, Phanor noted that he had contracted with a painter to have two houses painted, paying $75 for each house and lending him one of his slaves, Nathan, as a helper.[262] It seems likely that one of these houses was Phanor's home and the other was the main house.

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[255] Journalier, 3/10/1837.
[256] Ibid., 3/17/1837, 3/-/1837.
[257] Compte, 1837-1841.
[258] Journalier, 1/23/1839.
[259] Ibid., 12/14/1841.
[260] Ibid., 1/3/1842.
[261] Historic Structure Reports, 2003. Tommy Jones and Debye Harvey personal communication.
[262] Notebook, 1841-1845, 5.

Phanor mentioned several other buildings on the plantation. He sometimes indicates on which side of the river they were located, but gives no other geographic details. The most important buildings were the two gin houses, which Phanor referred to as cotton mills. On October 10th 1838, he wrote, "*The mill is broken. A day lost with all of the hands. Beautiful weather.*"[263] At the end of that month he adds, " *The mill on the other side started. 6 he-mules and 6 horses.*"[264] It stopped at the end of November, and the mill on the house side was started.[265] Phanor refers again to these mills on opposite sides of the river in 1840. In January he noted, "*The mill on the other side has finished ginning.*"[266] Three months later he noted, "*Finish ginning on this side.*" He then gave the total number of bales of cotton produced. It is known from the Lestan Prud'homme papers that a new ginhouse had been built around 1835,[267] but it is not known on which bank of the river it was located. Phanor continued to spend money on his gins in following years. In his accounts he notes a payment in 1837 of $778 "*to Saunders for work on the mill on the other side.*"[268] That was a substantial sum, which might have been for the installation of new machinery, but the 1838 reference indicates that at least a part of the mill was still powered by mules and horses at that time. It is possible that a steam engine was introduced to power the gin, while the press continued to be operated by mules and horses. In 1847 he spent another $260.50 "*for the Cotton mill (Eagle Stand).*"[269]

Phanor uses the word "moulin" when referring to a gin, but there are references in his journal and accounts to a different type of mill. These are to a "moulin a piles," which was his term for a gristmill.[270] In 1838 Phanor paid $275 "*to Porter for gristmill and wheels.*"

Some Southern planters believed it was not necessary to provide much shelter for their mules in the mild southern climate.[271] However, Phanor mentioned a stable in his journal. This was probably a place to stable horses and mules, but it was also used for other purposes. He mentions it being used in association with shearing his sheep.[272] It was most likely on the house side of the river within, or close beside the farmyard. Later that year he was looking for places to store a bountiful crop of hay. "*Did my hay on this side here. The storehouse of the fields is now full, the stable granary is now full, the gallery of the cotton warehouse is now full.*" All of these buildings were almost certainly on the same side - the right hand bank - of the river. It is clear the main complex of farm buildings was located on that side of the river. It is also clear that many of these buildings

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[263] Journalier, 10/10/1838.
[264] Ibid., 10/29/1838.
[265] Ibid., 11/28/1838.
[266] Journalier, 1/15/1840.
[267] Breedlove, 1999,76.
[268] Compte, 1837-41, 7.
[269] Compte, 1836-1849, 14.
[270] Journalier, 5/3/1837; Compte, 1837-1841, 2; see also Lachiver, 1997, 1307. Pile is a term in French for a large stone used for grinding.
[271] Vlach, 1993, 113.
[272] Journalier, 3/11/1839.

served multiple purposes, depending on the time of year and needs of the moment. For example, as noted before, cowpeas were stored in the slaves' hospital.[273]

There must have been a variety of other buildings on the plantation; for example there would obviously have been quarters for the slaves, but Phanor makes no reference to them. Unfortunately the picture provided by Phanor's journals and accounts of the central building complex is very incomplete.

1849 Succession Inventory and 1850 Sale

Emanuel died in 1845 and three years later his widow Catherine also died. Each had lived over eighty years, an unusual achievement in those days. In accordance with Louisiana's laws their shared property was to be divided equally between their heirs. The succession required a careful listing of all their possessions followed by a sale. The documents associated with these provide a detailed inventory of the plantation in 1849 and '50.[274]

The inventory filed in 1849 after Catherine's death provides the following concise description of the plantation.

> "*The plantation situated on the two banks of the Red River at about thirteen miles from the town of Natchitoches, having an area on the two banks of 1250 acres [1485 arpents] more or less, of which about 900 acres are cultivated, 200 in savane and 150 in wood, having a cotton gin on each bank of the river, an owner's house and dependencies, forge, storehouses etc.*"[275]

So the plantation was now more than 50% larger than it had been in 1816, without counting the tracts that Phanor owned.

In 1850 Phanor purchased the plantation from his parents' estate for $15,000.[276] The record of the sale provides some information on the boundaries of the property. On the right hand bank, the land was bounded above by a public road, and below by Phanor's land. On the left hand bank, Antoine Prud'homme owned the land upstream, while downstream was the plantation of Phanor's father-in-law, the late Benjamin Metoyer.

Emanuel and Catherine left several other tracts of land. While none of these was as large as the plantation on Isle Brevelle, in total they added another 2400 acres.[277] The first of these was an area close to the town of Natchitoches that was being leased by the Natchitoches Jockey Club. This is an indication that the Prud'hommes were involved in horseracing, the sport par excellence of the plantation aristocracy. This tract and the Trichel Plantation north of Town were now sold out of the family. Phanor bought the "Old Vacherie" on Saline Lake for a mere $25. It comprised about 338 acres, or 400

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[273] Ibid., 10/23/39.

[274] Succession de Catherine Lambre. Inventaire, 1849; Estate Sale of Emanuel Prudhomme, 1850. These documents are in Natchitoches Parish Courthouse. There are also items from the Succession of Emanuel and Catherine, 1849-1850 in P. F. P. folder 512.

[275] Succession de Catherine Lambre, 1849.

[276] Estate Sale of Emanuel Prudhomme, 1850.

[277] Ibid.

arpents, so the low price must have indicated that the land was mostly uncleared and offered only poor grazing. John Baptiste Prud'homme bought another tract in the same region, located along Saline Bayou, for $1000. It was twice the size, and judging by the name, "Prairie a Conan," might have offered better grazing.

Emanuel and Catherine owned a half share of their son Narcisse's home, "Fountaine aux Chasseurs." He had died one year before his father, so his widow bought their share. The sixth tract for sale was the 200 acres, purchased by Emanuel in 1840, on the left hand bank of the river below the Metoyer Plantation. The Hertzogs, who owned the land to the south, now bought this. Another detached parcel on the left hand bank, a small tract of 14 acres, was sold to Metoyer's widow.

So Phanor only purchased the Old Vacherie and allowed the other tracts to pass into other hands. The general effect of the sale therefore must have been to focus his attention on the plantation on Isle Brevelle. He and his older brother Jean Baptiste retained a claim to a "League Square at the Adayes." This claim had not been certified by the United States, and the brothers paid only $20 for it. It seems to have been a relic from the colonial era when Los Adaes was the disputed frontier between French and Spanish claims in America. French settlers were offered land there by the Spanish to forestall Anglo American inroads.[278]

Including the $15,000 Phanor paid for the plantation a total of $23,945 was paid for Emanuel and Catherine's lands. This amount was far exceeded by the price of the rest of their "property." Slaves were considered as chattel property, and the sale of that part of the estate realized $60,366.25, more than twice the value of all their lands.[279]

103 people were sold in 66 lots. Under Louisiana law, children up to the age of ten could not be sold away from their mothers;[280] so the sale included 15 lots of mothers with children. There were 37 children altogether. In one of these lots, two orphaned children were sold with a lame 62-years-old woman, who presumably was now acting as their mother. A few other family members were sold together: two elderly women were sold with their adult sons, and one couple was sold as husband and wife. Each special case probably indicated a privileged status. One of the sons who kept his mother was the driver on the plantation, and the husband in the married couple was described as a weaver.

The special roles and skills of a dozen of the people sold as slaves were identified in the sale documents. Hilaire was the name of the "Driver." He was almost certainly the same Hilaire who had been baptized on the plantation in 1809.[281] His age according to the sale document was only 28 years, but this must have been a mistake. In the 1849 inventory it was listed as 42, which would mean he had been born in 1808. Lindor was the name of the "Weaver" who had the privilege of being sold with his wife. There were two

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[278] Malone, 1998, 16 and 32.
[279] Estate Sale, 1850.
[280] Taylor, 1963, 40.
[281] Malone, 1998, 8.

"Carpenters," one of whom was the Solomon mentioned in Phanor's journals, and the other was called Lewis. Solomon was also the name of the plantation "Blacksmith." There was a "Cowkeeper" called Bysainte, who had been referred to by Phanor in his Journal as the "Mulatto Bysaint." And there was a "Coach Driver" named Charles. It seems probable that this was the same Charles who led the cotton pickers in terms of weight gathered according to the 1836 Cotton Book, as there is no other person named Charles on the sale list. Five women were identified as having special skills. Nancette and Celeste were each listed as a "Mid Wife," a position of some importance in the eyes of planters given the potential value of each addition to the slave population. Martha Ann was described as a "Washer," and presumably worked at the Main House, as did Mary the "House Servant." Venus was the "Cook." She might have been the Prud'hommes' cook or she might have prepared meals for the field hands.

With 66 lots sold for $60,366, the average sale price per lot was about $915. The highest prices were paid for young mothers with children. Eleonore, aged 28, with four children was sold for $2,600; Betsy, aged 30, with three children was sold for $2,500. Premiums were also paid for those with special abilities. Hilaire the Driver, Solomon and Lewis the Carpenters, and Solomon the Blacksmith were sold for between $1,300 and $1,500. A few others without identified skills were sold for comparable prices; for example, Achille, 20 years old, was sold for $1,400. He and other highly priced workers were probably strong young field hands valued for their abilities in the cultivation and picking of cotton.

Not surprisingly, the lowest prices were paid for the aged and infirm. The sale document listed eleven people aged 60 or over. Malingo, aged "80 or 90," was bought by Phanor for five dollars and Charlotte, the oldest at "100," was bought by him for one dollar. Several disabilities were noted. The most common was listed as "Hernia," this was suffered by four men and one woman. Finally, one of the men was noted as being "Insane." A one half share in Philip, "Black Smith, Insane," was sold to Jean Baptiste Prud'homme for 25 cents. This seems to have been an act of charity, as the sale document noted: "The Purchaser of Philip, to assume the Payment of near Four Hundred Dollars, being for Expenses incurred in New Orleans at the Hospital." Such treatment must have been unusual. Taylor in his study of slavery in Louisiana quotes an official at the insane asylum at Jackson, Louisiana, reporting that slaves did not lose their minds because of "the protection the law guarantees to them, the restraint of a mild state of servitude, the freedom of all anxiety respecting their present and future wants."[282]

Phanor purchased 29 of the 66 lots, managing to keep 46 people out of the 103 on sale. Other members of the Prud'homme family bought most of the rest. Only 7 of the 66 lots were sold to people outside the immediate family. It is possible, therefore, that some contact could have been maintained afterwards by people separated by the sale, but one can only guess at the effects on the people sold as chattels.

The rest of Emanuel and Catherine's property was classified as "Moveables." Under this heading were the equipment used in cultivating fields and running the plantation, all the

[282] Taylor, 1963, 121.

draft animals and other livestock, some stores of food, and the contents of the main house.

The list of farm equipment gives some more information on how fields were cultivated and indicates the large scale of the operation. Ploughs were the most important pieces of farm equipment and were listed first in the sale documents: 20 of these were sold in four lots. An additional 9 Spanish ploughs were sold separately. After the ploughs, 18 sweeps, 7 scrapers, 10 harrows and 9 wooden harrows were sold.[283] Draft animals pulled all of these implements, and 16 lots of chains and harnesses plus 14 ox yokes were listed amongst the equipment. Of course humans provided much of the muscle power in the fields, and their implements were listed next. The most numerous were hoes; there were 70 hoes and 18 grubbing hoes. Amongst the other tools were 21 spades and 24 shovels. Some of these were no doubt used for tasks other than cultivating the fields. There were 9 scythes for cutting the hay referred to by Phanor in his journals.

Other types of equipment suggest the wide range of activities that went on in various buildings and yards on the plantation. A few items probably relate to the ginning of cotton, but most of the equipment at the gins was probably fixed and sold with the real estate. The "moveables" include two scales and a large number of scaffold planks. Seed cotton brought from fields was often dried on scaffolding before it was ginned.[284] There was also a large amount of bagging and rope that were no doubt used at the gins.

One lot was listed as "Black Smith Tools, Iron etc. in Black Smith Shop." This shop was the "forge" listed in the description of the habitation among the real estate. Another lot was a chest of carpenter's tools. We know there were two carpenters on the plantation but it is not known if there was a building designated as a carpenter's shop at this time. However there must have been a considerable amount of construction already undertaken at the plantation, and other lots included kegs of nails and a "large turning lathe," so it seems likely there was a carpenter's shop. There might also have been a small sawmill. Several "sweep saws" and cross-cut saws were in the sale. Some of these along with axes and iron wedges listed in other lots might have been taken to the cypriere each winter. There was no reference to a gristmill in the sale, but earlier references indicate there was one on the plantation. There was a "grindstone" listed amongst the equipment, but this may have been for sharpening knives.

The sale included 14 "cane knives." Phanor's Journals contain a reference to canes that is difficult to interpret. But these knives suggest that sugar cane was grown on a small scale on Isle Brevelle. Other small-scale operations designed to make the plantation somewhat self-sufficient included spinning and weaving. There were 14 spinning wheels and one weaver's loom in the sale.

There were a large number of draft animals on the plantation. All of them are listed under their given names in the sale document. Mules were considered the most valuable animals. There were 23 of them and they were sold individually rather than in teams.

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[283] Estate Sale, 1850.
[284] Lyman, 1868, 50.

Several were valued at over $100 each. Phanor paid the top price, $125, for a mule named "Griffon." The oxen were sold in teams. There were 15 teams and they were sold for between $39 and $15. A few more oxen were sold individually for small sums, perhaps because they had lost their work mates. None of the horses were sold for more than $80. They were listed in the sale document in three groups. The first group consisted of draft horses. A pair of carriage horses headed this group and was sold for $140 the pair. The other 20 horses in this group were sold for prices ranging from $80 down to $20. There was one anomalous price of only $5, given for "Red Buck," whether this was due to a defect of physique or character we cannot know. The second group contained 16 horses. These were sold for only $5 each. These were probably the horses from the vacherie plus some colts and fillies that were valued at this amount in the 1849 inventory. Finally, there was a group of mares with colts, most of which were sold for less than $10. Probably these were the ones kept in the savane at Isle Brevelle. Sold separately from the draft animals, but obviously associated with them, there was a collection of thirteen conveyances, including carriages, carts, wagons, and several lots described as "pair of wheels and body."

The list of other livestock accords with the accounts given in Phanor's Journals. There were 75 sheep valued at $1.50 each, and 25 hogs valued at $1.00 each. 46 head of cattle, mostly cows with calves, were identified by their color or markings. A few were noted as being "half blooded." The top price for a cow and calf was $21.00, but most were sold for considerably less. These cattle were at the plantation, but in addition there were 200 head of cattle at the Vacherie. Those were "Sold in the Woods @ $2.00 a head."[285]

The remaining "moveables" in the sale included stores of food for slaves and livestock, contents of the main house and miscellaneous items associated with the running of the plantation. Among the stores of food were ten barrels of pork and one thousand bushels of corn. The large amount of corn in the sale indicates that the plantation could supply its own wants, while the few barrels of pork suggest it was far from self-sufficient in that area. Of course, some of the corn grown on the plantation would have been for the livestock. The next item in the sale was two thousand pounds of hay. The corn was valued at $750, while the hay was worth $50.

The contents of the main house were listed in more detail in the 1849 inventory than in the 1850 sale list. In the 1849 inventory of Catherine's estate, household items occupy more than five of the fourteen pages of the document. The main impression is of a house that was well equipped to support a comfortable, if not a luxurious way of life. The list of items associated with eating and drinking was particularly extensive. The Prud'hommes clearly took pride in being able to offer lavish hospitality with much silver on display and a well-stocked wine cellar. It is interesting to note that the cellar included 232 empty bottles. Later generations were to find a use for empty bottles in the parterre garden.[286]

Among the miscellaneous items in the inventory, there were small pumps and pipes, listed beside a half barrel of grape jam. In the sale these pumps were sold to Phanor with

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[285] Estate Sale, 1850.
[286] Neidinger, 2000.

some demijohns and jugs. It seems likely that these items indicate that the family made some of its own wine. Three other items from the miscellaneous category should be mentioned. One lot was listed simply as medicine. As noted above, this was an important item in the plantation's provisions for its workforce. Another lot was made up of five wheelbarrows. These were probably used in gardens and yards rather than in fields. But no items in the sale are specifically designated as gardening equipment. Lastly, one "Flat Ferry Boat" was sold to Phanor. This was the vital connection between the two parts of the plantation separated by the river.

Phanor managed to buy the majority of the items in the sale. As already noted, he bought the main plantation, with 29 of the 66 lots of slaves. He bought most of the agricultural equipment and the mules, plus all the sheep and hogs. He shared nearly all the contents of the main house with his eldest brother Jean Baptiste, with a few items going to Jean Baptiste's son Emile St. Anne Prud'homme. Thus at the close of the sale Phanor was the master of the plantation that he had helped his father manage for many years. The details of how he financed the purchase of the plantation are not known. It seems likely that he had the agreement and active assistance of other family members. In 1855, he owed Jean Baptiste nearly $13,000, which was to come due in 1864.[287] Fortunately for Phanor, the price of cotton had risen after the agricultural depression of the 1840s, and through the 1850s it would remain at around 9 cents per pound.[288] At this level, with reasonable luck and care, it would be possible to return to the level of prosperity enjoyed in the 1830s.

PIERRE-PHANOR'S PLANTATION ON THE ISLE BREVELLE

The Plantation as a Commercial Enterprise 1850 – 1860

Records

There were two aspects to Phanor's plantation and its landscape: it was a business and it was a home. Thanks to Phanor's habit of keeping notes of business transactions and to the reluctance of succeeding generations of the family to throw anything away, there is an extensive record of the plantation as a business. The record includes Phanor's "Journalier" for the years 1856 to 1860, his accounts with various individuals from 1858 onwards, several pocket notebooks, and some business correspondence.[289] In addition, due to the early death in 1852 of Phanor's first wife, Suzanne Lise Metoyer Prud'homme, there was another succession inventory.[290] Lastly, records made by Phanor's overseers

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[287] Breedlove, 1999, 19.
[288] Saynor, 1933, 183.
[289] Journalier, 1856-1861, P. F. P. folder 273; Compte Courant, 1858-1865, P. F. P. folder 165; Pocket Notebooks 1852, 1854, and 1855, P. F. P. folder 478; Pocket Notebooks 1855 and 1856, P. F. P. folder 479; Pocket Notebook 1860-1861, P. F. P. folder 480; Correspondence, 1850-1865, P. F. P. folders 143, 144, 145 and 146.
[290] Succession of Suzanne Lise Metoyer, Petition and Inventory, 1853 Natchitoches Parish Courthouse.

are among the most useful of the historical documents. These were entered in printed annuals entitled "The Cotton Plantation Record and Account Book."[291]

Thomas Affleck designed "The Cotton Plantation Record and Account Book" as an aid to efficient plantation management. Affleck was a planter and the owner of Southern Nurseries at Washington, Adams County, Mississippi. According to Phanor's journal, he purchased several items from Affleck's nursery in 1856, so Phanor might have known Affleck personally.[292] Affleck introduced his record-keeping books in 1847, and they subsequently ran through many editions and remained in use until after the Civil War. The books were organized under a series of headings that identified many of the items that an overseer and his employer had to consider when running a plantation. The major part of each book was devoted to a "Daily Record of Passing Events." On these pages an overseer was to record the yearly cycle of agricultural operations, taking particular note of factors affecting production. A series of inventory sheets were added to this diary. Using these standard lists an overseer could keep track of things related to the agricultural operations, such as livestock and equipment, amounts of cotton picked and baled, tools and supplies distributed to the workers, together with the incidence of births, deaths and sickness in the slave population. The last part of each book was a series of tables leading to a final balance sheet of profit or loss. On these pages the planter rather than the overseer was to sum up his accounts for the year. A copy of the Affleck's introduction, his tables, and his advice on the duties of an overseer are provided in Appendix One.

We do not know when Phanor began to require his overseers to use Affleck's record-keeping books. Books have survived from the years 1852, 1857 and 1860, plus the wartime years that followed. Unfortunately the systematic organization of records and accounts set out by Affleck was not completely followed by Phanor and his overseers. The diary and some of the tables were filled out, but Phanor kept separate account books, and his accounts are scattered and incomplete. So we do not have the comprehensive financial picture Affleck intended. Nevertheless, when supplemented by the other historical documents, these books provide a very detailed and informative picture of the plantation in these years. A transcript of entries in the book for 1860, the last year before the outbreak of war, is provided in Appendix Two.

<u>Overseers</u>

Affleck's book contained an essay on the duties of an overseer; see Appendix One. Affleck began by quoting George Washington's instructions to his overseers, requiring they be attentive to their duties. Affleck then summarized those duties emphasizing the best ways to care for the workers, and the draft animals and other livestock. He concluded as follows.

> "Bear in mind that *a fine crop* consists, first, in an increase in the number, and a marked improvement in the condition and value of the negroes; second, an

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[291] Note: in these footnotes, references to these Cotton Plantation Record and Account Books are abbreviated to R. A. B. They can be found in the Prud'homme Family Papers as follows: R. A. B., 1852 and 1866, P. F. P. folder 271; R. A. B., 1857, P. F. P. folder 272; R. A. B., 1860, P. F. P. folder 274.
[292] Journalier, 3/15/1856.

> abundance in provision of all sorts for man and beast, carefully saved and properly housed; third, both summer and winter clothing made at home; also, leather tanned, and shoes and harness made when practicable; fourth, an improvement in the productive qualities of the land, and in the general condition of the plantation; fifth, the team and stock generally, with the farming implements and the buildings, in fine order at the close of the year; and young hogs more than enough for next year's killing; *then* – as heavy a crop of cotton, sugar or rice, as could possibly be made under the circumstances, sent to market in good season and of prime quality. The time has passed when the Overseer was valued solely for the number of bales of cotton, hogsheads of sugar, or tierces of rice he had made, without reference to his other qualifications."[293]

Affleck's advice to take a long term rather than a short term perspective agreed with what the more enlightened planters of the time were saying, though most planters still paid close attention to the annual bottom line.[294] Phanor and his overseers must have read Affleck's advice. While we cannot know how much influence it had, reading the overseer's entries leads one to conclude they attempted to follow most of its precepts.

A man called "Russel" probably made the entries in the 1852 book. In his diary Lestan Prud'homme referred to an overseer of that name employed by Phanor in that year.[295] It is not known if this was the same person as the overseer employed in 1838–1840. Russel's entries were very brief and incomplete, and many weeks in the second half of the year were left blank. The records from 1857 and 1860 are much more informative. By that time a man called Seneca Pace had become the overseer. According to Phanor's accounts he was first employed in 1855 at an annual wage of $800.[296] Pace was a young unmarried man whose father came to live with him. The family came from Mississippi and, although they seem to have been Anglo-Americans, a strong bond developed between Seneca and Phanor. Pace remained in Phanor's employ for seven years, and in 1861 a new house was built for him on the plantation. He left in 1862 to fight in the Confederate army, but while he was away his father continued to live on the plantation until his death. Phanor wrote to Pace while he was in the army at regular intervals and he returned to the plantation after the war. Clearly Phanor placed a high degree of trust in Pace, and there was none of the suspicion and resentment that all too often characterized planter – overseer relationships in the antebellum period.[297] This might have been a virtue of French Creole plantation society in this region. Lestan Prud'homme's journal indicates that friendships between planters and overseers were common along the Cane River and members of planters' families sometimes acted as overseers.

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[293] Affleck. The Duties of an Overseer. See Appendix One.
[294] Scarborough, 1984, 67-72.
[295] Lestan Prud'homme Journal, 7/30/1852. Lestan was the grandson of Antoine Prud'homme, who was a brother of Jean Pierre Emanuel Prud'homme. Lestan lived on his grandfather's plantation which was located immediately upstream from Emanuel's plantation.
[296] Compte, 1858-65, 21.
[297] Scarborough, 1984, 102-137.

Land

The accounts for the plantation are complicated by expansion and diversification. Like his father, Phanor continued to make large investments in land. According to entries in the agricultural censuses for 1850 and 1860, the plantation grew from 1800 acres in 1850 to 3400 acres in 1860, although the amount of cultivated land only increased from 800 to 1000 acres.[298] However the figures of the total acreage are somewhat misleading for not all this land was part of the main plantation. A more detailed picture can be obtained from some of the other records.

The inventory taken in January 1853 after Lise's death in the previous year provides a summary of their joint possessions at that time. According to this inventory, the couple owned property in five places. They were the sole owners of the plantation on the Isle Brevelle described as follows,

> "All that certain tract of land or plantation situate on both sides of the Red River about Thirteen miles below the Town of Natchitoches Containing Two Thousand One hundred Acres more or less together with all the Buildings improvements and appurtenances Thereunto belonging:- Eight hundred acres of which are under cultivation and being the same on which the said Phanor Prudhome now resides appraised at the sum of Twentyeight Thousand Five hundred Dollars $28,500."[299]

In fact, the overall size of the plantation was less than stated. As noted earlier, there was a misunderstanding about the size of the tract Phanor had purchased in 1844 from the Levasseur family. This led to an overestimation of the size of the plantation by about 342 acres throughout Phanor's lifetime.[300]

Phanor and Lise also had shares in three other tracts. First, there was a half share in the Old Vacherie in Winn Parish. Second, there was "an undivided third of a tract of Land or plantation situate on old river formerly of the property of Pierre Chelettre deceased appraised at $335."[301] Third, Phanor and his wife owned a half share of "Three thousand Two hundred acres of land situate on Richland Bayou in the State of Texas appraised at the sum of Twelve hundred Dollars." In addition they owned three lots in town on the north side of Trudeaux Street, "with all the buildings improvements and appurtenances thereon appraised at the sum of Three Thousand Five hundred Dollars."[302]

In June of same year, Phanor made a summary of his possessions for the tax assessor.[303] The description of the main plantation was the same, but there were differences elsewhere. A new tract of land was listed as "590 36/100 acres Pine Land." In addition, there was "one half of 158 44/100 Pine Land with John Prudhomme." A marginal note converted these acreages to a total of 906. In 1853 therefore, Phanor was acquiring new tracts in the Pine Woods in partnership with Jean Baptiste Prud'homme. In partnership

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[298] Seventh and Eighth Censuses, 1850 and 1860. Agricultural Productions.
[299] Succession of Suzanne Lise Metoyer, 1853, 254.
[300] Partition of Land, 1873, Map of the plantation.
[301] Succession of S.L. Metoyer, 1853, 225.
[302] Ibid.
[303] Journalier, 1856-1860, 68.

with his brother he also owned "The Old Vacherie on the Lake," and another tract in Winn Parish called "The prairie." Together these amounted to 557 acres. Without explanation he listed three other properties owned by his brother in Winn Parish. The first of these was described as "Vacherie," the second as "Conan," and the third as "Cypress Swamp." Together they amounted to 688 acres. It is not clear what Phanor's interest in the "Prairie a Conan" was at that time, but it would appear some reallocation of the lands the brothers had purchased from their parents' estate had occurred. Phanor did not indicate with whom he shared the property on the Old River that used to belong to "Pierre Chelette," but did record that it was 320 acres in size. Lastly, his town property was listed as "1 Lot and house in town." Perhaps the other lots had now been sold. There was no mention of the 3200 acres in Texas in these tax returns, but he did record the following, "H. W. Powell a tract of Land 84 acres Sold." We know from later references in journals and accounts that Powell became the manager of the ranch established on the land in Texas.

At the end of the decade, Phanor made a similar inventory of his holdings for tax purposes, under the heading "Taxes of 1860 – 63."[304] In this list, the main plantation remained at 2100 acres, but the amount of cultivated land had been increased to 900 acres. The property in the Pine Woods had increased to 1500 acres in size and there was no indication that any of it was shared with Jean Baptiste. He still shared the Old Vacherie in Winn Parish with his brother, and that had increased slightly in size to 700 acres. The other properties in that locality listed under Jean Baptiste's name in 1853 were still listed in that way and had not changed in size. The property on the Old River was listed but no longer as land shared with others. However, in another summary compiled in 1862, this tract is described as "106 acres on Old River being one third of a tract with John & Achille Prudhomme."[305] The description of the house in town was unaltered. Again the large land holding in Texas was not included in the inventory.

We may conclude from these sources that the apparent increase in the size of the plantation noted in the censuses was mainly produced by acquisition of the land in the Pine Woods. The size of the main plantation had increased in 1850 when Phanor took control and added his own holdings to those of his parents. But it was only an increase on paper for, in practice, adjacent land bought by Phanor in the 1840s would have been integrated into the operations of the main plantation while Emanuel was still alive. In 1853 the size of the main plantation was thought to be 2100 acres, but in fact was slightly less than 1750 acres. As noted above, the difference was due to a misunderstanding about the size of the Levasseur tract bought in 1844. After 1853 no further changes in the size of the main plantation seem to have occurred. But in that year, Phanor began to acquire the land in the Pine Woods, which he integrated into the operations of the plantation using the woods to provide grazing as well as timber. Meanwhile, in concert with his oldest brother he had acquired a large tract of land in Texas, but this did not show up on his Louisiana tax returns. In partnership with Jean Baptiste, he also owned and operated smaller tracts of land in Natchitoches and Winn Parishes including the vacherie acquired

[304] Journalier, 1860-1864, 38.
[305] R. A. B., 1862, 148.

on Saline Lake by Emanuel. These were considered as part of the property for tax purposes, but as separate enterprises in the census returns.

The history of Phanor's activities buying and selling land in this period has not been traced in detail. It is possible that Phanor was also buying and selling other pieces of land as speculative transactions, without necessarily adding to the working acreage of the plantation. But no evidence of this has been found in the plantation accounts.

Enslaved Workers

The increase in the size of the plantation was accompanied by an increase in the number of people held as slaves. In 1850, Phanor owned 126 slaves, and by 1860 he owned 147.[306] There are a few references in Phanor's journal and correspondence that show that he was still buying and selling slaves. For example, in 1857 he purchased two people from an agent in New Orleans, paying 1600 piastres for them. "The griffe is Creole and named Severin, the American mulatto is called William."[307] However, some of the increase in the number of slaves was due to the birth of children within the slave community. Malone has pointed out that by the 1850s the slave community on the plantation had developed a balanced population structure and probably a certain social cohesion.[308] Phanor's list of taxable property compiled in 1853 gave the following tabulation of the age structure of the population

"1853 Negroes.

60 years and above	9
40 to 60	13
20 to 40	46
10 to 20	20
1 to 10	34
1 month to 1 yr	10
	132" [309]

There were fairly even numbers of males and females. In 1856, Phanor noted that he had 31 male workers between the ages of 15 and 45, and 27 female workers in the same age group.[310] From her analysis of various lists of slaves given in baptismal and succession records, Malone concludes that kinship ties were extensive. Although this community had been disrupted by the sale in 1850, many of those sold away from the plantation went to other Prud'homme family members and some contact between kinfolk might have been maintained. Some of the additional purchases might have come from the locality and therefore have contacts within the community. Only a few of the old people would remember the horror of being shipped captive from Africa.

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[306] Seventh and Eighth Censuses, 1850 and 1860: Slave Schedules.
[307] Correspondence, 6/13/1857, P. F. P. folder 146. In Louisiana, griffe was a term for someone with three Negro grandparents and one Caucasian grandparent, and mulatto was a term for someone with one parent of each race. See Mills, 1977, xiii.
[308] Malone, 1998, 78-80.
[309] Journalier, 1856-1861, 68.
[310] Ibid.

Affleck recommended that a workforce be carefully managed so that its value would increase.

> "And so of negroes, stock and implements. It will be readily understood that each year's crop is chargeable with the wear and tear of teams and implements. It is chargeable, with equal justice, with any depreciation in the value of the negroes, occasioned by overwork and improper management; in the effort, perhaps, to make an extra crop, independent of every other consideration. On the other hand, should the number of children have greatly increased during the year; the strength and usefulness of the old been sustained by kind treatment and care; the youngsters taught to be useful, and perhaps some of the men instructed in trades, and the women in home manufactures, the increased value of the entire force will form a handsome addition to the side of *profits*."[311]

Phanor's correspondence in 1855 provides an illustration of this advice being followed. In February of that year, he received a letter from J. B. Clouthon of Union Plantation about "Your Boy Raymond." This man had been sent by Phanor to Clouthon to be trained as an engineer, and the instructor was impressed with his attitude and intelligence.

> "I have to state that I have seldom met with a Negro who showed more anxiety to learn everything pertaining to a steam engine in which I could shew him, cheerful, attentive and obedient in all things and I have no hesitation in saying that with a little more practice he will make a competent and carefull engineer."[312]

Raymond became an engineer, for several years later, in 1861, we read of Raymond making repairs to the engine at Phanor's sawmill; but we also read of him plowing and making shoes, so he apparently played several roles on the plantation.[313]

Some of the special skills possessed by the enslaved workers were noted in the 1853 succession inventory. As in the 1850 sale inventory, those serving as carriage driver, stock keeper, carpenter, blacksmith, house servant and nurse were identified. Of course, many of them were the same people named in the sale. But in addition a few more skills were identified. Alexis was described as a "shoemaker," Butler was a "brick mason," and Nathan was a "painter." The 1850s was a period when new construction was undertaken on the plantation, so it is not surprising that special mention was made of the brick mason and painter. Many of the workers had the ability to make their own clothes. Pace referred to them sewing their clothes during wet weather when they could not work in the fields.[314]

Affleck's advice to overseers on the disciplining of slaves was " Be *firm*, and at the same time *gentle* in your control." He continued:

> "Never display yourself before them in a passion; and even if inflicting the severest punishment, do so in a mild cool manner, and it will produce a tenfold effect. When you find it necessary to use the whip – and desirable as it would be to dispense with it entirely, it *is* necessary at times – apply it slowly and

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[311] Affleck. Explanation of Records and Accounts. See Appendix One.
[312] Correspondence: J. B. Clouthon to Phanor Prud'homme, 2/3/1855.
[313] R. A. B. 4/21/1861, P. F. P. folder 275; R. A. B., 4/28/1862, P. F. P. folder 276; and R. A. B., 1/7/1864, P. F. P. folder 277.
[314] R. A. B., 10/31/1860.

> deliberately, and to the extent you are determined, in your own mind, to be needful before you began. The indiscriminate, constant and excessive use of the whip, is altogether unnecessary and inexcusable. When it can be done without a too great loss of time, the stocks offer a means of punishment greatly to be preferred."[315]

An entry by Seneca Pace in the 1857 Cotton and Plantation Record and Account Book indicates that he used the whip when he saw fit. At the beginning of cotton picking in that year, Pace complained of the laziness of the hands. On August 31st he wrote, "....all hands Picking other side Doing nothing not much open hands lazy." A few days later he recorded, "....I gave hands a Dram at Breakfast." The dram may have been intended to offset the effects of a spreading sickness. On September 9th he reported that 30 hands were sick. On the 17th he wrote, "...plenty sick I cant account for it." The weight of cotton picked in the next few weeks was of course low. On September 28th, Pace reported, "....Picking this side 39 hands weighed by Driver from his weights 6000 fair quality of cotton...." The entry for the next day reads, "Pleasant Day Dews not so heavy Pick fair weights front Below finish front hands in fine spirits some week from fever yet some I cure by floging."[316]

This is the only reference to the use of the lash in Pace's records, but the casual nature of the reference suggests it was not an unusual event. There is no reference to confinement in a set of stocks as punishment.[317]

Pace does record rewarding the workers on occasions. Time off was granted on certain Saturdays; usually an afternoon was given but sometimes the whole day. On special occasions permission was given to hold a celebratory dance. For example, on Saturday March 17, 1860, a half-day holiday was given, and Pace wrote in the margin of his record for the next day, "Seraphin and Jane married last nite. Gave them Ball good conduct."[318]

The health of the workers was closely watched by Pace. During cotton picking, if a hand was excused work due to sickness, the nature of the ailment was noted next to each name in the record of cotton picked. After the mysterious sickness that affected so many people in September 1857, there was an outbreak of mumps at Christmas. And that year Pace kept a record of each visit by a physician and a note of who had spent time in the plantation hospital.[319] In 1860, he again recorded reasons for hands' absence from the cotton fields during picking. The most common ailment he noted as "bone fellon." This was a deep, usually suppurative inflammation of the finger, also called a whitlow, that was often suffered by pickers.[320] Other than these entries during cotton picking, Pace

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[315] Affleck. Duties. See Appendix One.
[316] R. A. B., 8/29/1857.
[317] This single reference to flogging has to be treated with caution. Ann Patton Rose has concluded from her study of the antebellum records that the Prud'hommes and their overseers used rewards and withdrawal or denial of privileges rather than coercion as a means of controlling their labor force. Rose, personal communication 2003.
[318] R. A. B., 3/18/1860.
[319] R. A. B., 1857 end materials.
[320] Ann P. Rose, personal communication, 2003.

noted only causes of death. No doubt, the fact that a doctor had taken up residence at the plantation relieved Pace of some of his responsibilities in this area. Dr. Hulen arrived in April 1860 and began to live in the house Phanor had built when he was first married.[321] Other physicians were to follow and the house became known as the Doctor's House.

Livestock

Affleck's advice to overseers on the subject of livestock began:

> "Next to the Negroes, the Stock on the place will require your constant attention. You can, however, spare yourself much trouble by the choice of a stock-minder, and by adopting and enforcing a strict system in the care of the stock. It is a part of their duty in which Overseers are generally most careless."[322]

Perhaps mindful of Affleck's comment, Seneca Pace kept a close watch on the draft animals on the plantation. He makes frequent observations on their condition in his "Daily Record of Passing Events." According to the agricultural censuses, there was a considerable increase in the numbers of draft animals during the decade. In 1850 the plantation had 20 horses, 23 mules and 14 oxen. In 1860 the number of horses had fallen to 16, but the number of mules had doubled and the number of oxen risen to 20. The value of these animals was estimated at $2,940 in 1850 and $6,640 ten years later. Unfortunately the 1860 census figures appear to be unreliable. Pace noted in October 1860, that he had put livestock in a field to feed during a drought. The livestock included 73 head of mules, mares and colts, and 38 head of work oxen.[323] But, whatever the correct figures should have been, clearly there was a substantial increase in the number of draft animals. This increase in numbers goes well beyond what would have been required to work the increased acreage of cultivated land, so it must indicate a more intensive working of the land. The numbers also indicate clearly that Phanor preferred mules for work in the cotton fields.

Pace also kept an eye on the other livestock, but here the picture was made complex because livestock were located in several different places, and belonged to several different people. Pace used some of Affleck's stock inventory pages to record movements of livestock between different parts of the plantation and between the main plantation and other places, but his notes are not systematic and seem incomplete. Moreover they indicate that the condition of some of the livestock was poor and mortality was high. For example in the space for the first quarter's inventory of 1860 his notes started:

> "Jan 8. Recd from Vashery 6 hogs poor
> Feb 22nd Put out pastor in bad order some few 120 In pastor Beeve good work oxen and cows and calves poor ----- 120 I have some 50 here yet poor ------
> What was Brought from lake is all dead except 2 they will die.

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[321] R. A. B., 4/18/1860.

[322] Affleck. Duties. See Appendix One.

[323] Seventh and Eighth Censuses, 1850 and 1860: Agricultural Productions; R. A. B. 10/22/1860 marginal note. The census was taken in June 1860 so there was an interval of four months between that record and Pace's count.

May 12th J. B. Prudhomme two Beeves in Pastor one large hornes Brindle white face some pied one horns not so large Blue on Black speckle."[324]

The reference to the lake indicates the sick animals were brought from the Old Vacherie on Lake Saline. Some of the livestock on the plantation belonged to the workers. Later, on the same page as the above quotation, he noted branding calves in July 1860. The enslaved workers owned twenty of these cattle, of which five were the property of Jean Louis, the stock-keeper.

According to the agricultural census returns, the total number of livestock on the plantation declined in this period, but the data may be misleading. In 1850, according to these returns, Phanor had 50 milch cows, 150 other cattle, 100 sheep, and 40 swine. These numbers are similar to those noted in the late 1830s and early '40s. But in 1860 the census reported a decrease in nearly all categories. The number of milch cows dropped to 20, the number of other cattle to 100, and there were just 30 sheep. Only the number of pigs had increased; the total was now 60. However these figures might have recorded only the livestock on the main plantation at the time of the census. There was probably a flock of sheep in the Pine Woods. In 1859 Phanor noted sending 235 sheep to the Pine Woods.[325] And in his summary of taxable possessions for 1860, Phanor gives a fuller picture of his holdings of cattle. In addition to the 100 head of cattle at the plantation, Phanor noted another 300 head at the vacherie; though these did not all belong to him for they bore three different Prud'homme brands, RP, MP and PPP.[326] This vacherie was the ranch in Texas rather than the Old Vacherie. A document survives in the Prud'homme Papers that includes a count of cattle branded at the Texas ranch in each year from 1853 to 1861.[327] In 1853 a total of 114 cattle were branded. This number increased steadily until in 1860 the total was 330. H. W. Powell managed the ranch on behalf of Phanor and Jean Baptiste, and a note in the same document says he was given a quarter of the cattle for looking after the ranch. In addition to the cattle, young horses and mules were reared at the ranch. In 1857, Phanor noted a separate contract with Powell relating to these animals.

"The 15th of October 1857. It is understood between Powell of the first party and Bte Prud'homme and Phanor Prud'homme of the other that Powell bought by our count 20 to 25 breeding mares, that he will have for his pains a fourth of the male colts and a fourth of the mules or he-mules, but that all of the fillies will be of our mark and that he will not have a part in the fillies nor have the males until 1858. I included and paid his travel fees."[328]

Periodically livestock were transferred between the ranch and the plantation. For example, in 1860, Pace described in his record-keeping book nine mules and ten horses received from Powell in Texas.[329] Various people seem to have been hired to drive the

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[324] R. A. B., 1860, B, 1.
[325] Journalier, 2/21/1859.
[326] Journalier, 1861-64, 38.
[327] Succession of Emmanuel Prud'homme and Catherine Lambre, 1849-1850. La Vacherie de Texas a J. Bte. Prudhomme & P. Prudhomme. P. F. P. folder 512.
[328] Journalier, 1856-61, 17.
[329] R. A. B., 7/6/1860.

animals between the two places. One was the son of Azeron Favron, the owner of a steamboat landing in Natchitoches, with whom Phanor often did business.[330]

Agricultural and Industrial Equipment

In his record-keeping book, Affleck provided spaces for an overseer to make a quarterly inventory of implements and tools, and to keep a record of the tools given out to each hand. There was also space for a planter to make an inventory of equipment at the opening and close of the year, see Appendix One, tables B, D, and K.

> "The implements and tools require a good deal of looking after. By keeping a memorandum of the distribution of any set of tools, they will be much more likely to be forthcoming at the end of the month. Axes, hoes and other small tools, of which every hand has his own, should have his number marked upon it with a steel punch. The strict enforcement of one single rule will keep everything straight – 'have a place for every thing, and see that every thing is in its place.'"[331]

In his lists, Affleck named 36 different types of implements organized by their proper place of keeping – wagon shed, plow shed, stable and tool house. Although neither Seneca Pace nor Phanor used Affleck's inventory sheets, we know from the 1850 sale inventory and the 1853 succession inventory that most, if not all, of these types of implements were to be found on the plantation. We do not know where they were kept. There was a stable and a number of storage sheds or "magazines," but sheds specifically for storing farm equipment are not referred to in the records.

Phanor was interested in technology and he seems to have been recognized as a leader in the introduction of new technology within the region. In 1850 he was nominated both by Natchitoches Parish and by the Governor to attend a meeting in New Orleans called to promote the expansion of railroads across the state.[332] As a planter, Phanor tried to keep up with advances in agricultural equipment. He subscribed to the *Southern Cultivator* and his pocket notebooks contain notes on agricultural implements. In 1855, shortly before his second marriage, Phanor made a two-month tour of northern states, journeying from Louisville to Buffalo and Niagara Falls, then proceeding to Boston and New York before returning via Washington and New Orleans. In the notebook he kept on his travels his interest in technology is apparent; for example in New York he made notes on a new type of cotton gin.[333] In 1856, he made notes on various types of plows, including a T. E. C. Brinly plow and a Ruggles and Nourse plow.[334] In July 1858, he purchased a Brinly steel

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[330] Succession 1849-1850, La Vacherie de Texas.
[331] Affleck. Duties. See Appendix One.
[332] Lestan Prud'homme Journal, 12/29/1851.
[333] Notebook, 1855, 40-41.
[334] Notebook, 1856, 5-7. T. E. C. Brinly was one of the first manufacturers of steel plows in the South, his works were in Simpsonville and Louisville, Kentucky. Ruggles, Nourse and Mason Company of Boston, Mass. became famous for manufacturing cast iron plows in the 1840s and then steel plows in the 1850s. Joel Norse introduced his famous Eagle no. 2 plow in 1842. Ardrey 1972, 8-11; Wendel 1997, 282.

plow.[335] Phanor's notebook also contained a newspaper clipping advertising "Howes Cotton Harvester for picking cotton in the field. Patented December 4, 1855."[336]

Affleck's record-keeping books did not refer to the industrial machinery on a plantation, perhaps because on a typical plantation the management of the gin and other types of mills was the responsibility of an employee other than the overseer. On Phanor's plantation the overseer seems to have had some responsibility in this area even though there were probably other employees involved. Regardless of who was responsible, the industrial machinery was a major item on a plantation's balance sheet. In the 1850s, Phanor invested in a new gin and bale press, a new steam driven corn mill and a sawmill.

In 1850 when Phanor bought the plantation, there were two cotton gins, one on each side of the river. There was probably a bale press attached to each gin. Both of these presses would have been wooden screw presses, for, in October 1850, Phanor wrote to the manufacturer of a new type of iron press, in somewhat awkward English, as follows.

"Mr. D. McCombs, Raymond Miss.

Sir.
Wishing to introduce on Red River one of your New Cotton Press, as described in the Southern Cultivator, please to give me some informations.
What is the size of the Box?
Could it be made Smaller or Bigger?
What are the Weights of the Bales?
What is the price delivered at New Orleans?
Will you sent a Carpenter to put it up?
I think that if one was introduced on this river; and proved to be as good as described by M. W. Philips in the Southern Cultivator there would be a chance to sell great many, we are all disgusted with our wooden servant.
Your Most Obedt
Phanor Prudhomme"[337]

He must have acquired the iron press, because in 1854 there is further correspondence with the supplier about the shipment of castings and a chain for his press. [338]

Despite Phanor's disparaging remark about the wooden press, probably at least one continued to be operated on the plantation. His Journal for 1857 contains notes on the dimensions of the components of a wooden press, which suggest he was about to build or rebuild one. The notes conclude as follows.

"*1 screw which can be 18 feet long by 22 inches in diameter. This should be of Pin Oak – oak with little leaves. The four 10-foot long pieces and the two 17-foot long pieces are preferred in Pin. The 12-foot long piece, 16 by 29 inches may be in two pieces of 15 or 14 1/2. That is the measure of the finished wood; one must add a little when cutting it.*"[339]

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[335] Journalier, 7/8/1858.
[336] Notebook, 1856, inside cover.
[337] Correspondence, Phanor Prud'homme to D. McCombs, 10/7/1850. P. F. P. folder 143.
[338] Correspondence, Jas. McComb to P. Prud'homme, 6/10/1854. P. F. P. folder 145.
[339] Journalier, 2/16/1857.

For most of the decade, the plantation continued to operate two gins. In 1856 Phanor noted in his Journal that he had arranged for P. B. Plauche and Co., his agent in New Orleans, to insure his two gins.[340] Two years later when renewing the insurance he valued the gins as follows.

> " *The mill on the side of the house for the sum of $1500 plus the value of 75 bales of picked and cleaned cotton. The mill on the side opposite the house is run by steam. You insured the steam engine for the sum of $2000. The cotton mill for the sum of $2000 and for the value of one hundred bales of picked and cleaned cotton...* "[341]

But he was making plans to replace both of these gins. In November 1857, Pace was complaining about problems with the gin on the near side of the river: "4 Wednesday. ...Start Gin this side Done Bad Box heat Band not track well cotton wet Stick Saws etc."[342] By 1860 a house for a new gin had been constructed on the right hand bank of the river. Pace's record for that year documents the process by which the new gin was brought into operation. In January the house was being used to store seed cotton, which was then taken to one of the existing gins for processing. On January 19th the engine at the steam gin on the left hand bank was dismantled and hauled across the river, a difficult and tedious job that took three days.[343] The gin on the far side probably ceased operation after this, for in August the press on the far side was also dismantled and brought over to the new gin-house. In February 1860, brickworks for the engine house of the new gin and for a gin cistern were under construction. In March the machinery was installed and Phanor wrote to his agent to arrange the insurance, estimating the value of his new gin at $3000.[344] He made no reference to reinsuring the old gins. In April the chimney of the new gin was finished, and in July men were building a ramp to the gin out of cypress planks.[345] When cotton picking began, the new machinery was started so that hands could be trained how to operate it. An attempt was made to start ginning in earnest at the end of September, but a pump failed. However in the first week of October, Pace reported – "gin run good" – and it continued to operate successfully for the rest of the year.[346]

It appears from the records that both the old gins ceased operation after 1860. In July1860, Pace noted that he was using "the old gin" to store fodder.[347] That was probably a reference to the mule gin on the right bank since most of the animals were kept on that side. In August the workers were planting turnips and Bermuda grass in the gin yard, and in November they were building a plank fence around it, presumably so it could be used for livestock.[348] In 1862 the old gin-house was being used to store carts. The gin on the left bank had had both its engine and press removed. In 1862 bricks were brought from its chimney across the river to build a cabin chimney in the plantation

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[340] Journalier, 9/30/1856.
[341] Journalier, 9/8/1858.
[342] R. A. B., 11/4/1857.
[343] R. A. B., 1/19-21/1860.
[344] Journalier, 3/15/1860.
[345] R. A. B., 4/8/1860; and the weeks of 6/24/1860 and 7/1/1860.
[346] Ibid., 9/6/1860; 10/4/1860.
[347] Ibid., 7/16/1860.
[348] Ibid., 8/29/1860, and 11/11/1860.

yard.[349] However in the same year the cistern at this gin was repaired.[350] That probably meant the gin-house was not demolished but like the mule gin on the other bank was converted to other uses, presumably the storage of crops or equipment.

In 1860 a new steam-powered gristmill also came into operation on the plantation. In March, Pace reported the arrival of a new gristmill and seed-huller that had to be hauled from the Rigolet de Bon Dieu.[351] On June 8th, the engine chimney was ready and the next day Pace reported –"Start Engine and Felton Corn mill perform good. Started by Hendricks and Bates."[352] However, the start up was not without its problems. On June 16th Pace complained –"Grind on New Mill trouble with pump & shafting & bands Mill does well when she run."[353] In July an advertisement appeared in the *Natchitoches Chronicle*, placed by a machine shop in Alexandria that was probably the supplier of the machinery. It cited Phanor Prud'homme as a reference for their skills in installing steam driven equipment.[354] It is not clear where the gristmill was located. It had its own chimney so it was not attached to the new steam-powered gin. It might have stood close to the main corncrib. In 1857 Pace referred to the building of "a large corn house." That might have been a reference to the large square crib that still stands at Oakland.

Phanor's sawmill was also steam operated. The mill became part of the plantation's operations around 1858. It was located on the 1500 acres of "Pine Woods Land" that Phanor began to acquire in 1853. For some reason it was not until 1858 that he reported "*entering*" the tracts he purchased five years earlier, referring to them as "*the lands behind Gongre's place.*"[355] An account book for the sawmill for the years 1860 to 1862 survives and in this the sawmill is located at "Gongreville."[356] Gongre may have been the original owner of the mill, and he continued to play a role in its management. He was also a planter and continued to farm, apparently on a small scale. In Phanor's accounts he recorded buying 8 bales of cotton and one bale of wool from Gongre after 1858. In 1860, the overseer made several references to sending workers to plant and harvest crops on Gongre's land.[357] Some of this land was near the main plantation. A survey of Phanor's plantation made in 1873 labeled a strip of land beside the Bayou Natchez as being in the joint ownership of "Achille Prud'homme, Scroggins and Gongre."[358] Phanor also referred to sending 235 sheep to Gongreville in 1859.[359] Exact business arrangements are unclear. Gongre acted as a sawyer at the mill but Phanor also engaged others to act in that capacity.

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[349] R. A. B., 2/24/1862, P. F. P. folder 276.
[350] Ibid., 1/28/1862.
[351] R. A. B., 3/24/1860.
[352] Ibid., 6/9/1860.
[353] Ibid., 6/16/1860.
[354] Scarborough, 1999, 136. The firm was Eyre and Chamberlin Machine Shop of Alexandria, presumably Hendricks and Bates were employees sent to install the equipment.
[355] Journalier, 6/18/1858.
[356] Saw Mill Accounts, 1860-62. P. F. P. folder 468.
[357] See for example R. A. B., 5/2/1860 and 19/18/1860.
[358] Partition of Land, Map of Plantation, 1873. Natchitoches Parish Courthouse.
[359] Journalier, 2/21/1859.

Operating the mill presented a number of challenges in 1860. In the first week of that year Pace reported – "Saw Mill Stop Shaft Broke & top plate of Steam Chest."[360] In order to get to the mill from the main plantation it was necessary to cross the Bayou Natchez. In February, Pace took two teams to the mill to haul wood and reported that they had had to swim the bayou.[361] In the same month, work began on construction of a bridge across the bayou. Phanor paid a man called Charles Amman $600 for building this bridge; the payment was termed a subscription which implied that there were other subscribers.[362] Work on the bridge continued on and off throughout much of the year. Meanwhile, Pace noted that work had finished on a railroad at the mill.[363] There seems to have been difficulties in keeping the sawyers who were hired to operate the mill. In 1859 Phanor had hired W. H. Scott –"*to attend to the saw and work with the hands at fifty dollars a month when he is at work.*"[364] The next year J. H. Black replaced him. Then he left suddenly. On November 6th Pace lamented –"Saw Run by Negroes" – and two days later S. E. Goodman was put in charge.[365]

The sawmill accounts from 1860 show that in addition to providing sawn lumber to Phanor's plantation, the mill sold lumber to other planters, including Mathew and Emile Hertzog, and to Phanor's New Orleans agent, J. B. Plauche and Co.[366] It is not possible to assess how much income was derived from this operation. Phanor remained first and foremost a cotton planter but his acquisition of the sawmill and the ranch in Texas indicates he saw some merit in diversifying his business interests. Perhaps this was a lesson he had drawn from the agricultural depression of the 1840s.

The Yearly Cycle of Agricultural Operations

Affleck recommended that in his "Daily Record of Passing Events" an overseer should record items such as:

> "…the kind of work being done, and the number of hands engaged in it; when plowing, planting, sowing, scraping, etc., began; when the first forms, blossoms, and open bolls appeared; the state of the weather and forwardness of the crops; the first appearance and continued progress of the caterpillar and of other insects that injure the crops, with every fact of importance relative to them; the behavior, good or bad, of the negroes; and every other item that may be of value for future reference."[367]

In the following description of a typical year, most references are to Pace's record-keeping book from 1860, with supplemental references to the books for 1852 and 1857. A complete transcript of the 1860 book is presented in Appendix Two.

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[360] R. A. B., 1/3/1860.
[361] Ibid., 2/8/1860.
[362] Compte, 1858 – 1865, 18.
[363] R. A. B., 2/25/1860.
[364] Compte, 1858-65, 30.
[365] R. A. B., 11/8/1860.
[366] Saw Mill Accounts, 1860-62.
[367] Affleck. Explanation. See Appendix One.

Life on the plantation marched to the rhythm of the seasons and it varied only slightly from year to year.[368] Variations in the calendar of operations were primarily a response to weather. Weather conditions were noted almost every day in the overseer's entries. Pace had his own terms for weather, for example, he described some days as "smoky," which was probably his way of saying cloudy. Sometimes weather was cause for complaint – too much rain, or not enough, a late frost, or oppressive summer heat – and sometimes it was cause for celebration – a warm and pleasant day in winter, or a fresh breeze in summer. Always the overseer's concern was the effect on agricultural production, so a day might be noted as "disagreeable" but "good for work;" see for example Pace's entry for 2/23/60.

The year opened with a celebration. The enslaved workers were allowed one or two days holiday, an occasion for both dancing and sleeping; see the entries for 1/1/60 and 1/2/60. When work began, the main activities were cleaning the fields and plowing. These continued through most of January and February. Cleaning the fields of the residue of last year's crops was done by the "trash gang" formed by the female hands. The women were sent into the fields to "cut stalks," roll the trash into piles and burn it. Where woody vegetation had invaded fields, men joined in the work. In January 1860, men were cutting "locust brush" on "this side" of the river while women were cutting and burning stalks on the other side; see the entry for 1/23/60. Plowing commenced when the weather created the right soil conditions. In 1852 and 1857 plowing commenced in the first week in January, but in 1860 almost no plowing was done till February. The male hands did this work with teams of oxen and mules. The condition of the animals was carefully watched. After rain the alluvial soils became "stiff" and "sticky," work slowed and teams were soon exhausted; see for example the entries for 2/10/60, 2/13/60, and 2/22/60.

When soils were unsuitable for plowing, the workers were assigned to a wide range of other tasks on the plantation. Around the fields, ditches and fences had to be maintained. Ditching was mentioned several times in the Record from the winter of 1857. Groups of men were organized to dig new ditches, or enlarge existing ones, while women cleaned ditches of grass and other trash. The network of fences on the plantation was extensive and much time was spent at various times in the year splitting rails and rebuilding fences. The men split the rails, but the women participated in erecting the fences; see for example the entry for 2/8/60. Men were sent to obtain material for the fences from woods along the bayous and from the sawmill in the Pine Hills; see the entry for 2/8/60. Wood from the hills was also needed for heating and cooking, and to make charcoal and tar. Entries for 1/9/60, 1/18/60 and 1/20/60 refer to the making of a "coal kill," which was a charcoal kiln, and the entry for 2/24/60 refers to a "tar kill."

Ginning and pressing the previous year's cotton was an important activity. In 1857 ginning continued into March, but in 1860 the last reference to pressing was in the entry for the last day in February. This was a good time to ship bales of cotton, as water levels in the river were high. Three times in February 1860, Pace recorded sending bales by steamers down the river. In addition to hauling cotton bales to the landings, the teams of draft animals had to haul cottonseed out to the fields where it was used as fertilizer.

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[368] Lyman, 1868, part 1, chap 6. The Cotton Planter's Calendar.

Teams were kept busy at this time of year hauling a wide variety of things and roads were often muddy. Repairing roads and lanes was therefore another important task. Sometimes this involved the repair of bridges over drainage ditches and bayous. The work on the bridge over Bayou Natchez on the way to the sawmill has already been mentioned; see entries for 2/13/60 and 2/14/60.

Sunday was a day of rest, which meant that the hands had a chance to work in the Quarters and in their own garden plots. This was an opportunity for the overseer to ride around the plantation and check the condition of livestock in the pastures and the backwoods; see for example the entry for 1/22/60. Another item regularly noted was the level of water in the river; see for example entries for 1/15/60, 2/5/60, and 2/19/60. This had considerable significance both for the passage of traffic up and down the river and for the ferrying of teams and equipment across the river between the two halves of the plantation.

March and April were the main months for planting, though in a good year it began in February. Exact timing depended on the weather. Of the two main crops, corn was planted first, and then cotton two or three weeks later. In 1860, the start of planting was delayed by slow progress in plowing the fields. At the beginning of March, cottonseed was still being spread on the fields as manure and the hands were shelling the seed corn; see the entries from 3/1/60 through 3/3/60. Corn planting began on the 5th of March. It proved to be "heavy, slow work," but within the week the corn was sprouting.

In 1852, cotton planting began in the second week of March, but in 1860 it was delayed till the last day in the month. Most of March in that year was spent continuing the cleaning, plowing, fertilizing and harrowing of the fields. Some of the fields had been used in previous years for other crops, such as corn and potatoes. Other areas were described as "new ground;" see for example the entries for 3/19/60 and 3/21/60. When planting started, ploughs opened drills in the ridged earth. Women following the drill ploughs dropped in cotton seeds and then harrows drawn by mules were used to cover the seeds; see for example 3/22/60, 3/31/60, 4/3/60 and 4/5/60.

Achieving a good stand of corn and cotton often required repeated plantings. Late frosts were feared because they could cause severe damage to the young shoots, and spring floods were another hazard. In 1860, replanting the corn began in late March and continued into the fourth week in April. Fortunately, not much of the cotton had to be replanted in that year. That was unusual, replanting cotton was the rule rather than the exception. In 1857, Pace complained at the end of April, "Replant cotton other side with hoes not half stand I planted 170 Acors [acres] Bad Slow work land in good order...."[369] He continued the next day, "Plant 100 Arpents of Cotton with Plough 85 Arpents Replace with hoe not more than half Stand Cut worms are plenty."[370]

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[369] R. A. B., 4/28/1857.
[370] Ibid., 4/29/1857.

Other crops were planted in the fields each spring. In 1860, sugar cane was planted in the first week in March. The planting of both "Irish" potatoes and "Carolina" or sweet potatoes began in the third week in March and continued at intervals into May. Pumpkins and watermelons were planted in April, and cowpeas were planted between rows of maturing corn in June.

The hands were allowed some time to plant and tend their own crops of fruits and vegetables. In 1860 they were given a 'holiday' on one Saturday in each month between March and July. In March, Pace noted "Negroes plant their potatoes and watermillons," see the entry for 3/7/60. In addition they were occasionally allowed a few hours during the week, see for example the entry for 5/1/60, but this happened infrequently. Some of the hands owned a few cattle in the swamps. These were rounded up and marked at the same time as the Prud'hommes' animals.

Laborious cultivation of the row crops began shortly after planting. Men used mule drawn plows, scrapers and sweeps to turn and cultivate the soil. Then gangs of both men and women followed with hoes to thin the cotton and corn, and to cut out weeds. Cotton planters saw grass as one of their greatest enemies, particularly in a wet spring, and much labor was expended to keep the fields clean. These operations were repeated at regular intervals; see for example the entries for 4/21/60, 4/25/60, 5/10/60, 5/21/60 and 6/6/60. In 1860 the hands finished thinning the cotton on June 20th and a holiday was granted the following Saturday. Thereafter weeding continued, but the pace slowed as maturing crops began to shade out competing vegetation; see for example 7/10/60 and 7/11/60. The cotton began to open on July 20th and the next day the hands were allowed another holiday. However, sweeping and hoeing were not completely finished until the end of the next week. On the night of the last Saturday in July, the workers were allowed to hold a dance – a brief celebration before the work of picking began; see 7/29/60.

Throughout the spring and summer months, whenever there was a pause in the routines of planting and cultivation there were other tasks waiting to be done. For example, there was hay to cut, field drains had to be maintained, and cord wood had to be cut and hauled; see for example the entries for 4/20/60, 6/28/60 and 6/30/60. In July, the collection of fodder began. Leaves were stripped from the corn and once dry were stored as fodder for the mules and oxen. In 1860 the stripping and hauling took most of two weeks; see the entries from 7/12/60 to 7/21/60. Over the next few weeks the women's trash gang went again through the fields "bending" the corn, turning down the ears to protect them from rot until they could be harvested.

One of the most important summer tasks was the construction of a temporary bridge across the river to link the two halves of the plantation. During the first few months of the year a flatboat was used to ferry people, stock and equipment across the river, but when water levels were too low for steamboat traffic a bridge was constructed. It is not known in what year this practice began, but it was annual event by the late 1850s. The timing of its construction and removal varied, because of differences in water levels from year to year. In 1857, the riverbank was cut in a new place in late July, but there were heavy

rains in August and the bridge does not seem to have been in place until October 14th. [371] In 1860 there was a hot dry summer and Pace recorded putting up the bridge on May 31st. However he reported more work on the bridge on July 31st, with four men building the frame and others working on the riverbank, see the entries for 7/31/60 through 8/4/60. The bridge was always removed when the river rose with the onset of winter and steamboats began to come up the river again. In 1857, Pace wrote on December 7th, "River rise fast here water Red took up bridge."[372] The bridge built in 1859 was not taken up until January 20th, 1860, but in the autumn of 1860 the rains were heavy and the bridge had to be hastily taken up at the end of November; see the entries for 11/28 and 29/60. Posts to support the bridge were left in the river after the removal of the superstructure. Pace referred to "bridge stakes" showing when water levels fell in the spring of 1860; see the entry for 4/12/60. It is not known how large the bridge was, but it must have allowed for the passage of wagons as well as people across the river. It was probably used for hauling the steam engine used to power the gin across the river in 1860. Livestock were probably made to ford the river rather than use the bridge. Pace referred to fording places on several occasions; see for example entries for 1/23/60 and 4/15/60.

Each Sunday during the growing season, the overseer surveyed the state of the crops and ruminated on the likely size of the cotton crop. Pace was in turns optimistic and pessimistic according to the weather conditions and the numbers of insect pests. In 1860 for example, Pace's assessment was upbeat on April 22nd as he surveyed a thick stand of cotton shoots and an improving crop of corn. However one week later, on April 27th, he was worried that the cotton was not coming up on the lighter soils and feared that he would have to replant. One month later, on May 27th, despite the appearance of locusts and a lack of rain, the cotton was looking fine, though the corn crop was suffering. A week later, on June 3rd, after some rains everything was flourishing. But in July everything needed rain, the cotton was "doing nothing" and he anticipated only half a crop of corn; see for example the entry for 7/15/60. This state of anxiety continued through a hot dry month until the picking began in August.

Preparations for picking cotton had begun in June when oak was brought from the hills to make baskets; see the entry for 6/29/60. The exact date for the start of picking like the start of planting depended on the weather. In 1857 rains had delayed the start until the fourth week in August, but in 1860 picking began in the first week. The hands had to make at least three passes through the fields, and picking continued until the end of the year, or into January of the next year. Overseers kept a careful record of the amount of cotton picked by each hand. Affleck's record-keeping book provided spaces for tabulating this on a daily basis for every week from the beginning of August until the end of the year. Each hand was assigned a number and a record of his or her performance was kept beside that number. Nearly all able-bodied workers were required to pick cotton during busy periods. In 1860, Pace usually listed about 70 people in his list of hands, of whom only half a dozen were regularly excused because of other duties. For example, in the third week of August, four were excused because they were house servants and two

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[371] Ibid., 10/14/1857.
[372] Ibid., 12/7/1857.

were working on the gin. In that week another six were sick or disabled. In the second and third weeks of September, Pace complained that the hands were not picking adequate weights. According to his tables, in the second week, 60 hands picked 69,300 pounds, an average of 192.5 pounds per picker per day. In the third week, the average fell to 186 pounds per day. At the start of the fourth week he reported that the hands performance had improved, but he makes no comment on what disciplinary measures he had taken, if any.

In September 1860, preparations made for ginning the cotton included erecting scaffolds in the gin yard to spread and dry the seed cotton, and training workers to operate a new gin; see entry for 9/6/60. Ginning and pressing began at the start of October. It continued at intervals for the rest of the year. Shipping bales had to await the rise of water in the river. On December 1st 1860, immediately after the removal of the bridge, an attempt was made to ship 100 bales on the steamer Violet. The bales were "rolled out by women at old Gin." But the steamer ran aground near Metoyer Point and the bales had to be offloaded; see the entries for 12/1/60, 12/2/60 and 12/5/60.

While picking cotton dominated life on the plantation each fall, there were other crops to harvest, some new crops to plant, and a wide range of other jobs to attend to whenever there was a pause in picking. Gathering the corn began on October 1st and continued for nearly three weeks in 1860. It was followed by harvests of cowpeas, potatoes, pumpkins and sugar cane; see for example the entries for 10/25/60 through 10/27/60. Fourteen wagon loads of "common peas" and one load of red and black peas were gathered in 1860. Sugar cane was left in the fields to mature as long as possible, but it had to be cut before the first frost. Among the winter crops to be planted were turnips, mustard greens and Bermuda grass. Providing grass in pastures was sometimes a problem. In 1860 Pace bemoaned the lack of grass in the fall and had to resort to feeding the livestock on last year's corn. He began feeding corn to the mules in late August. By late September he was feeding it to oxen, milch cows and horses; see for example the entry for 9/29/60.

Most of the jobs that were not urgent had to wait until the pace of picking slackened, usually sometime in November. Then fences were repaired, drains cleaned, and wood cut for winter. Splitting rails for fences was a big job in late November and early December in 1860; see for example Pace's entries for the weeks of 11/18/60, 12/2/60 and12/16/60. Finally towards the end of the year, preparations were made for the next year. For example in the second week of December 1860, all hands with seven teams were cleaning new ground. The men were cutting the brush and the women were cleaning and burning stalks. The celebration of Christmas brought a lull in the round of work. In 1860 the hands were given the afternoon of December 24th and all day on December 25th and 26th as holidays. On Christmas Day and the next day they went to dances at Octave Metoyer's plantation, which provided a no doubt welcome opportunity for workers on different plantations to enjoy themselves together. Then on the 27th the tasks of cleaning fields and cutting and hauling wood resumed as a new year approached.

The Balance Sheet

Affleck's Cotton Plantation Record and Account Book ended with a balance sheet to be used to calculate profit or loss – see Appendix One.

> "It is a statement of account, as it were, between the Planter and his plantation, in which he charges it with every item of investment and outlay; and gives it credit on the opposite side, for what of these articles may be forthcoming at the close of the year, the produce then on hand, and the proceeds of what may have been sold."[373]

On the debit side, Affleck gave six headings. Land was first on the list, though it was not the largest investment of the cotton planter.

> "The plantation is justly chargeable with its own cash value at the commencement of the year; and with one year's interest on the same at six per cent. No course of farming can be profitable, which will not pay a fair rate of interest upon the value of the land employed."[374]

Six per cent was the standard rate of interest used for such calculations at that time, and one of Phanor's notebooks contained instructions on calculating interest at that rate.[375] The investments in "*negroes,*" stock and implements were then entered on the balance sheet. The enslaved workers represented the largest investment for the planter. Again interest at six per cent had to be figured into the calculations, plus any purchases made during the year. Unsold produce on hand at the beginning of the year was to be listed on the debit side, and finally the sum of plantation expenses was to be figured and entered on the balance sheet.

On the credit side, the cotton planter was to itemize any increases in value of land, "*negroes,*" stock and implements, plus any sales under those headings. The planter then entered income received from the sale of cotton and other produce, plus the value of any produce on hand at the end of the year. Affleck's aim was to provide a simple, condensed balance sheet for a plantation. He admitted that the records of most planters would be more complex. "Planters will generally keep private statements of their accounts, their liabilities, the expense of their families, and so on; which would, moreover, be entirely out of place here."[376] That was the case with Phanor's accounts. Most of the tables at the end of Affleck's record-keeping books were left blank, including the balance sheet, and Phanor kept his own much less simple or condensed accounts. These included items not directly related to the operation of the plantation, and were further complicated by shared ownership of some business interests such as the ranch in Texas. While some of Phanor's account books survive in the collection of family papers, several books are missing and there is no clear summation of the plantation's returns in the 1850s. Nevertheless it is clear that these were years of prosperity and Phanor would have been able to record a substantial profit each year.

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[373] Affleck. Explanation. See Appendix One.
[374] Ibid.
[375] Notebook, 1860-61, 25.
[376] Affleck. Explanation. See Appendix One.

Over the decade there was a steady increase in the value of the land with its buildings and other improvements. In the 1850 census the plantation was valued at $20,000; a reasonable estimate given that Phanor had purchased his parents land for $15,000 in that year. By 1860, the plantation was valued at $35,000.[377] This was probably a conservative estimate. Of course, in the intervening years, the plantation had grown in size by about 1600 acres. However, as nearly all of the increase was in "unimproved acreage," the rise in value cannot simply be attributed to this enlargement. Some of the increase must be attributed to the enhanced value of the cultivated land and the plantation's buildings and other improvements. Pace's entries in the record-keeping books confirm the impression obtained from Phanor's journals and notebooks that the plantation was carefully managed along the lines recommended by Affleck. Ditches, roads and fences were regularly maintained. The fields were naturally fertile and too flat to be subjected to much erosion, but some were nevertheless regularly fertilized with cottonseed. And a considerable investment was made in buildings and industrial plants in this decade, notably in the steam powered gin, corn mill and sawmill.

Setting aside any social benefits, judged from a ruthless economic perspective the development within the slave community of a balanced population structure and a certain social cohesion had advantages. The natural increase of the population expanded the labor force, minimizing the need for additional slave purchases at a time of rising prices. And Phanor clearly agreed with Affleck's advice that planters should develop the skills of their workers and provide some instruction of the men in trades and women in home manufactures. So we may conclude that the economic value of the workforce increased over the decade, though we know little about its actual condition, nor the toll taken by enslavement, punishments, ill health or overwork.

There seems to have been a marked contrast between the treatment of the draft animals and some of the other livestock on the plantation. The draft animals, particularly the mules, represented a considerable investment, and their condition was watched carefully by Pace. On the other hand the cattle that roamed the swamps on the plantation and the woods at the Old Vacherie were of little value and received little attention. Pace reported that they were in poor condition much of the time. We know almost nothing about the condition of the sheep and hogs. Phanor's interest seemed to be focused on his breeding mares, probably because he was generally interested in horses and horse racing. It is difficult to know therefore whether a profit was being made or a loss incurred under the heading of 'Stock.' Moreover, as there is only fragmentary information on the Prud'homme brothers' ranch in Texas, any summation would be based on a very incomplete picture of the livestock business.

Phanor was no doubt a leader within the community of Red River planters in the area of agricultural technology. His notebooks and correspondence reveal that he thought of himself in that way and with justification. Certainly he kept abreast of current developments through his readings and travels, and he was making large investments in new steam-driven machinery. He had adopted a long-term economic view, and there is also evidence of a certain caution and frugality. Not only did he make careful inquiry

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[377] Seventh and Eighth Censuses, 1850 and 1860: Agricultural Productions.

about new machines before making any investments, he also reused old equipment where possible. So, for example, he had the steam engine from the gin on the left bank transferred to the new gin on the right bank.

The investments in new machinery were made possible by Phanor's success as a cotton grower. According to the 1860 agricultural census, there were ten plantations in Natchitoches Parish with more acres under cultivation but only three of those managed to produce more cotton. The 1850 and 1860 agricultural censuses provide figures for cotton production on the plantation, but these have to be used with caution. According to the first agricultural census, in 1850 the plantation produced 230 bales, and, according to the next census, ten years later it produced 698 bales.[378] As the 1860 census was taken in June, the production figures would have been a record of the previous year's cotton crop. This was probably also true ten years earlier, although that census was conducted later in the year, so we are comparing the production of 1849 and 1859. 1849 was a bad year, because of widespread flooding in August just before the crop was ready for harvest. In contrast, 1859 was a good year on Phanor's plantation, even though, as noted in the previous chapter, it was not a good year for plantations in the Red River Parishes in general.[379] A comparison with production figures for other years on the plantation using data from other sources is difficult and potentially misleading. Census figures were based on a standard size bale weighing 400 pounds, but the actual weights of the bales produced on Phanor's plantation varied widely. So it is difficult to compare the census data with the number of bales produced in other years as reported in Phanor's journals and accounts. Sales receipts and Pace's records indicate that in the 1850s the average size of the bales shipped to New Orleans from the plantation was somewhere between 500 and 550 pounds.[380] If we adjust the census figures on that basis, we can see that the 1850 production was very low, but that the 1860 production was high, being equivalent to somewhere between 510 and 560 bales of the size normally pressed on the plantation. Figures are available for two other years in the 1850s. According to the 1853 succession inventory, the plantation had on hand an amount of cotton equivalent to 500 bales of the standard 400-pound weight.[381] This would have been the 1852 crop. Four years later, in 1856, Phanor sold 495 bales, with an average weight of 514 pounds.[382] This total included at least 55 bales from the 1855 crop, but it might not have included the entire 1856 crop. However, it seems safe to conclude that in both 1852 and 1856 the plantation's production was well above the 1850 total, but somewhat below the 1860 figure. It must always be borne in mind that cotton growing remained a risky business, as each year's crop was subject to damage by inclement weather and insect pests. It is not clear whether the 1850s were particularly good years for growing cotton, but they were good years for selling cotton.

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[378] Ibid.
[379] Menn, 1964, 98. The census takers estimated the crop was down about 50% in this region.
[380] Correspondence, P. B. Plauche. "Compte de Vente de 49 Balles Coton." 5/20/1852, P. F. P. folder 144; R. A. B., 1860, 41 "Record of bales pressed."
[381] Succession of Suzanne Lise Metoyer, 1853 Inventory, 256.
[382] Journalier, 1856-61, 85.

Obviously, the profit obtained from a cotton crop depended not only on the quantity grown but also on the price obtained, and in this respect the 1850s were much kinder years than the 1840s. In 1849 the average export price of cotton had risen to 11.3 cents per pound, and the next year it rose to 12.1 cents.[383] The years of overproduction and low prices had ended. In 1852 the price had fallen a little, but at 9.8 cents it was still at a level that provided a good profit. And through the rest of the 1850s the price remained firm, standing at or above 11 cents for all the second half of the decade.[384] Of course, the actual prices obtained by planters varied by quite wide margins around these averages. For example, in 1856, Phanor listed the prices obtained for eight different shipments totaling 271 bales. At a time when the national average was 12.6 cents per pound, Phanor's agents obtained prices ranging from 11.75 to 15.5 cents, with 90% of his cotton sold for prices above the national average.[385] The 271 bales with an average weight of 522 pounds brought a return of $19,777. It seems reasonable to conclude, therefore, that while the size of his cotton crop fluctuated from year to year, Phanor probably enjoyed a number of highly profitable years.

Equally as important for the balance sheet as success in growing and selling cotton was an ability to hold down plantation expenses. And in this area too, Phanor was probably more successful than many planters. It is apparent from Phanor's accounts that he kept a close watch on all financial transactions, no matter how small the sums involved. Affleck listed fourteen categories of expenses – see Appendix One, Table N – and Phanor kept detailed records of transactions that would have fallen within each of these categories. Also, he understood the advantages of making the plantation self-sufficient in many areas. The production of corn increased along with the increase in cotton. In 1850 the plantation produced 4500 bushels and ten years later it produced 7000 bushels.[386] Unfortunately, the census data from 1860 for other crops appears incomplete, so other comparisons cannot be made. But it is clear that expanding cotton production was not displacing the food crops that were normally grown. The plantation was not self-sufficient in pork, but it seems to have been able to provide most of its other requirements.[387] As already noted, Phanor expected his workers to produce their own vegetables and allowed them to keep some livestock. The plantation produced some of the clothing and shoes needed by the workers, and had its skilled artisans to meet other needs. For nearly all items that could not be supplied by the Isle Brevelle or the Pine Woods, Phanor went to his agents in New Orleans. Throughout this period he used the same agents, J. B. Plauche and Co. This longstanding relationship speaks to a level of mutual trust and confidence that probably indicated fair dealing on the part of both planter and agent. This trust was probably strengthened by the fact that some members of the Plauche family were residents of Natchitoches, and so they were part of the same French Creole society as the Prud'hommes.[388]

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[383] Sydnor, 1933, 183.
[384] Ibid.
[385] Journalier, 1856-61, 84.
[386] Seventh and Eighth Censuses, 1850 and 1860: Agricultural Productions.
[387] In February 1860, for example, the plantation took delivery of 110 barrels of pork. R. A. B., 2/3/1860 and Table E.
[388] Lestan Prud'homme made several references to members of the Plauche family in Natchitoches in his Journal; see for example 7/4/1850 and 7/15/1850.

In summary, the 1850s were a period of growing prosperity. This was generally true across the South, and many planters took advantage of this to speculate in land and slaves, seeking quick profits and adopting a short-term view in the management of their plantations. In contrast, Phanor was investing in improvements and carefully husbanding his resources. In this respect he set a good example to other planters inside and outside the Red River region. But unfortunately for the Prud'hommes, his confidence in the future was misplaced. Much of the value of his investments was to be lost in the coming war.

THE PLANTATION AS A HOMEPLACE

The landscape was the focus of day-to-day life for all who lived on the plantation, and was as much an integral part of "home" as were the dwellings where people slept. Unfortunately, daily life as lived on the Prud'homme plantation is only partially documented in the archival record, leaving large gaps in the story of the domestic landscape. In his journals and records Phanor Prud'homme focused on the plantation as a commercial enterprise, and offered only glimpses of the domestic scene.

In his journal Lestan Prud'homme provides more information on the social life of Phanor's household. It is a picture of "ever open door" hospitality and close relations within the extended Prud'homme family, and with neighbors along the river. There were daily promenades and horse rides, frequent visits to town, and hunting, shooting and fishing expeditions. But Lestan's journal gives almost no information on the character of the domestic landscape. Pace's entries in the record and account books make no references to the Main House, except when some of the enslaved workers were engaged in hoeing the garden, or making and mending fences around the yards.

The Prud'homme Home

The Main House serves as partial evidence of the evolution and success of the agricultural enterprise, of the growth of a family and its wealth, and the corresponding desire to add more space and specialized rooms to the house. The structure itself reveals the series of additions that the Prud'hommes made; but the remnant landscape features are more difficult to decipher and interpret, and much of the fabric does not survive.

We can assume that the household was one of relative refinement and comfort for this somewhat isolated frontier. Emanuel and his wife had traveled to France in 1821, and had their portraits painted. The family followed the norm of the plantation elite in sending their sons to colleges on the Eastern Seaboard or abroad to receive a broad education before returning to the plantation and assuming responsibility for its management. Phanor's itinerary for his trip north in the 1850's, including his mention of visiting a Midwestern botanical garden confirms that he was very much in contact with the world of horticulture, and his notes indicate he was an astute observer of the landscapes he visited.[389]

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[389] Notebook, 1856, 23-39.

The entry allee and the parterre were features that would have indicated the family's refinement. This appearance of the front of the house would have been important in conveying to the public the status of the Prud'homme family. The live oak-lined driveway framed the view of the house and created a dramatic processional for the visitor. The mid-19th century appearance of the allee would have been less romantic and shady than today's, and more a statement of order and prosperity. The choices of a geometric patterned garden or parterre as an entry feature was not unusual for the time. Such parterres had been popular throughout the colonies. The parterre was a particularly appropriate choice for a raised house with a broad gallery from which to view the garden. Boxwood was almost certainly the original edging for the flower beds. It was eventually replaced by a edging of upturned bottles, but that process seems to have occurred in the early 20th century.[390]

In his journal for the years 1856 to 1861 Phanor mentions some of his gardening activities. For example, in February 1856 he records planting seeds of bois d'arc, osage orange, in the garden.[391] In March he planted 16 cedars and 4 "chevres vert" (probably live oaks), and received from Affleck's nursery some pecans, apples (*Malus sp.*), nectarines (*Prunus sp.*) and oaks.[392] In the same month he lists vegetables given to his gardener to plant.

> *"March 17 Sent to Touissant – Lion's Paw solid white celery, Winnings – cabbage, new prickly spinach, Avane's early cabbage...Orange melons – winter squash from Paris."*[393]

He provided some of these seeds to his workers for their own gardens: *"To the slaves: seeds of Pruton squashes, winter squash from Paris."* He does not record where everything was planted, but presumably the vegetables were grown in his vegetable garden and probably most of the fruit trees were grown nearby.

In September 1856 he noted planting 8 cedars along the length of the yard and 6 in the garden. At the end of his journal for these years he gave an inventory of the trees planted in the spring of 1857, and this list provides some details about locations.[394] In January he transplanted grape vines "*along the grande allee,*" and some lilacs "*along the fence between the yard and the forge.*" In February he planted willow cuttings on the other side of the river – perhaps along the riverbank. In March he planted "*magnolia seeds near and under the cedar in the parterre,*" and "*forty tamarind seeds along the flower bed border in the garden.*" The list continues but unfortunately it is very difficult to decipher Phanor's writing.

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[390] Prud'homme family photographs from the early 20th century show vestiges of the boxwood edging within the garden.
[391] Journalier, 2/20/1856.
[392] Ibid., 3/5/1856, 3/6/1856, and 3/15/1856.
[393] Ibid., 3/17/1856.
[394] Journalier, 1856-61, 78-79.

From all this, one obtains a picture of a man frequently experimenting, trying out new plants and moving them to see how they grew in different locations. Of course much of the physical labor would have been done by his slaves; Touissant and Johnson were the chief gardeners. But his journal entries indicate that Phanor did some of the work himself. For example, when in April 1857 he planted another 96 tamarind seeds he wrote: *"I planted them on the surface, pushed them into the earth only with my feet."*[395]

As noted in Chapter Two, a plantation mistress was typically responsible for the fruit, vegetable and flower gardens. However, in his journal entries, Phanor makes no mention of the activities of the women in his household, so we do not know what role if any his first or second wife played in the management of the gardens.

The Doctor's House and the Overseer's House

As already noted, the house that became known as the Doctor's House, was probably built after Phanor's marriage in 1835. It was certainly there when the 1840 census was taken.[396] After the death of his parents, Phanor must have moved into the Main House, and the second house would then have been available for others to use. However we do not know how it was used until 1860. In that year, Pace's records refer to sending "one team for frt (freight) for Dr. Hulen."[397] Thereafter it became the Doctor's House. The archival records tell us nothing about the landscape around this house.

We also know almost nothing about the Overseer's House in 1860. In 1860 Pace recorded that his house was whitewashed.[398] In the same year Phanor was presumably referring to the house's yard when he noted *"Mr. Pace's fence has not lasted as well as mine."*[399] In 1861 a new house was to be built for Pace and that is the house that still stands, and despite year's of occupancy by tenants is still known as the Overseer's House. However we do not know if the earlier house was on the same site, or, if not, where it was located.

The Quarters

Olmsted gives a picture of a plantation quarters that he encountered walking on a Sunday in the countryside near Natchitoches.

> "They (the quarters) were apparently intended for the accommodation of about one hundred slaves. The residents were mending clothes, washing and cooking, and look well-fed and contented…The cabins were small, built mostly of hewn plank…There was but one room,

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[395] Ibid.
[396] Information supplied by Deborah Harvey who is conducting research for a Historic Structure Report.
[397] R. A. B., 4/18/60.
[398] R. A. B., 5/25/60.
[399] Journalier, 1856-61, 52.

> and no loft, to each cabin...Several of them, into which, without intrusion I was able to see, were very destitute of furniture.[400]

The Slave Census of 1860, indicates there were 30 cabins in the Quarters on Phanor's plantation. Unfortunately we know little else from the written record and the archaeological investigation. Pace's entries refer to the Quarters on the right hand bank and make no reference to slave dwellings in other locations. So it is reasonable to conclude that the 30 cabins were grouped together in one cluster.

We know there was a hospital, be we do not know where it was located. Presumably it was somewhere within or close-by the Quarters. We do not know if there was a central kitchen to provide the field hands with their meals in the fields, but it seems likely. According to Lestan Prud'homme's journal, there was "a place where victuals is cooked for the hands" on his grandfather's plantation, which was next to Phanor's place.[401]

While we do not know much about the Quarters it is safe to conclude that the slaves lived in conditions very different from the Prud'hommes in the Main House. While the planter's family lived in relative comfort and commodiousness, the enslaved workers and their families (when they were fortunate enough to be with their families) lived with only the bare necessities, in small quarters houses, with sparse furniture, little privacy and little time of their own. What connected the experiences of gentry and slaves, however, was the connection to the land as a place of home. Both relied upon the land for sustenance and spent their days in the landscape, understanding its textures, its seasonal fluctuations, its secrets. Though both classes had their origins in homelands a continent or more removed, they came to know this landscape along the Cane River as home.

THE WAR YEARS, 1861 – 1865

Continuities and Disturbances

Through most of the war years, Phanor and his overseers continued to keep records of daily events on the plantation. These are found in Phanor's journals and pocket notebooks and in the Affleck record-keeping books.[402] These historic records convey two different pictures of the war years. On the one hand, there is a picture of things continuing as normal, with the landscape following annual cycles of planting, cultivation and harvest. On the other hand, there is evidence of mounting confusion as the war advances. At first disturbances to normal routines seem like background noise, but this noise grows louder until, in March and April 1864, the armies arrive at the plantation. After this, there was a determined effort to return to the agricultural routine despite the imminent collapse of the Confederacy. 1865 brought not only the end of the war and with it the emancipation of the enslaved workforce, but also in October the death of Phanor Prud'homme. So the end

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[400] Olmsted, A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States, 629-630.
[401] Lestan Prud'homme, 10/7/1850.
[402] Journalier, 1861-1864, P. F. P. folder 273; Pocket Notebooks, 1860-1861 and 1861-1862, P. F. P. folder 480; Pocket Notebook, 1862-1864, P. F. P. folder 481; R. A. B. 1861, P. F. P. folder 275; R. A. B. 1862, P. F. P. folder 276; R. A. B., 1863-1864, P. F. P. folder 277; R. A. B., 1864-1866, P. F. P. folder 278.

of the old social order across the South coincided with the passing of the plantation from the second to the third generation of Prud'homme owners.

The Events of 1861

In January 1861, the hands on the plantation were busy ginning and shipping the previous year's large crop of cotton. The success of the agricultural enterprise in 1860 was no doubt a matter of pride for the Prud'hommes and their overseer, and it may also have been a source of some satisfaction to the workforce. Pace noted in the record for New Year's Day: "Holleay with hands Gave Ball last nite. Dance all nite to day all day plenty of neighbors Negroes good Conduct not a angry word No Braggin of last year Crop."[403]

It was perhaps evidence of an optimistic mood that new ground was being cleared for cultivation, and young mules were being broken in for work.[404] And construction projects were continuing; in January a seed-house was being built as part of the new gin complex, and two months later work was to begin on a new home for Seneca Pace.[405]

The planting season began in late January with an early planting of Irish potatoes, and, over the next two months, sugar cane, sweet potatoes, corn, millet and watermelons were planted in their turn. Cotton planting began on March 25th with "Lecomte" seed being sown on the far side and Petit Gulf on the house side of the river. Some Egyptian cotton was planted on April 10th, and ten days later replacement of the first cotton planted was begun where necessary. Then over the next few weeks, pumpkins, "flour corn," "flint corn," and cowpeas were planted to complete the usual array of commercial and subsistence field crops.

In his journal, Phanor continued to record his gardening activities. In the spring, these included planting plums and apricots in "*the parterre in the garden*," and pruning roses, "*to the left of the door*."[406] Later in the year, he was planting pecans "*to the right of the yard*," and in the cabbage patch, where he marked them with two pickets perhaps intending to transplant them at a later date.[407]

Seneca Pace made his usual rounds of the plantation each Sunday and his mood remained fairly optimistic until mid-July. But on July 14th he reported that many of the hands were sick, and although the cotton was growing fast it was not "loaded."[408] Thereafter the sickness spread, and one month later Pace noted: "Sick Billious fever plenty sick not satisfied with the treatment of Doctor Leyhai."[409] Picking began that week with only 30 hands in the fields. Caterpillars and bollworms were also taking a toll, and in mid-September Pace complained: "Cattapillars eating fast places clean Injure Cotton Much I

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[403] R. A. B., 1/1/1861.
[404] Ibid., 1/22- 24/1861.
[405] Ibid., 1/17/1861, 3/14/1861.
[406] Journalier, 3/7/1861, 4/25/1861.
[407] Ibid., 11/2/1861 and 11/3/1861.
[408] R. A. B., 7/14/1861.
[409] Ibid., 8/11/1861. Dr Lehai had replaced Dr. Hulen as the resident doctor on the plantation in 1861.

Believe I Cant Make half Crop." [410] The sickness ebbed and then returned in late September: "Plenty of sickness Some dangerous Something like typhoid fever."[411]

In the end, five hands died of the fever and the cotton crop was not much more than half the size of the previous year's crop.[412] Pace's record of bales pressed in the fall and following winter indicated that just over 300 bales were produced. But the bales were unusually large, with an average weight of around 600 pounds. This might have been planned to reduce the space required to store the cotton. In May 1861, the Confederate Congress had severed trade relations with the United States and prohibited the export of cotton for use in Northern textile mills. While trade with Europe continued through New Orleans, it was increasingly subject to uncertainties and disruptions.[413] In July, Phanor had taken out a loan of $3000 from the Banque des Citoyens, repayable in January 1862, and he noted that it was "*renewable if I cannot sell the cotton.*"[414]

Meanwhile the war had begun to affect in more direct ways the lives of the Prud'hommes. As befitted one of the leading planters and slave owners in the region, Phanor was active in support of the Confederacy. He contributed to the costs of raising companies of volunteers for the army, and found ways to assist the civil administration. In his pocket notebook for 1861, after listing provisions purchased for the plantation, he listed various arms and equipment. These were probably purchased for the volunteers who were rushing to fight for the Confederacy. They included 12 rifles, 30 pistols, 30 belts and scabbards, 30,000 percussion caps and 122 cartridges.[415] And as part of his civilian duties, he became keeper of the local list of "Subscriptions of Crop for the defence of the Confederate States."[416]

The demands of the army for manpower had an immediate impact on Phanor's family. As volunteer companies formed to fight for the Confederacy, Phanor's son-in-law, Winter Breazeale became Captain of the Prud'homme Rangers No. 1, and Phanor's eldest son, Alphonse, enlisted as a private.[417] Winter and Alphonse soon saw action, taking part in the first Battle of Oak Hill, Missouri, in August 1861. Towards the end of the year, there were indications that Seneca Pace would soon leave. In November, he noted that he had had to leave his duties on the plantation for three days in order to "attend Batalion Drill." While he was absent Favron attended to the business of the plantation.[418]

The Events of 1862.

The second year of the war opened on the plantation with the familiar repetition of winter tasks. The hands were kept busy cleaning the fields, plowing, ditching, fencing, hauling

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[410] R. A. B., 9/15/1861.
[411] Ibid., 9/29/1861.
[412] R. A. B., 1861, 134; R. A. B., 1862, 134.
[413] Winters, 1963, 45.
[414] Notebook, 1860-1861, 19.
[415] Ibid., 1860 – 61, 11 and 12.
[416] Breedlove 1999, 28.
[417] Ibid., 25-26.
[418] R. A. B., 11/25-27/1861.

wood, and ginning and pressing cotton. Various small construction projects were started; fences around Seneca Pace's new house and the Doctor's yard were to be built, and a new cabin for Solomon, the carpenter, was to be constructed in the plantation yard.[419] Phanor's gardening activities included pruning "*the rose trees by the stairs*," and planting scuppernongs at the base of the lilacs in the yard.[420] However the normal routine was disrupted by the departure of Pace at the beginning of March to join the army. Phanor then had to look for a new overseer and in the meantime he had to assume most of the duties himself. These duties included making daily entries in the Cotton Plantation Record and Account Book, which he did in English though he continued to use French for most of the entries in his journal and notebooks. His entries give an indication of how normal agricultural activities had become interspersed with activities related to war. In the first weeks of March, for example, as the planting season got underway, Phanor sent hands to carry supplies to the volunteers in Natchitoches, and he ordered Solomon, the blacksmith, to make some weapons for Seneca Pace.[421]

The outbreak of war and the ensuing dislocation of trade increased the advantages of aiming for a high degree of self-sufficiency on the plantation.[422] In his pocket notebook Phanor made a note of the comparative costs of two different rations for his slaves.[423] Apart from indicating his usual thrift, this suggests he was concerned about rising prices for provisions. The entries also show that he was exchanging items with neighboring planters. The many family connections that tied together the French Creole planters in the region no doubt facilitated these transactions. They were probably always going on, but were now increased as the war disrupted supplies. For example, in the week of March 9th, the following exchange took place. "2 cart loads Nubins from Mr. Hertzog for 2 good loads of Corn to plant."[424] He also gave some sugar canes to Mr. Hypolyte Alloise, and seed potatoes to the Lecomtes.

At the start of the third week in March, Phanor noted in the Cotton Plantation Record and Account Book the death of Emile Hertzog on the Tennessee River, and on a blank page in the book he drew a rough map of the river. It was unusual for him to make that type of note in a book that was supposed to be used to chronicle agricultural activities, so the news must have come as a shock. He had good reason to be nervous. His own son, Alphonse had been wounded and captured at the Battle of Pea Ridge in Arkansas in the first week of March.[425] Fortunately, Alphonse managed to escape and returned home to the Isle Brevelle to recover. He spent the summer helping his brother-in-law, Winter Breazeale, organize cavalry units, which became part of the Second Louisiana Regiment of Cavalry.[426]

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[419] R. A. B., 1862 weeks of January 12 and 19, February 2 and 9.
[420] Journalier, 2/14/1862.
[421] R.A.B., weeks of March 2 and 9.
[422] Seale, 1994, 111-112.
[423] Notebook, 1861- 1862, 7.
[424] R. A. B., 3/9 to3/15/1862.
[425] Breedlove, 1999, 26.
[426] Ibid.

Cotton planting began on April 5th. Phanor made no comment on the amount of land to be devoted to the crop, but the acreage must have been considerably below that of previous years, for not much time was spent on the planting. In the place of cotton, the acreage devoted to corn was greatly expanded. In the following October, Phanor recorded in his journal; "*Returns: 621 cart loads corn plus 44 for the negroes, total 665 of 28 Bushels = 18520 Bushels.*"[427] This total was nearly three times the amount harvested in 1860, and it is not clear whether this represented the entire amount harvested in 1862. There are additional references in the accounts to corn being sold and given away. In any case, it seems likely that the amount of land planted in corn was at least three times the prewar acreage. The amount of space devoted to other food crops was probably also expanded, but these other crops were mostly for home consumption not trade, and so compared to cornfields their acreages remained insignificant.

In April news came of the carnage on the battlefield at Shiloh in Tennessee, and then news of the Union Navy's capture of New Orleans. Fearful of a rapid Union advance there were appeals to planters to destroy any stored cotton that could not be hauled to safe locations.[428] Phanor referred to the possibility of his cotton being burnt by order of the Confederate Government in a note in his journal dated April 31st. He had good reason to worry since much of the previous year's crop was still stored on the plantation.[429]

At the beginning of May, there were appeals to place trees to block rivers to impede use by the Union Navy.[430] At this time Phanor considered moving his enslaved workers away from their quarters to keep them away from any marauding bands of jayhawkers. Gangs of these outlaw draft dodgers and deserters were reported to be hiding out in the hills of northern Louisiana.[431] On May 12th Phanor wrote: "Had two Loads of planks put along Bayou Congo to put up shanties in Case the hawkers trouble our Negroes – Thunder at 5 pm a little rain – good for vegetation."[432] The location of Bayou Congo is not indicated on any maps, but it may have been one of the tributaries of the Bayou Brevelle. Conga was the name of the "free Negro" from whom Emanuel had bought land when he was establishing the plantation, and that may have been the origin of the name. In any case it seems most likely that the location was in the forested areas on the west side of the plantation. For the next five weeks he noted the delivery of planks from his sawmill, however, fears of attack gradually subsided and the cabins were not built.

On May 28th Phanor hired a new overseer. He wrote in his journal: "*Mr. Phelps has taken charge of the plantation at noon – to be paid $800 on the products of the harvest that can be sold.*"[433] While this must have relieved Phanor of many of the mundane responsibilities, he continued to fill out the "Daily Record of Passing Events." There is reason to believe, therefore, that he did not place the same confidence in Phelps that he

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[427] Journalier, 1861-1863, 20.
[428] Winters, 1963, 103, and Breedlove, 1999, 33.
[429] Journalier, 1861-1863, 12 and 16.
[430] Breedlove, 1999, 34.
[431] Seale, 1994, 113.
[432] R. A. B., 5/12/1862.
[433] Journalier, 1861-1863, 17.

had accorded Pace. In the event, Phelps lasted less than five months. Phanor paid him off on October 24th, but recorded no explanation.[434]

Through the summer months, Phanor's entries showed a continuation of normal agricultural activities, hoeing corn and cotton, branding cattle, etc. But the sounds of war kept intruding, sometimes quite literally. Towards the end of June, returning after an absence from the plantation he noted: "Sweeps & Hoes in Cotton. No appearance of rain. Cannon was heard the 25th 26 & 27 I think it is from Vicksburg."[435] It seems scarcely credible that the sound of cannon would travel the 135 miles separating Vicksburg from Natchitoches, but Phanor had no doubt heard that Commodore David Farragut's force had proceeded up river from New Orleans to take Baton Rouge and threaten Vicksburg.[436]

The presence of Confederate military units in the parish placed demands on Phanor and other planters for provisions and other supplies. Sometimes Phanor expressed his support by making gifts to the military, and at other times he sold items to them. For example, on June 12th, he gave "two Horses to Cavalry, Antoine Prudhomme Capn – Ball Tyger & Texas horse."[437] And on August 23rd, he noted in his journal: "Sold corn, forage, flour corn, 2 beeves & Bl salt to Batallion of W. W. Breazeale."[438] Two days later he added: "Sold my wagon & mules to the Company of Antoine $60."[439]

Cotton picking began in late August, but at that point the entries in the Record and Account Book ceased for three months. We do not know the reason for this break, but it surely indicates that things were not running smoothly at the plantation. When Phanor's entries began again in late November most of the hands were in the fields picking cotton: "Beautiful weather Cool all hands picking except the Spinners, Weaver and Sucklers – Mr. McNeley has moved to his house & the old man Pace has taken possession of his little room by the carpenter."[440] The exemption from picking cotton for the spinners and weaver was significant. The workers had always produced some of their own clothing, but with the onset of war the need for self-sufficiency had increased on the plantation. J. T. McNeely was to be the new overseer, with effect from December 1st. His arrival in the last week of November required Seneca Pace's father to leave the house built for his son, but as Phanor's note indicates he continued to live on the plantation while his son was in the army. Phanor's journal indicates that he was writing letters to Seneca Pace about once a month, and there was obviously an understanding between them that his employment had been temporarily interrupted rather than ended.

In one of his last entries in the "Daily Record of Passing Events" before he handed it over to McNeely, Phanor noted that he had sent three hands to help build fortifications on the river. Following the capture of New Orleans, several inland parishes had formed

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[434] Ibid., 20.
[435] R. A. B., 6/28/1862.
[436] Taylor, 1990, 181.
[437] R. A. B., 1862 notes following page 158.
[438] Journalier, 1861-63, 19.
[439] Ibid.
[440] R. A. B., 11/25/1862. The correct spelling of the overseer's name is McNeely.

"Committees of Safety."[441] Representatives of these committees meeting in Shreveport had appealed to planters to provide slaves to build fortifications along the Red River below Alexandria. The planters were to provide their men with clothing, bedding and tools, and they would receive $25 per month for the hire of each slave. Phanor carefully listed the equipment and supplies he sent with his men. "One Wheel Barrow, One Axe, One Spade, One Shovel – two Bigg Baggs for bedding – Meal – Bacon – Sweet Potatoes – One Iron pot – One Skilet and their Clothes and Bedding."[442] Two days later in his journal he added: "*Dec.1 the negroes left from Favrons in the Steamboat Starlight at 2 pm to the number of 54.*"[443] Favron's steamboat landing was in Natchitoches; boats could reach it from either the Cane River or the Rigolet de Bon Dieu.

McNeely made the entries in the Record and Account Book for the last three weeks in the year. The biggest job for the hands was hauling corn and cotton to storage in whatever covered spaces could be found in and around the plantation. Phanor jotted some notes at the end of the year about the disposal of some of this corn and cotton. He had given away 298 bushels of corn to a variety of people since the end of October, and sold another 262 bushels for 75 cents a bushel.[444] In addition he had "furnished" corn meal to eight families. Some of these were families of employees and others were relatives, so it is not clear whether that corn meal was given or sold. While the surplus corn was sold or given away, most of the cotton had to be stored on the plantation. Phanor noted at the end of the year:

"Bls Cotton Stowed away –

1861	October 26 – Under Shower house near the lake –	62 Bls – 14 taken off.
	October 19 – Under Corn Magazine Over the river –	75 ~
1862	March 6 – Under Middle Way Shower house -	57 ~
	" " – The last Shower house down -	38 ~ = 232 Bls.

May 5 The 75 Bls under the Corn magazine were removed to the three Shelters in the field ---

" " About one hundred Bales in Seed in Gin Loose."[445]

The 137 bales from the 1861 crop did not account for all of that year's production, so some of it must have been sold and shipped before the fall of New Orleans. But the 95 bales from the 1862 crop plus the estimated 100 bales not yet ginned did in all probability indicate the size of that year's crop. If so, these figures confirm that the acreage on the plantation in cotton had been much reduced and that the character of the landscape had become quite different as a result of the war.

The Events of 1863

Entries in the Cotton Plantation Record and Account Book for this year do not begin until late March. Perhaps there had been a delay in acquiring a new book and whatever records the overseer kept in January and February have since been lost. When McNeely's entries

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[441] Winters, 1963, 164.
[442] R. A. B., 11/29/1862.
[443] Journalier, 1861-1863, 22.
[444] R. A. B., 1862 end pages.
[445] Ibid.

begin the planting season was underway. Rice and "shargo" were being planted in addition to the usual crops. Shargo was probably a sorghum grown as a fodder crop. A couple of weeks later, on April 11th, McNeely wrote:

> "Rained ligt shower Before breakfast held up raine until afternoone finished Braking up land at 4.00 commenced planting corne after noon stopped at 4.00 by raine. Concluded to plant no cotton this year."[446]

The capture of New Orleans had not only disrupted the cotton market, but the associated supply of credit to planters. This caused many to reexamine the economics of a plantations system focused on the production of one commercial crop. They were therefore open to recommendations to diversify and produce more food-crops and livestock to support the war effort. The editor of the Natchitoches Union had opined:

> "Provisions have advanced in price so that people of ordinary means find it difficult to get them, never was a time more propitious to the adoption of another system of social economy..."[447]

In the place of cotton most of the cultivated land on Phanor's plantation was planted in corn and sugar cane, both of which were easier to sell than cotton. In early March, Phanor had sold 1947 bushels of corn to the Confederate government. He received a dollar per bushel, but the price would rise to three times this amount over the next year.[448] It is also possible that some of the land previously devoted to cotton was converted to hayfields or pastures. Livestock was becoming more valuable, as meat was required not only for plantation rations but to feed the army. In March, Phanor sent a trunk to his son Alphonse containing: "*2 sides of ribs, 2 hams, 2 jowls, 12 ½ Btles white wine Cakes in letter paper and one small keg of lard.*"[449] Four days later, he sent a similar present to his younger son Emanuel, who had joined the army at the age of seventeen. However there is nothing to indicate that the plantation's cattle were brought in from the swamps and accorded better care.

A few fields might have been left fallow. Reducing the amount of fieldwork would have made labor available for other tasks. One of the most important tasks was manufacturing items that had become difficult to obtain, which now included finished cloth, clothes, and various household necessities such as candles and soap. Of course, it was not just a question of reassigning tasks; workers had to possess the necessary skills. The tradition of having some skilled artisans amongst the slaves would now prove to be an advantage. Phanor's practical turn of mind would be another advantage. He seems to have welcomed the challenge. In January he had ordered a number of books including *The Making of Chemical Products*, by Roset, a *Manual of Soap-making* and a *Manual of Dyeing* by the same author, and a *Dictionary of Arts and Manufactures* in two volumes.[450] In May he

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[446] R. A. B., 4/11/1863.
[447] Natchitoches Union 12 December 1861, quoted in Seale, 1994, 111.
[448] Winters, 1963, 320.
[449] Journalier, 1861-1864, 24.
[450] Ibid., 23.

was able to record in his journal that he had marked cottonade filling 10 cases and 6 sacks "homemade."[451]

That summer the state legislature authorized a distribution of implements for carding cotton and wool, in order to encourage the production of textiles on plantations. Phanor was quick to take advantage of the offer. On August 15th he wrote: "Call for Cotton and Wool Cards, did not find the number – they are to bring them tomorrow –."[452] The next day he recorded the names of the women to whom he gave the implements: "Cotton Cards [new] 1863 to witt [Suzanne – Loise – Catherine – Azelie – Marguerite – Laiza] – [Wool Cards to witt – Suzanne – Phillis – Adeline – Pantry -."[453] Some of the thread and yarn that was produced was sent out to women in the locality to weave. Phanor paid one of these weavers – a Mrs. Nancy Trummell – six loads of corn in exchange for thirty to thirty five yards of cotton cloth, woven and dyed.[454] At the end of his Record and Account Book for 1863 he recorded similar payments and the delivery of bags of cotton to several others.[455]

Shoes were items that were becoming more expensive to purchase. Phanor kept a record of shoes made during the first three months of the year on the plantation. During this period his shoemaker made sixteen pairs, and Phanor kept a careful record of the various steps in their manufacture – numbers of hides cut, shoes cut, shoes given to be made, shoes made and their sizes.[456]

The incomplete nature of Phanor's accounts after March may be attributed to events that began to seriously disrupt life on the plantation in April. On April 21st, McNeely noted in his Daily Record of Passing Events: "Mr. Alphonse Prudhomme got home this afternoon."[457] Alphonse had been wounded again and had returned home to recuperate. A few days later McNeely reported:

> "25 Monday. Began to Raine this Morning at 7 Oc Rained hard for a while then Showery until Evening Bad newes about the Yanks loaded all the carts & wagons with corne to go to Natchitoches in the morning."
> "26 Tuesday. Started 7 Teems to Town with corne Sent 9 hands out to the sawmill to make a Lot to pen the stock in if we have to run them from the Yankeys …. "[458]

The bad news was the advance of the Union Army under General Nathaniel Banks' command towards Alexandria, while Confederate forces under General Richard Taylor retreated upriver. On Thursday, McNeely sent his family to the Pine Woods. He himself remained on the plantation for one more day before following them. The Prud'hommes moved into town. It is not clear what happened to the enslaved workforce. Late Tuesday afternoon McNeely returned, and on Wednesday May 4th the hands recommenced

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[451] Ibid., 26.
[452] R. A. B., 8/15/1863.
[453] Ibid., 8/16/1863.
[454] Breedlove, 1999, 32.
[455] R. A. B., 1863, 45.
[456] Ibid., end pages.
[457] Ibid., 4/21/1863.
[458] Ibid., 4/25 and 4/26/ 1863.

cultivating in the cornfields. A two-man watch was posted each night. On Friday, McNeely noted: "our army is passing by constantly" and the next day he added: "Our army still retreating from the enemy. Yankeys are in Alexandria."[459] Phanor made no direct reference to these events in his journal, but noted that two of his hands were impressed into service by the passing army on May 5th. "Boston & Peter impressed by Major Dupuis by order of Gen. Taylor for artillery service. Appraised at $800 ea."[460]

From Monday to Friday of the next week, McNeely recorded only that he was sick, and on Saturday, May 14th he went again to the Pine Woods. He returned to the plantation again on Tuesday May 17th to supervise a resumption of plowing and hoeing. The next day he noted that Mr. Prudhomme had gone to Shreveport, by then the headquarters of General Edward Kirby-Smith, Commander in Chief of all Confederate forces west of the Mississippi.[461] We do not know what business sent Phanor to Shreveport but it may well have included the problems associated with the movement of troops across his plantation. On Thursday, May 19th, McNeely wrote: "Texas troop turned their horses in Resque."[462] At least one of the fields on the plantation was sown in rescue grass. The next day McNeely added: "Texas Cavalry left this morning for the last time I am in hoops."[463]

An uneasy calm returned to the plantation in late May. Watchmen were posted each night, and cannons were heard in the direction of Vicksburg, but hoeing corn and planting peas became the main focus of life. The feared Union advance upriver from Alexandria did not take place as Banks redirected his attention towards Port Hudson on the Mississippi.[464] During the week of June 5th the Prud'hommes returned from their town house and the McNeely family came back from the Pine Woods.[465] Some semblance of normalcy must then have returned to the plantation. The hands continued sweeping in the cornfields, planting peas, and hoeing sugar cane and pumpkins. In the week of June 19th a bridge was erected across the river and preparations were made to start the steam engine for the gristmill.[466] But there are indications that the disturbances had affected the enslaved workers. McNeely reported much sickness, many were in hospital with fevers; and then on June 20th he noted: "Edmo ran off today at 12 Oc."[467]

Phanor had some good news to record at the end of June. He noted in his journal that he had sold 230 bales of cotton, each weighing about 600 pounds, at 20 cents per pound. This gave a return of $27,600. He did not say to whom the cotton was sold, but it was probably sold to the Confederate Cotton Bureau, which was headquartered in Shreveport. In April 1862, the Confederate Congress had authorized the purchase of cotton from planters, and over the next two years the Bureau purchased more than 80,000 bales in

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[459] Ibid., 5/ 6 and 7/1863.
[460] Journalier, 1861-1864, 26.
[461] Taylor, 1990, 186.
[462] R. A. B., 5/19/1863.
[463] Ibid., 5/20/1863.
[464] Taylor, 1990, 186.
[465] R. A. B., 6/5 to 6/101863.
[466] Ibid., 6/19to 6/25/1863.
[467] Ibid., 6/20/1863.

Louisiana.[468] The generalized nature of Phanor's calculation of his return indicated that this was not a normal sale through his agent. Some of the cotton bought by the Bureau was stored in warehouses, and some of it was secretly traded for supplies, but much of it remained on the plantations where it had been produced. This seems to have been the case with Phanor's bales, as there was no mention in the accounts of them being shipped or hauled anywhere. There was a downside to the good news: if the purchase were by the Bureau, it would have been paid for in Confederate currency, which was already of questionable value.

The fall of Vicksburg on July 14th must have caused consternation in the Prud'homme family. Phanor's younger son, Emanuel, was captured. He had left Georgetown College in Washington DC and at the age of seventeen had joined the Prud'homme Guards, the Twenty-sixth Louisiana Regiment.[469] Moreover, the surrender indicated very clearly the weakness of the Confederacy. There are however no direct references to the event in the plantation records. Emanuel was soon paroled and returned home on July 31st.[470] He managed to rejoin his unit and continued in service until the end of the war. The family's anxiety about the fate of the Confederacy was indicated by a note in Phanor's journal written ten days after the surrender of Vicksburg. "*Wrote to H. W. Powell that I intend to send the bloodstock and to look for lodging for 40 to 50 Negroes.*"[471] A month later, on August 28th, he wrote in his journal instructions in English for getting to the ranch in Corsicana, Texas. He probably intended to give a copy to someone hired to take either the horses or the slaves to Texas.

That person was not going to be McNeely. Phanor discharged him at the beginning of August. Phanor wrote the following comment in the Cotton Plantation Record and Account Book:

> "Settled with Mr. McNeeley from the first of August he has been 8 Months on the Plantation. Paid him for his wages $533.36. Sent him a horse to be returned as soon as he can buy one. Good man but his children are not agreeable."[472]

The parting seems to have been fairly amicable, and it may have been associated with the return of Seneca Pace. He was back on the plantation at the end of August and remained there till the beginning of December.[473] However Pace did not resume all the duties of overseer, and Phanor continued to make the entries in Affleck's book.

For the remainder of the year these entries record a continuation of agricultural activities, but the calendar was very different from that of peacetime as there was no cotton to be picked. The gathering of corn began in the first week in September and continued into October. Finding spaces to store all the harvest was a problem and by October some of it was being hauled to the sawmill in the Pine Woods.[474] Meanwhile other crops were being gathered: rice and barley in September, sugar cane, sweet potatoes, peas and

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[468] Winters, 1963, 322; Seale 1994, 114-117.
[469] Breedlove, 1999, 26.
[470] Journalier, 1861-1864, 24.
[471] Journalier, 1861-1864, 27.
[472] R. A. B., 8/14/1863.
[473] Ibid., 8/30/1863 – 12/8/1863.
[474] Ibid., 10/19/1863.

pumpkins in October. After the harvest some of the livestock were turned into the cornfields and a few fields were prepared for the sowing of winter wheat.

Livestock were a cause of worry. In August, Phanor complained that he had "Lost in the space of 6 weeks – 82 Hogs big and Small."[475] Perhaps he blamed this on his stock keeper for at the weekend he noted: "Punish John Louis by not coming to quarter for 15 Days."[476] Jean Louis had been identified as the stock keeper in the 1853 succession inventory. The reason for the loss is not recorded. It seems more likely to have been disease than theft, though given the disturbed social conditions some theft may have been involved. In September, Phanor noted: "3 Shoats were Stolen on the other side of the river."[477] As a result of this theft, he brought the hogs over to the near side of the river and put most of them into pens to fatten. Watchmen were still posted each night to warn of any danger from jayhawkers, but it would have been impossible to keep the swampy bayous at the boundaries of the plantation under surveillance.

The army or other Confederate authorities regularly requisitioned draft animals. For example, in late August a wagon and four yokes of oxen were impressed to haul lumber to Grand Ecore north of Natchitoches.[478] In October three pairs of oxen were sent to haul government stores from Grand Ecore to Shreveport.[479] And at the end of October, a wagon and four mules were sent to Alexandria to transport sick soldiers.[480]

The plantation continued to supply slaves to work on the riverine fortifications near Alexandria. On November 14th, Phanor made the following entry; "Sent to work below the 6 following hands with 3 axes and 3 spades – Auguste – Edmond – Seraphin – Severin – Jessey – Jacot – We have two already out – Andre with a wagon and 4 mules, Butler with 3 Yoke of oxen and 3 chains - ."[481] In his journal he noted the ages of these men, which ranged from 23 to 44 years, and their estimated values, which ranged from $3000 to $3500. These estimates were made by Seneca Pace and clearly indicate the large increase in the value of slaves during the war.[482]

The government also made demands in the form of war taxes on the produce of the plantation. Planters were required to contribute one-tenth of their crops to supply the Confederate Army.[483] At the end of November, Phanor wrote:

> "29 Tuesday. Sent Corn to Mr. Carver Agent to Collect the War Tax –
> 6 Loads Corn to Taxe of 40 Bushels = 240 –
> "30 Wednesday. 8 loads Taxe Corn of 40 Bls - 320
> Sent one load of Planks one thousand feet = $40."[484]

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[475] Ibid., 8/17/1863.
[476] Ibid., 8/21/1863.
[477] Ibid., 9/18/1863.
[478] Ibid., 8/30-8/31/1863.
[479] Ibid., 10/14/1863.
[480] Ibid., 10/30/1863.
[481] Ibid., 11/14/1863.
[482] Journalier, 1861-64, 30.
[483] Seale, 1994, 113-114.
[484] R. A. B., 11/29-11/30/1863.

The shipments continued and by the end of the week the agent had received 1200 bushels of corn.[485] The next week Phanor sent in addition "4000# of fodder for Taxes."[486] Teams then began hauling planks for Camp Pratt – a camp for conscripts.[487] In September Phanor had noted that the army had started to conscript men aged between 40 and 45.

Through the fall, Phanor continued to make plans to evacuate livestock and slaves to Texas. On October 20th he noted in his journal that he had written to General E. Kirby Smith about a safeguard.[488] There is no evidence that he obtained this, nor that he managed to put his plan into action.

At the end of the year, instead of ginning cotton the hands were boiling sugar. Preparations for this had begun in early November when men "Brought Polls from pine wood to make shelter for Sugar Boiling -."[489] The next week hands were "Working at putting up Kettles for boiling Sugar," and when this was finished, "Dobbing Sugar Mill chimney."[490] Barrels were needed to store the sugar and Phanor managed to obtain 100 hoops for these.[491] On December 13th, Phanor noted that he had received a 'sugar boiler' from a neighbor, and three days later all hands were engaged in grinding canes and boiling sugar.[492] While some sugar had been grown in earlier years, it had not been done on an industrial scale, so the processing of the crop was a new challenge for Phanor and his workers. In his methodical way Phanor investigated the entire subject, making notes in one of his notebooks on the correct way to plant canes, and in another on how to build a sugar mill.[493]

The Events of 1864

The entries in the Cotton Plantation Record and Account Book for 1864 occupy the pages at the beginning of the 1863 book that had not been used before. The year began badly on the plantation with a mysterious sickness decimating the cattle. Phanor had begun to note the death of cattle before Christmas 1863. He could not explain the losses and they mounted rapidly; by the start of the next year 34 cattle were dead.[494] Phanor seems to have suspected the cattle had been poisoned by something growing in the pasture and wrote; "Turn the cattle out of the Pasture to try if the Disease will stop."[495] But the losses continued and at the beginning of February he noted: "Lost another Cow – making about 60 to 65 head already dead – Shall never put them in front pasture - ."[496]

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[485] Ibid., 12/3/1863.
[486] Ibid., 12/5/1863.
[487] Ibid., 12/7-12/8/1863.
[488] Journalier, 1861-64, 1863.
[489] R. A. B., 11/7/1863.
[490] Ibid., 11/16-11/19/1863.
[491] Ibid., 11/23/1863.
[492] Ibid., 12/13-12/16/1863.
[493] Notebook, 1860-61,18; R. A. B., 1863 pages following Table O.
[494] R. A. B., 1/1/1864.
[495] Ibid., 1/4/1864.
[496] Ibid., 2/5/1864.

Sickness was also affecting the human population. Many of the hands were in the hospital. Phanor attributed this to a spell of extremely cold weather.[497] Nevertheless, there were many tasks waiting to be done and the hands resumed their work routines. In the cold weather most of the men cut cordwood and the women shucked corn. It was good weather for killing hogs. Nineteen were butchered at the end of the first week in January.[498] As temperatures moderated, plowing began in last year's corn, sugar cane and rice fields. Some hands were also given work in Phanor's gardens. In the week of January 17th, they were putting up a fence and pulling up bois d'arc (*Maclura pomifera*), around the garden.[499] The next week they were manuring both the vegetable and parterre gardens with cow dung, and some planting and transplanting got underway.[500] A few hands were exempted from these outdoor tasks so they could spend their time weaving, spinning or making shoes.[501]

Meanwhile Phanor continued to provide assistance in various ways to Confederate military units, which were preparing for the next advance by the Union Army. For example on January 29th, he noted: "Butler left to day with 6 Yokes of oxen – 5 good chains to go to Natchitoches and thence to Alexandria with a Canon - ." Two weeks later he reported: "Butler Came Back today at 12 PM with the 6 Yoke of Oxen, the 5 chains with hooks broken and the Log chain – had left on the 29 of Jany – making 14 Days – Lost one mule died suddenly."[502]

The agricultural activities continued through the month of February. Early in the month there was another cold spell and hog killing. This time 22 hogs were butchered and Phanor sent for a load of hickory to smoke the meat.[503] When the ground had been prepared, planting began, starting with barley and sugar cane, and then corn, followed by rice and tobacco.[504] But at the end of the month these activities were interrupted by the threat of invasion. On the 29th of February, all hands were sent to cut trees and throw them in the Rigolet de Bon Dieu to try to block passage by an invading force.[505] Some of the hands returned after a few days and the cultivation of the fields was recommenced. All of the hands were back on the plantation by March 8th, but Phanor made his daily record of agricultural activities for only four more days. The last entry reads: "Fine and pleasant a little cool – Seraphin & Severin arrived this morning from fortifications."[506] Not quite all the empty pages in Affleck's book had been used up, so the end of Phanor's daily record indicated a disruption of the plantation's routine. This was caused by the start of the Red River Campaign.

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[497] Ibid., 1/1-7/1864.
[498] Ibid., 1/8/1864.
[499] Ibid., 1/19/1864.
[500] Ibid., 1/25-1/27/1864.
[501] Ibid., 1/7/1864, 1/18/1864, 1/21/1864, 1/31/1864.
[502] Ibid., 2/11/1864.
[503] Ibid., 2/7-2/9/1864.
[504] Ibid., 2/11/1864, 2/22/1864, 2/27/1864.
[505] Ibid., 2/29/1864.
[506] Ibid., 3/13/2864.

The invasion threatened in April 1863 became a dreadful reality in March 1864. The Union Army's goal in its Red River Campaign was to take Louisiana and Texas out of the war. At the urging of General-in-Chief Henry W. Halleck, Banks was to march his army into Texas by way of the Red River. One important advantage of this route was the possibility that the costs of the campaign could be met by seizing large amounts of the cotton stored in the region.[507] Around Natchitoches, for example, according to estimates by the Confederate Cotton Bureau 12,556 bales were being stored.[508] On March 15th, Fort De Russey on the river below Alexandria fell to a Union force under General A. J. Smith. This force had traveled from Vicksburg along the rivers, but now rapids at Alexandria obliged the army to wait for a rise in water levels to permit their naval support craft to continue upstream. The Union forces spent this time hunting through areas south of Alexandria for cotton that had not already been moved to safety or burned at the behest of the Confederate Government.[509] Eventually, the Union Army with its naval support moved upriver in the last week of March, following the courses of Cane River and the Rigolet de Bon Dieu. As the Confederate forces under Taylor retreated from Natchitoches, a company of cavalry was ordered to set fire to all the cotton stored at plantations along the river channels. One observer gave the following description:

> "On my return trip I saw the planters getting their cotton out of the mills and other buildings preparing to sacrifice it. The wind was very strong and the unbaled cotton was scattered in all directions and was caught on the small trees, it reminds one of a snow scene in a cold climate .....An unbelievable quantity of cotton fell victim to the flames .....In fact the road all the way to Natchitoches, a distance of 18 miles on could say was a solid flame, and the air was completely permeated with the smell of burning cotton."[510]

Union Forces reached Phanor's plantation by March 22nd. Nine days later, Phanor scribbled in his pocket journal the following account of the conduct of one unit of the Union Army.

> *"March 31/64 - Several have camped in the yard – the men have pillaged my house – the whites, the blacks, the officers as well as the soldiers. – April 1st. – General Emery also slept in the yard. He called on me. He was very polite, and though I did not ask him for protection, learning that I had been pillaged, he left me a guard despite my refusal. He told me he had eight thousand Infantrymen."*[511]

It is not clear how much damage was done to the plantation buildings during this first pillaging, nor whether cotton stored on the plantation had already been burned by order of the retreating Confederate Army or was captured at this time by advancing Union forces.

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[507] Taylor, 1990, 191.
[508] Winters, 1963, 322.
[509] Ibid., 322; Taylor, 1990, 192.
[510] Seale, 1994, 118-119, quoting Edwin C. Bearss, ed. Louisiana Confederate: Diary of Felix Pierre Poche. Trans. Eugene Watson Somdal. Natchitoches: Louisiana Studies Institute, Northwestern University,1972.
[511] Notebook, 1862-1864, 6.

Despite Phanor's earlier plans to evacuate his slaves to a safer location, most, if not all, of them were at the plantation when the Union forces arrived. About a quarter of them chose the uncertain freedom of the 'contrabands' and attached themselves to the Union Army. In 1866 Phanor's son, Alphonse, made a list of the hands who had "departed with the Yankees" on March 22nd 1864.[512] The list included 11 men, 10 women and 15 children.

There followed several days of apparent tranquility, for Phanor noted that he was planting peaches on April 1st and 3rd.[513] Then, on April 7th, he had a terrifying encounter with jayhawkers.

> *"Thursday 7 April – my house has been pillaged by a soldier – who having got the advantage of me put a pistol to my throat – the negroes ran away – the scoundrel threatened to fire at any moment before each demand, but in the course of the day all has been ruined, during the rain which greatly damaged the furniture and everything – even the ransacked books – a scene of Cannibals, ..."*[514]

The next day Phanor complained that his servants had abandoned him.

> *"Friday 8 – putting the house in order all day – Andrew, when I asked him to help me, answered, no, that he was leaving for Natchitoches, he stole from me many tools, my lathe and my little chest of tools, he is a scoundrel – Charles has abandoned the house, at least I haven't seen him since this morning. I ordered him to come sleep in the dining-room, the rascal was afraid, he told me himself."*[515]

While Phanor was attempting to restore order to his house, the advance of the Union Army was being halted at Mansfield, in the Pine Woods about 55 miles northwest of his plantation. Phanor gave a brief summary of the engagement in his notebook.[516] The information may well have come from his son Alphonse who took part in the battle.[517] Following a further engagement at Pleasant Hill, Banks' army retreated downriver. The burning of planter's property during this retreat blackened a wide area between Natchitoches and Alexandria. Taylor, whose men harried the retreating enemy, reported:

> "The destruction of this country by the enemy exceeds anything in history. For many miles every dwelling house, every Negro cabin, every cotton gin, every corn-crib, and even chicken-houses have been burned to the ground; every fence torn down and the fields torn up by the hoofs of horses and wheels of wagons."[518]

The most serious damage suffered by Phanor's plantation probably occurred during this return passage of the Union Army along the river. A year later in a letter to a sister living in Nantes, France, Phanor reported his losses as follows.

> *"I had almost 900 bales of cotton, a fortune at this moment, but all of that was destroyed by the flames of the Yankees and the Confederates. My magnificent cotton mill with its steam engine is burned. I have left, four bales of cotton, my*

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[512] Journalier, 1864-1866, end notes.
[513] Notebook, 1862-1864, 13.
[514] Ibid., 13 – 14.
[515] Ibid., 14 – 15.
[516] Ibid., 12.
[517] Breedlove, 1999, 26.
[518] Official Records, Ser. I, Vol. XXXIV, Pt. I, 580 – 1. Quoted in Winters 1963, 365.

house, my stores, my camp and my land. There are some, even more unfortunate than I, for they have lost cotton, negroes, and home. I still have all my blacks with me, they work as in the past, with the exception of two or three whom I have decided to send away."[519]

The loss of the new steam gin was a major blow, but the other plantation buildings and the Main House had been spared. And one might question the claim of 900 bales of cotton lost. It is not clear where such a store would have come from, given his figures cited above for the number of bales being stored in 1861. Moreover in March 1865, Phanor reported in his journal: "Speculators hauling my cotton sold to the C. S."[520] Perhaps that was the surviving four bales. But there may have been some exaggeration in Phanor's letter, he was certainly very angry when he wrote it. His letter also seems to have understated the number of slaves who had departed without his permission.

Whatever the exact amount of damage, Phanor, his family and his plantation survived the Red River Campaign in much better shape than many neighboring families and properties. Five months later, in September 1864, Alphonse married Elizabeth Eliza Lecomte. At the Lecomte plantation the main house had been burnt, but the two families managed to celebrate the nuptials in high style. The *Natchitoches Times* commented: "We could hardly realize, as we beheld the superb cake, that destitution or want ever scowled upon our happy land."[521]

In September, Phanor recommenced a record of events on the plantation in his journal. The entries are partly in English and partly in French. At the beginning of the month, sickness was again afflicting the workers, and the passage of Confederate troops was causing further damage to crops.

> "Friday 9 .....Lost a fine negro Boy Josep of Typhoid fever."
> "Saturday 10. Warm and Sultry Heavy Dew. The Regiment of Brig. Genl. Debray Camp here yesterday and plaid the devil with my sugar cane & new corn – it is the old regt. of Gl. Debray under the Command of Major Owens."[522]

But despite these troubles, perhaps in part as a gesture of defiance, Phanor was able to reestablish the plantation's work regime. In September, hands were cutting rice and tobacco, and, in October and November, they harvested corn, sugar cane, pumpkins and sweet potatoes.[523]

As the harvest proceeded, Phanor was able to share items with friends and family members.

> "Monday 15. Damp fogg – Braking Corn – Sent 15 Baskets Sweet potatoes to Mme. Breazeale – 20 ..... 4 Bags Wheat 1 Basket pears – and to Judge Warren Moise the Girl Virginia –"

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[519] Correspondence: Phanor Prud'homme to Madame Jean Roques, June 22, 1865. Translation: Eve Mouton.
[520] Journalier, 1864 – 66, 3/16/1865.
[521] Natchitoches Times, n.d. Quoted in Breedlove, 1999, 37.
[522] Journalier, 1864 – 1866, 9/9 and 9/10/1864.
[523] Ibid., 9/12 and 9/27/1864; 10/21 and 10/22/1864; 11/4 and 11/15/1864.

> Sunday 27. Cloudy – Warm. Finished last night digging sweet Potatoes – 15 Bags to my Achille – Alphonse started today for Alexandria gave to him receipts to try to collect –."[524]

Alphonse had been relieved of his duties in July because of his wounds, and was now the enrolling officer for Natchitoches Parish.[525]

Most of the cattle on the plantation survived the passage of the armies, perhaps because they were hidden from view in the bayou swamps. In September, Phanor counted 97 head of cattle recovered from the woods.[526] And in December he was able to increase the size of the herd. "Wednesday 7. Warm S wind – Went to Natchitoches bought 25 heads of beeves at $40 the head."[527]

It is not clear what happened to the more valuable draft animals on the plantation as the armies came through, but many must have escaped appropriation by the soldiers, for Phanor was able to continue agricultural operations. However, the confederate authorities continued to requisition some animals and supplies. In December, Phanor noted that he was pasturing 17 government mules in the savane.[528]

As the year closed a degree of normality had been recovered. The daily events on the plantation once again reflected the passage of the seasons – so, for example, as the river rose, Phanor was "obliged to take off my bridge.''[529] And the treatment of the workforce does not seem to have changed – as the year drew to its close tasks were being assigned, shoes issued and holidays given.

The Events of 1865

At the beginning of the year, Phanor worried about the possibility of a return of the Union forces and asked again for a safeguard for the removal of his workers and other possessions to safety. On January 17th, Henry W. Allen, the Confederate Governor of Louisiana, wrote from Shreveport to tell Phanor that the endorsement of General Kirby Smith was awaited and sought to reassure him.

> "In the meantime, let me assure you that there is no immediate danger of a new invasion by the enemy and therefore no necessity of removing your negroes in a hurry."[530]

This reassurance proved to be well founded and there was no repetition of the events of the previous year. The war came to an end without further military conflict in the Red River region.

In his journal, Phanor made few references to the final stages of the war. In March, he noted that three hands sent to work on fortifications at Grand Ecore had returned with

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[524] Ibid., 11/15 and 11/27/1864.
[525] Breedlove, 1999, 26.
[526] Journalier, 9/26/1864.
[527] Ibid., 12/7/1864.
[528] Ibid., 12/6/1864.
[529] Ibid., 12/21/1864.
[530] Correspondence, H. W. Allen, Governor of the State of Louisiana, 1/17/65. P. F. P. Folder 146.

certificates of discharge.[531] On April 22nd he wrote: "Cool & clear. Fixing Lestan's Bridge – heard of assassination of Lincoln & Jimard."[532]

Phanor complained of increasing lawlessness, as the prospect of defeat became a reality. In March, for example, he removed his front fence to keep it safe from thieves, and in May he complained that some of his horses and cattle had been stolen.[533] After the surrender on June 2nd of the Confederacy's Trans-Mississippi forces, more of his former slaves chose to leave the plantation. On June 21st, Phanor noted: "Wednesday 21. Fine & Clear Jules Seraphin Collins & Cesaire ran away to Natchitoches last night – came back at night."[534] Two days later, Cesaire who was apparently regarded as the leader was sent to the Provost Marshal, who removed him from the plantation. Two women elected to go with him, though one of them returned later. The rest of the workforce remained on the plantation, but there were other challenges to Phanor's authority. On July 21st for example, he noted: "Severin was found in the Grist mill taking meal."[535]

On July 29th, Phanor described the situation in a letter to his sister in France.

> *"Nothing new since my last letter, the country is as quiet as it can be. The great uncertainty for us is the future. What are we going to do, with the new type of work? Will we be able to make the negroes work? That is the great question, for me the problem is more than doubtful. Up to the present, all of mine who did not leave with the Yankees in the spring of 1864, are still with me and continue to work. I had to make a contract with them in the presence of an officer of the government to arrange to finish the crop of this year, 1865. They remain with me on rather minimum conditions, I give them the care, that I had always given them when they were slaves, I dress them, and I give them each 10 bushels of corn. In the contract, I promise to keep and to give the same fare and food to all, the old ones who cannot work, I have 5 of them, and as for children under 12 years of age, there are 46.*
> *I would not have wanted to send them way from the plantation anyhow. Next January, I will have to make a new contract with those whom I shall want to keep. This new contract will be for the whole year. How I will be able to manage with them, I don't know too much. The attempts at free work made on the River have not succeeded. I will try to manage with mine to take part of the crop, I would prefer that type of contract. If I have to pay them every 3 months, as the law requires, I do not think I shall keep many. We shall see, it is useless to worry before then."*[536]

Despite these problems and perhaps in deliberate defiance of the disordered situation, Phanor kept his hands busy in his fields and gardens. His journal contains a long list of all

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[531] J.ournalier, 3/4/1865.
[532] Ibid., 4/22/1865.
[533] Ibid., 3/21/1865; 5/22/1865.
[534] Ibid., 6/21/1865.
[535] Ibid., 7/21/1865.
[536] Correspondence: Phanor Prud'homme to Madame Jean Roques, July 29, 1865. Translation: Eve Mouton.

the items planted that spring.[537] In the fields they planted all the food crops that had been successfully grown in previous years, including sugar cane, beans of various kinds, melons, potatoes, millet, rice, and of course corn. In addition some cotton was reintroduced. So Phanor was anticipating the revival of the cotton trade as soon as the war ended. In the gardens, the gardeners were busy planting, pruning and grafting. In June he noted planting vines across the river from Madame Metoyer's place, and on the near side near the landing.

In the last three months of Phanor's life, he seems to have succeeded in restoring some sort of order to the plantation. In July, he reported that everything was growing fine, though he had the misfortune to lose eight oxen, killed by lightening in a summer storm.[538] At the end of August, Powell arrived from Texas with mules and horses; presumably to replace some of the draft animals that had been lost.[539] In September, cotton picking began. In his journal Phanor made a note of a new type of machine that interested him, a combined harvester:

> "McCormick Combined Reper & Mower, a Combined thrasher & Separator – With a horse power, but as the horse power is the dearer, it could be attached to the Gin power --- Received by Powell."[540]

His last two entries in his journal read: "Thursday 28. Cloudy [Pace was married today] stock in cornfield. Friday 29. Clear."[541]

Phanor died on October 12th, 1865, at 59 years of age. The succession inventory made at that time confirms that the plantation emerged from the war with limited damage to its buildings, equipment and livestock.[542] Nevertheless the wealth of the family had been greatly reduced. In 1853, after Lise's death, the family wealth was appraised at $141, 345; but after Phanor's death, it was appraised at $45,986, barely a third of the pre-war figure.[543] That valuation was based on a summation of the values of his real estate, movables, horses – including bloodstock held in partnership with Lecomte, and cash and claims – including "uncurrent" Confederate money. The decline in the family's wealth no doubt reflected declines in the value of many and probably all of these; but the most important change was in the real estate, since much of the family's wealth had been in the form of human real estate. In 1850, Emanuel's slaves had been sold for $60,366; in 1853, Phanor and Lise's slaves were valued at $77,601. Their estimated value continued to increase during the prosperous 1850s, and during the war the value of each of the slaves sent to work on the fortifications was estimated at $3000 to $3500. Phanor had been one of the largest slaveholders in Natchitoches Parish owning 147 slaves in 1860, now none of these people could be counted as property and all that wealth had disappeared.

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[537] Journalier, 1865, Plantations dans le jardin et dans le champ.
[538] Journalier, 7/23-7/26/1865.
[539] Ibid., 8/31/1865.
[540] Ibid., 9/5/1865.
[541] Ibid., 9/28-9/29/1865.
[542] Breedlove, 1999, 38-39; Natchitoches Courthouse Records – check originals for further details.
[543] Ibid.

A number of sales were held to dispose of Phanor's property and settle his estate. In December 1866, his sons Alphonse and Emanuel bought the plantation for $12,500.[544] That was less than half of its pre war valuation. In 1850, Phanor had bought the plantation, which was then smaller, for $15,000, and in 1853, its value had been estimated at $28,500. This loss in value was common to all plantations in the Red River region, and it has been estimated that after the war real property throughout Louisiana was worth rather less than one third its prewar value.[545]

[544] Succession of Pierre Phanor Prud'homme, 186, Natchitoches Parish Courthouse; Breedlove, 1999, 41.
[545] Shugg, 1939, 193-4.

CHAPTER FOUR
LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PLANTATION CIRCA 1860

SOURCES

The Prud'homme Family Papers provide a wealth of information on the operation of the plantation, but there are no plans that illustrate its layout. There are a few land surveys, but these only show section boundaries. An 1873 survey drawn up at the time the plantation was divided between Alphonse and Emmanuel shows the overall boundaries of the plantation at the end of Phanor's life.[546] This survey indicates two features in addition to the section boundaries: a levee and a fence. It is the most detailed plan found so far of the antebellum plantation.

The following description and accompanying Period Plan of the plantation circa 1860 has been pieced together from an analysis of the written record, an archaeological survey, a study of 20th century documents such as a soil survey and an aerial photograph, and a consideration of evidence provided by the present landscape.

The written record is voluminous, but unfortunately neither Phanor nor his overseers found it necessary to describe the exact location of most of the things they were recording. We have sifted through geographical references from the record-keeping books and journals, but there remain many questions about the layout. We have also checked through Lestan Prud'homme's Journal for any references that describe Phanor's plantation in the early 1850s. In addition we have analyzed record-keeping books compiled by Alphonse in 1866 and 1867, on the assumption that the layout of the plantation was not changed until the property was divided in 1873.[547]

The archaeological survey was made in 1997 by a team from the Southeast Archaeological Center of the NPS.[548] The team headed by Christina Miller and Susan Wood, was under the direction of Bennie Keel, Regional Archaeologist. Their findings are useful in addressing questions about the location of buildings in the area now owned by the NPS. But this area includes only a very small part of the antebellum plantation.

20th century sources such as a 1921 soil survey and a 1941 aerial photograph provide pictures of the plantation after it had been divided and managed by one or two later

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[546] Partition of Land, Map of the Plantation, J. Alphonse Prudhomme Surveyor, 1873.
[547] Copy of Lestan Prud'homme Journal 1850-1852. Northwestern State University, Irma Sompayrac Willard Collection; R. A. B., 1852 and 1866, P. F. P. folder 271; R. A. B., 1867, P. F. P. folder 279.
[548] Miller and Wood, 2000.

generations of the family.[549] Nevertheless there is reason to believe that there was a large amount of continuity in the landscape, since the land use remained essentially the same, and the land continued to be worked with draft animals. These sources have therefore proved useful in understanding some of the geographical references in the historical documents.

The landscape has changed a great deal in the last 50 years, but the present landscape contains some important clues to its historical character. This evidence is provided by features such as the historic buildings, old trees and fence-line vegetation, the historic parterre, and minor humps and hollows indicating the location of paths and ditches. Interviews with Prud'homme family members have aided us in interpreting these signs.[550]

In the following description and Period Plan, some features of the layout have been identified with greater confidence than others. Questions and uncertainties are indicated in the plan, and it is our hope that these will prove useful in guiding further research.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISTICS

The characteristics of the plantation landscape are described under the following ten headings:

Property Boundaries,
Spatial Organization,
Cane River and the Bayous,
Roads and Lanes,
Cultivated Ground,
Pastures and Hayfields,
Woods and Swamps,
Clusters of Buildings, Yards and Gardens,
Cemeteries,
Rhythms of Life on the Plantation.

The plantation landscape was a dialogue between people and the land. Natural systems that were discussed in Chapter One strongly influenced the development of the plantation system, discussed in Chapter Two. Some of the resulting landscape characteristics were typical of cotton plantations throughout the bottomlands of Louisiana, but some of the characteristics were peculiar to this place. What was typical and what was unusual will be discussed further in a later chapter on the historical significance of this landscape.

PROPERTY BOUNDARIES

The survey made by Alphonse in 1873 when the plantation was to be divided mapped the boundaries of the plantation at Phanor's death. These are shown on the Period Plan. The property encompassed 1904.36 acres.

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[549] Bureau of Soils, 1921, Soil Survey of Natchitoches Parish, J. Kerr et al. 1395-1442; USDA aerial photograph CQJ-8A-52, 1/19/41.
[550] Prud'homme, Kenneth and Vivian Prud'homme Duggan, Interview with authors, June 5th and 6th 2000.

The form of the property had some of the characteristics of the colonial land grants, for it extended back from the river to the bayous on each side. However its irregular shape indicated that the plantation was a composite of several tracts acquired at different times. All of the additions to the Rousseau tract were located on the right bank – descending – so that 70% of the acreage was on that side by 1860. At first the plantation had barely reached Bayou Brevelle, but eventually it extended far across that stream and reached Bayou Natchez.

In several places the boundaries followed natural features, such as the banks of the river or bayous. Elsewhere the original arpent lines had become inscribed in the landscape by the construction of roads, lanes and drainage ditches along the boundary lines. These man-made features are discussed further in later sections of this chapter. In some places there would have been no visible demarcation of the boundary on the ground, and in one place there was a misunderstanding lasting many years about where the boundary actually ran. This misunderstanding, which involved the southern boundary in Section 51, has been described in the previous chapter.

Alphonse made some field notes while he was doing the boundary survey that record the types of trees he used as boundary markers. These trees will be discussed further in the section on Woods and Swamps.

The 1873 survey also recorded the names of the owners of adjacent properties. People related to Phanor by blood or marriage owned most of the adjacent plantations. Antoine Prud'homme, brother of Jean-Pierre Emanuel owned the next plantation upstream. His son Lestan, who was the father of Lestan the diarist, occupied it. Like Phanor, Antoine had land on both sides of the river. Narcisse and John Baptiste Prud'homme owned the land across the Bayou Brevelle. The Metoyer family, which was related by marriage to Phanor, owned the land downstream from the Rousseau tract. Phanor's mother-in-law, Madame Benjamin Metoyer lived on Metoyer Point, and her son Octave farmed the land across the river. Only the land beyond the plantation's southern and southwestern boundaries belonged to people who were not relatives, but some of these, such as Gongre, were at least business associates. Nearly all the adjacent land was part of large plantations, which were owned by French Creole slaveholders. However there was at least one smallholding, occupied if not owned by a "free Negro." On the left hand bank immediately above Phanor's property was the "Langlais Place." This property was not shown on the 1873 survey, but its location was described in Lestan Prud'homme's journal and in one of the record-keeping books. [551]

SPATIAL ORGANIZATION

It was considered a mark of a well-ordered plantation that the layout be planned with a precise rectilinear geometry. In Louisiana this was often found on sugar plantations, but it was also found on some of the larger cotton plantations. This regimentation reflected the hierarchical organization of plantation society, and expressed a planter's concern to

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[551] Lestan Prud'homme Journal, 1/16/1852; and R. A. B., 4/10/1867.

maintain discipline and efficiency in his enterprise. The geometry was imposed on the flat bottomland spreading out from a "Big House" beside the riverfront. [552]

Because of the absence of detailed plans, it is difficult to say how much regimentation there was on Phanor's plantation. Based on the limited evidence available, we think that there was indeed some ordering geometry, but that this never dominated the natural patterns of the floodplain. The clearest evidence of regimentation is to be found in the landscape around the Main House, where there remains today evidence of a rectilinear arrangement in the gardens and the oak allee. This is considered further in the section on Buildings, Yards and Gardens. The lanes, which led from the riverfront to the bayous, extended lines from this orthogonal geometry out into the larger landscape. On the left hand side – descending – of the plantation, we think there was a long straight lane opposite the oak allee. And on the right hand side, there was another lane running in a straight line. However this lane appears to have been centered on the Doctor's House rather than the Main House. These lanes are discussed further in the section on Roads and Lanes.

It is our hypothesis that geometric lines were introduced early in the history of the plantation when the land was surveyed and cleared. But, over time, that artificial order came to be seen as less important than an ability to work with the natural systems governed by the river and bayous. This awareness was reflected in the vocabulary of the place. Phanor and his overseers used mostly the river and other natural features in the landscape to provide orientation in their records of agricultural operations. They referred to places as being on "this side" or the "far side" of the river; "above" or "below" meant upstream or downstream; and "front" or "back" indicated distance from the river. The bayous provided place names: Ataho and Noir on the far side and Brevelle and Congo on this side. Significant differences in soil and drainage distinguished certain areas such as "Sandy Ridge" on the far side. These terms became as important as the lanes as a means of describing the location of a particular field and agricultural operation. They will be considered further in the section on Cultivated Ground. During and after the antebellum period the straight lines of the lanes were altered. This reinforces our hypothesis that a formal geometry gave way to natural patterns over time.

CANE RIVER AND THE BAYOUS

Cane River and the bayous were important presences in the lives of all people living on the Cote Joyeuse and the Isle Brevelle. For those living on a floodplain, the rise and fall of the waters was of obvious concern. In addition, the river provided an artery for the movement of people and goods, and, at the same time, it was an obstacle to be negotiated whenever one moved from east to west.

The water in Cane River could rise with a startling rapidity. In early April 1861, Seneca Pace estimated the water had risen 10 or 12 feet in 48 hours. This was no doubt a misstatement, and he meant inches not feet, but on another occasion he referred to the

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[552] Kniffen, 1963, 296; Vlach, 1993, 2-12.

water rising "from a bore," presumably like a tidal wave.[553] The possibility of flooding had been a concern when Emanuel built the Main House. The living space was raised 6 feet above the ground on brick piers to protect the house and its inhabitants. But when floodwaters came, they might not have spilled over directly from the river, but instead spread from the bayous. The only documented case of waters spilling over the banks of the river was in 1849, and even in that flood the banks in front of the Main House remained above the waters. Many years later in 1908, Phanor's son Alphonse wrote:

> "The highest water we have had in this section within my recollection and of which I have record was in 1849, when the highest stage was reached Aug. 15th -- - Cane River went over its banks in several places and we had in front of my house 18 to 20 inches of bank."[554]

In his journal, Lestan Prud'homme, Phanor's second cousin, referred to the losses suffered by planters during the 1849 floods. Writing in May 1850, he noted the general fear of rising waters.

> "A rise is reported above and as the river is pretty full, and rising here, though the rise at this place is presumed to have been occasioned by the rain, planters are fearful of an overflow; which if it happened would complete the ruin already commenced last year by the water which came to a height never yet heard of, and coming in the month of August, destroyed all the crops."[555]

Lestan's diary suggests planters lived in a constant state of anxiety, and were prey to rumors of floods originating upstream and now heading towards them, which much of the time proved to be exaggerated if not completely false.[556]

There is no evidence in the historical documents or on the ground today that artificial levees were ever built along this stretch of Cane River. Instead levees were constructed along the bayous. When there was flooding, waters submerged the "pays bas" and spread from there across the cultivated ground. In order to reduce potential damage on the west bank, a levee was built beside the Bayou Brevelle. It is not known when it was constructed; it may have been built in Emanuel's time. There are several references to its existence in the historical records, but no reference to its construction has been found.[557] We do not know the northern limit of the levee on Phanor's property, but to be effective it must have run most of the length of the bayou and there is a levee along its entire length today. To the southwest, where the boundary of the plantation left the bayou, the line of the levee is shown on the 1873 survey. Following the property boundary, the levee turned and entered Section 38. It then turned again and ran across Sections 38 and 51, see the Period Plan. The levee crossed the headwaters of the small bayou that is thought to be the Bayou Congo referred to in the record-keeping books. In 1861 Pace mentioned that the women workers were repairing a dike and making a dam on "Congo Bayo." They were probably working on a flood control device in the levee.[558]

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[553] R. A. B., 4/7/1861 and R. A. B., 3/1/1857.
[554] Correspondence, Alphonse Prud'homme letter to Gervais Lombard, Asst. State Engineer, August 8th 1908; P. F. P. folder 153.
[555] Lestan Prud'homme Journal, 5/10/1850.
[556] See for example Lestan Prud'homme, 3/26/1852.
[557] See for example R. A. B., 3/19/1860 and 9/17/1860.
[558] R. A. B., 7/3/2861 and 7/4/1861.

There were also levees on the eastern side of the plantation to prevent flooding from the Bayou Ataho. In May 1866, Alphonse wrote:

> "28 May Worked all day with all hands at the Levees on other side and this. Holding water still in check and hope to save what corn I have out and all the cotton."[559]

It seems certain the work referred to was repair to existing levees that would have been constructed during Phanor's or Emanuel's time. We have not determined the exact line of the levees, but a search beside the bayou might reveal evidence of them on the ground today.

By the 1850s low waters in Cane River were as much a source of concern as high waters to planters along its banks. The Cane River was closed to steamboats for about two-thirds of each year. The accessibility that had originally encouraged the settlement of the Cote Joyeuse and Isle Brevelle was compromised. In part this was due to the diversion of the main flow of the Red River into the Rigolet de Bon Dieu, but that channel was also closed part of each year. In dry seasons, Alexandria was the head of navigation on the Red River and Natchitoches was inaccessible by boat. In his journal, Lestan describes the joy in the town when a steamboat arrived in March 1852 after a long dry spell.

> "The Kimball (steamboat) went up the Bondieu Sunday morning and got to Natchitoches at about 5 P. M. Several rounds of the canon were shot at her arrival expressive of the joy and satisfaction of the inhabitants of this place, seeing the navigation once more established after having been stopped for the last 8 or 9 months."[560]

Low water levels in winter were a particular problem for planters, as this was the season when they normally shipped their bales of cotton and received their provisions. Most of the traffic in people and goods was headed to or from New Orleans, a journey of between 2 and 3 days. Lestan Prud'homme mentions a scheme to build a railroad link from Natchitoches to the New Orleans and Opelousas Railroad, but nothing came of it in the antebellum years and the region remained dependent on riverboats.[561]

Pace carefully recorded the passage of the first steamboat to pass the plantation each winter. In 1857, the Steamer Montgomery passed up on December 21st. In 1860, as noted in the previous chapter, the Steamboat Violet ran aground on Metoyer Point on December 2nd after picking up 100 bales of cotton from Phanor's plantation. While the river was navigable, an average of two or three steamboats passed the plantation each week. Their timing was unpredictable. Olmsted described his frustration in New Orleans waiting for a boat to take him upstream to Natchitoches, as its departure was repeatedly delayed while it waited for freight.[562] Because the serpentine course of the river meant smoke could occasionally be seen long before a steamboat came into view, the arrival of a boat could sometimes be anticipated. But boats could also arrive and depart unexpectedly, requiring frantic dashes by those hoping to travel.[563]

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[559] R. A. B., 5/28/1866.
[560] Lestan Prud'homme, 3/16/1852.
[561] Ibid., 9/10/1852 and 10/10/1852.
[562] Olmsted, 1856, 603-607.
[563] Lestan Prud'homme, 2/17/1851.

As water levels sank, alternative routes had to be found for travelers and freight. When Cane River went dry and the Rigolet de Bon Dieu remained open, steamboats could get to Natchitoches by coming down Cane River from its junction with the Rigolet. When this happened the Prud'hommes used Azeron Favron's landing in Natchitoches. In May 1860, for example, teams were sent to Favron's twice, once to haul general freight and once to haul a piano for the plantation. At the end of the month a carriage was sent there to meet Phanor on his return from a trip to New Orleans.[564] Sometimes freight was also collected from an unnamed landing on the Rigolet to the east of the plantation, and occasionally from further downriver below Cloutierville on Cane River, or from Alexandria.

At the plantation, there was a landing on the right hand bank near the old gin. According to oral histories, tentatively supported by archaeological investigations, the old gin was located near the northern boundary of the plantation.[565] That would position the landing on the outside of a major bend in the river, at a point where the swing of the current against the bank would maintain a relatively deep channel. In his journal, Lestan Prud'homme talked about swimming in the river at "Phanor's Landing" in the summer of 1850.[566] From this account one gets the impression there was only one landing. We have found no references to a second steamboat landing, but we think there must have been some type of landing on the left bank for flatboats which ferried people, animals and equipment between the two banks of the river.

Cane River divided the plantation into two parts, so it was a barrier as well as an artery. People, draft animals, carts, wagons and machinery had to be taken across the channel almost every day. In the winter this was done by flatboat and pirogue. Every plantation beside the river had these craft, and Lestan Prud'homme makes frequent references to their use. For example one day in May 1850, he found himself temporarily inconvenienced.

> "I got up early to resume the work commenced yesterday evening, but I was detained, having to cross the river, (both the pirogue and flat being on the opposite side) till after breakfast, which however was sooner than usual."[567]

In 1858 Phanor noted in his journal that he had a new flatboat measuring 32 feet long and 11 feet wide.[568] Some plantations had boatmen, but we have found no mention of such a person on Phanor's plantation.

Once the channel became fordable in the spring, people and animals could wade across at the shallows. Sometimes this became possible as early as the end of March, or beginning of April.[569] And once it was reasonably certain that steamboat traffic had halted for the season, a bridge was erected to facilitate the crossing. The timing of its erection and

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[564] R. A. B., 5/7/1860, 5/16/1860, and 5/29/1860.
[565] Miller and Wood, 2000, 73.
[566] Lestan Prud'homme, 7/11/1850.
[567] Ibid., 5/28/2850.
[568] Journalier, 1856-1861, 3/27/1858. See also R. A. B., 10/191860 for a reference to the pirogue.
[569] R. A. B., 3/31/1861 and R. A. B., 4/15/1860.

removal has been discussed in the previous chapter. We do not know where the bridging point was in the antebellum period.

Pace made several references to the hands "working" the banks of the river. The movement of people, animals and equipment across the river required that ways be cut down the steep banks to the bridge and fording spots.[570] And sometimes work was required to repair the effects of natural erosion by the river; for example in March 1862, Phanor recorded the hands "*filling a little crevasse in front of the house.*"[571] It also appears from the records that the trash gang cleaned the banks of unwanted vegetation. Pace mentioned that grass grew by the river, so there were parts of the batture that were not overshadowed by trees.[572] There is no mention of livestock grazing by the river, so the work was probably done to improve visibility to and from the water, particularly near the landing.

ROADS AND LANES

At the time the plantation was established, roads were less important than the river as a means of transportation, but over the years as water levels sank the importance of roads rose. In this region there were two categories of roads: river roads, which ran along the banks of the rivers, and lanes, which led away from the rivers giving access to the backlands of plantations and bayous.[573] River roads followed both sides of Cane River, but the road on the right bank provided the most direct route to Natchitoches. This was a journey of about 15 miles, that usually took about 3 hours by horse or carriage, if one did not stop to pay a social call en route.[574] Unlike the public river roads, lanes were often fenced and gated, but this may have been more a matter of confining livestock than restricting public access. In the close-knit French Creole society, with its customary hospitality, people apparently were free to move across each other's lands. Of course this applied only to the dominant class; the movement of enslaved people was very restricted and closely supervised.

There were many references to roads and lanes in the plantation records but little to indicate their exact locations. The earliest map that has been found of the road network is the 1921 soil survey.[575] Where bends in the river formed points the river roads took shortcuts – usually called cut-offs - across the base of the points. Within the boundaries of the plantation, on the right hand side of the river the map showed a river road with two cut-offs, and one lane, and on the left hand bank a river road and two lanes. There is evidence that all of these existed in the antebellum period, so they are shown on the Period Plan.

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[570] See for example R. A. B., 7/23/1857; R. A. B., 9/26/1860.
[571] Journalier, 3/19/1862; see also R. A. B., 3/16/1866.
[572] R. A. B., 8/26/1860.
[573] Gregory and Moran, 1996, 81-84.
[574] Lestan Prud'homme, 6/25/1852.
[575] Bureau of Soils, 1921.

One of the cut-offs on the right hand side of the river followed the northern boundary of the plantation. As noted in the previous chapter, this section of river road was referred to in the record of the 1850 sale. To the south, the cut-off across Metoyer Point was not mentioned in the 1850 sale - because it lay beyond the limits of Emanuel's landholdings - but it is mentioned in Lestan Prud'homme's journal in 1852.[576] The 1873 survey showed that in this location the boundary of the Phanor's plantation departed slightly from the original land grant arpent lines. There must have been a trade of land across the road, in which Phanor obtained a small amount of Section 105 and the Metoyers gained a similar amount of Section 40.

Between these cut-offs, a lane ran from the riverbank near the Main House back to the Bayou Brevelle. There are references to this lane in the plantation records, several of which mentioned the maintenance of fences and ditches alongside it. For example in February 1861, Pace had the hands cleaning drainage ditches in order to accelerate the removal of water after a flood. He noted their progress as follows: "Ditch on lane fence finish as far as water of lake permit."[577] It is clear that the lane ran past the lake that still exists beside the bayou, but it is not clear where it went beyond the lake. The 1921 Bureau of Soils map showed the lane turning southwestward to run beside the Bayou Brevelle, and eventually dividing with one branch continuing to follow the stream and one turning westward to cross the Bayou Natchez. It is quite possible that these lines indicate the historic course of the lane and that it was the route followed by Phanor's hands when they were sent to the sawmill.

According to the 1921 map, where the lane began at the riverbank near the Main House, it turned through two right angles and formed a dogleg before running in a straight line to the bayou. If this was the historic orientation and alignment of the lane in this area, it raises interesting questions. Why was there a dogleg in the lane? Why was the long straight stretch oriented on the cottage that became the Doctor's House and not the Main House? The explanation might lie in the history of the area before the cottage was built in the 1830s. As we do not know that history, we can only speculate that there was some logic to the layout that is no longer apparent.

On the left hand side of the river one lane ran through the middle of the Rousseau tract and the other followed its southern boundary. There are many references in the plantation records to a central lane on this side of the river with cotton fields arranged on either side of it. We think this lane originally ran in a straight line southeastwards from a point on the riverbank opposite the Main House and its oak allee. In the 1921 soil survey map the lane was shown running from a point on the bank further downstream and making two bends before reaching the line that we believe was the original alignment. We think the line shown on the 1921 map reflects changes at the river crossing that occurred after the Civil War. These are discussed in the next chapter. The original lane can be seen very clearly on the 1941 aerial photograph, so it continued to exist though it was no longer much used because it did not lead to a crossing. The geometry of the original alignment is interesting. The straight line appears to have originated directly opposite the oak allee,

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[576] Lestan Prud'homme, 3/2/1852.
[577] R. A. B., 2/27/1861.

but it did not continue along that axis, running instead at a slight angle to it so that it was parallel to the arpent line at the northern edge of the Rousseau tract. The line headed towards the Bayou Ataho. The lane did not actually reach the bayou, but if the line were extended it would have intersected the bayou where it meets the southern boundary of the Rousseau tract. All of this strongly suggests the lane was an early feature of the spatial organization of the plantation, planned on paper, and then superimposed on the natural landscape.

The lane that followed the southern boundary of the plantation on the left hand side of the river was sometimes called the Bon Dieu Road.[578] An early 20th century Parish map and the 1921 soil survey map showed this lane crossing the Bayou Ataho and proceeding eastwards, then dividing and crossing several other bayous before reaching the main channel of the Red River.[579]

We can be almost certain there was a third lane that followed the northern boundary of the plantation on this side of the river. In a journal entry made in March 1862, Phanor wrote about surveying with Lestan Prud'homme, a line for a drainage ditch to flow into the Ataho, located between Phanor's land and Antoine's land. Both agreed to give 40 feet of their property to accommodate the drainage way. Phanor noted: "*Lestan will give the road if the crevasse grows to 60 feet.*"[580] The 1921 soil survey did not show a lane on the boundary between Phanor's property and Antoine's plantation, but the 1941 aerial photograph showed a track on Antoine's side of the line.

The repair and maintenance of roads and lanes was one of the regular duties of the plantation workforce. The earth surface must have become deeply rutted particularly in wet weather, and there were frequent references to digging and cleaning ditches beside the roads. These ditches also served to drain adjacent fields, so they are discussed further in the next section. Bridges were built across the larger ditches to carry the lanes on both sides of the river. In addition, there were two major bridges, one at the crossing of Bayou Natchez on the way to the sawmill, and another on Bayou Ataho, no doubt to carry the Bon Dieu Road.[581]

CULTIVATED GROUND

The cultivated ground on the plantation comprised between 900 and 1000 acres, or rather more than half of the total acreage of the plantation. It was divided into two parts by the river, and each part extended back to the forests and swamps beside the bayous. On each side of the river the cultivated ground formed a large open field, which was enclosed by fences. Each field was subdivided into smaller units called "cuts," which were separated by drainage ditches and turnrows. We do not know the exact boundaries of the fields, but

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[578] See for example R. A. B., 1/13/1860.
[579] Map of Natchitoches Parish, (no date, circa 1910.) Northwestern State University of Louisiana, Cammie G. Henry Research Center.
[580] Journalier, 3/19/1862.
[581] See for example R. A. B., 1/26/1862; R. A. B., 2/13/1866; R. A. B., 2/2/1867 for references to bridges in lanes. The bridge over the Bayou Natchez has been discussed in the previous chapter. The bridge over the Ataho was referred to in R. A. B., 2/7/1867.

it is possible to make some deductions from the record-keeping books and journals, and the 1873 survey.

On the right bank, almost all of the cultivated ground lay to the south of the lane to Bayou Brevelle. Along its northern boundary the cultivated land abutted the savane. In the record-keeping books there were references to plowing and planting having begun at the lane or the Quarters.[582] There was a reference after the Civil War to plowing having begun at the Carpenter's Shop, which was close to the Main House. This might indicate the area at the entrance to the lane beside the Doctor's House was sometimes cultivated.[583] Downriver the land was plowed up to the boundary of the plantation at the cut-off on Metoyer Point.[584] To the west, the cultivated land stopped at the margins of the lake beside Bayou Brevelle.[585] South of this the boundary is not known, but it seems likely it was determined by the position of the levee that was designed to protect the cropland from floods. In the 1873 survey, a fence was shown immediately to the west of the drain in Section 51. This fence probably indicated the boundary of the cultivated ground in that section. That would leave the major part of Section 51 in forest and swamp, which could explain why confusion over boundaries in this area was not resolved in Phanor's lifetime.

On the left bank of the river there was a series of cuts on either side of the central lane. There was an area of forest and swamp beside Bayou Ataho, but we do not know how large that unimproved area was. Along the southern boundary of the tract, Bayou Noire, also called Black Bayou, made additional areas unsuitable for cultivation. This bayou intersected the southern boundary rather more than halfway along its length. There are references to plows crossing Black Bayou, so there must have been cuts between it and Bayou Ataho.[586] When the plantation was divided in 1873, Phanor's son Emmanuel acquired all the land on the left bank and parts of Sections 51 and 25 on the right bank. The division probably gave the brothers approximately equal amounts of cultivated ground. If, as suggested, most of Sections 51 and 25 were uncleared, nearly all of Emmanuel's share of the cultivated ground had to have been on the left bank. That would mean somewhere around 450 acres were in cultivation out of a total of 524.50 on the left bank.

The position of the fences around the cultivated ground changed from year to year during the 1850s and early 1860s, as additional land was cleared. There were several references to this process in the record-keeping books.[587] Woodland clearance left tree stumps in the new land, and there were several references to cleaning with hoes around these stumps.[588] The fences were required to keep roving livestock out of the crops. The erection and repair of fences took up a lot of the workers' time and there were many references to these tasks in the overseer's records. On the right bank these references mentioned fences

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[582] See for example R. A. B., 4/3/1860 and page 35.
[583] R. A. B., 2/2/1867.
[584] R. A. B., 10/17/1866, R. A. B., 7/18/1867.
[585] R. A. B., 5/5/1860, R. A. B., 2/20/1861, 3/2/1861.
[586] R. A. B., week of 1/12/1862.
[587] See for example R. A. B., 3/21/1860, 6/19/1860, R. A. B., 1/19/1862, 4/21/1862.
[588] R. A. B., 4/5/1860, R. A. B., 3/21/1861, 5/1/1861.

along the riverfront, along the line at Metoyer Point, beside the savane, at the lake, and along Bayou Brevelle. On the left hand bank, fences were mentioned at the front, along the northern boundary next to Antoine Prud'homme's land, along the southern boundary next to Octave Metoyer's plantation, and along Bayou Ataho. Lanes were also fenced so that cattle could be driven from the swamps to the riverfront when required. In all, therefore, there were several miles of fences to be maintained. They were of two types: rail fences and "log" fences. The latter were probably worm fences formed by stacking the logs horizontally. References to moving fences and to raising their height by one log suggest this type of construction, and the symbol used for the fence on the 1873 survey was a zigzag line. Since the post and rail fences would have been more trouble to move, they were probably used where the line was expected to be permanent, such as along the lanes. There seems to have been a division of labor in building these fences: women usually built the rail fences and men built the log fences.

The cuts into which the cultivated ground was divided were of various sizes. There was a 3-acre cut and a 50-acre cut. Many of the cuts were named. On the right hand side, the names included the Quarter Cut, Bermuda Cut, Bonhomme Cut, China Tree Cut, Shower House Cut, Lake Cut, Bayou Brevelle Cut, Front Cut and Middle Cut. Some names referred to what was traditionally grown in that spot, as in, for example, Old Potato Cut and Sugar Cane Cut. Other names referred only to location, as in, for example, "front cut near Grandma's gate" and "triangular cut between turnrows." [589] On the left hand side, names included Sandy Ridge Cut, Graveyard or Cemetery Cut, Elm Tree Cut, Bayou Noire Cut, and Ataho Cut. On this side of the river several cuts seem to have had no name and to have been identified by reference to their position vis-à-vis Sandy Ridge and the lane, as in, for example, this report by Seneca Pace in March 1862:

> "20 Thursday. Fair Cool Day Cloudy late P.M. Plant corn 30 Ploughs good headway Plant of New Corn all this side Sandy Ridge first 2 Cuts near it at lane third cut from lane & half Midle Cut."[590]

Sandy Ridge was an important topographic feature on the left bank, that was located at a point about one third of the distance from the river to the bayou. It was clearly visible as a piece of waste ground in the 1942 aerial photograph, but it was plowed in the antebellum period.

We can locate some of the named cuts, but it is not possible to piece together the entire field pattern. The size and shape of the cuts is not known and there were an unknown number of unnamed cuts. It is often unclear in the overseer's entries on which side of the river work was being done, and some names could apply on both sides of Cane River, for example there could have been a Lane Cut and a Gin Cut on either or both banks. Spelling variations raise further questions: for example, "Boneum Cut" was probably the same place as "Bonhomme" or "Bonnehomme" Cut. And, no doubt, there were also variations between different overseers and owners in the name used to describe a particular cut.

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[589] R. A. B., 2/20/1867, 5/14/1867.
[590] R. A. B., 3/20/1862.

As a general rule on cotton plantations two thirds of the cultivated land was planted in cotton and most of the remainder in corn. The lighter soils nearer the riverfront were preferred for cotton and the stiffer soils were planted in corn. However there was no hard and fast rule as there was some rotation between crops over the years, and there were plenty of references in the record-keeping books to cotton being planted in stiff soil. Sweet potatoes and other vegetables were usually planted close to the Quarters, no doubt as a matter of convenience, while the location of fodder crops varied. As noted in the previous chapter, cowpeas and beans were usually interplanted with the corn or grown along fences.

Access to the cuts was obtained via the lanes and turnrows. On the left bank field there must have been a series of turnrows branching off the central lane. On the right hand side of the river, the lane to Bayou Brevelle did not run through the cultivated ground, so another route became important. Phanor called this route the "grand turnrow."[591] The line of a long, straight turnrow running southwestwards through Sections 104 and 40 to Section 39 can be clearly seen on the 1941 aerial photograph. In 1941 it started at the site of the gin, but we think it predated the construction of the gin in 1860, and that this was the "grand turnrow" that provided the principal access to the cultivated ground on this side of the river. Where this big turnrow crossed the arpent line separating Sections 39 and 38, it changed course and ran due south till it reached the limit of Phanor's property. The big turnrow performed some of the functions of a lane but it did not lead to forested areas beside a bayou and so it did not need to be fenced. Off this principal turnrow a network of other turnrows would have provided access to cuts on either side. At one of the arpent lines, either between Sections 40 and 39 or Sections 39 and 38, there might have been a short lane running from the river road to the lane beside the bayou. There were references to a "Middle Way," to a "cross fence," and to some "gate posts" in the field on this side of the river, and we guess that they might have been located beside this lane; but the references were not very specific, so this remains a guess. If this lane existed it did not play an important role in the circulation pattern in 1860, and was only referred to in the context of where in the field the hands were working. It was not shown on the 1921 soil survey map, but tracks can be seen in both locations in later aerial photographs.

Drainage of the cultivated ground was achieved by a network of "water furrows" leading to larger ditches, which ultimately led to the bayous. The small drainage ways were made with plows. Phanor wrote in March 1862: "Trash gang making drains on this side with one plow."[592] Larger ditches had to be dug by hand. In the previous chapter the employment of itinerant Irish laborers to dig ditches was discussed. The ditches dug by the Irish in 1837 were about 700 yards long, and between 11/2 and 2 feet deep.[593] In April 1862, Phanor described the construction of another ditch leading to Ataho Bayou.

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[591] Phanor called it this, mixing French and English in an entry in his Journalier for 1865 listing plantings in his gardens and fields, 6/21/1865.
[592] R. A. B., 3/28/1862.
[593] Journalier, 3/6/1837.

> "Finished the ditch from the pond to Tao. 3 spades deep and 4 feet wide. Began the ditch from there to the place where the ditch runs inside of the field. 6 feet wide and 2 spades deep. Made about one third – to be finished after first rain."[594]

On the right hand side of the river, there were at least three large ditches leading to the Bayou Brevelle. These can still be seen on the 1941 aerial photograph. One of these was located beside the levee on the southwestern side of the cultivated ground. In March 1860 Pace recorded three men at work cleaning this "Big Ditch at Levy."[595] A second large ditch ran from Metoyer Point to the lake beside the bayou. In February 1861 Pace noted:

> "Men Clean Ditch leading from Mde. Ben = Metoyer Point. Make it wide & Deeper Slow Bad Work. Women make fence in lane near Ditch Slow Bad Work."[596]

In this note, the lane referred to the cut-off taken by the river road across Metoyer Point at the start of the ditch. The third ditch ran close to the lane to Bayou Brevelle. This ditch would have been used to carry water away from the yards around the Main House as well as water from the northern edge of the field.

One of the large ditches dug by the Irish laborers was on the left bank, but Phanor's account did not make it clear where it was located. Much of the land must have been drained into Bayou Noire, which flowed across the southern property boundary into Octave Metoyer's plantation. The 1941 aerial photograph shows a large drainage ditch running from Sandy Ridge into this bayou. It is not known when that ditch was constructed, but it is quite likely to have been in Phanor's time. A large ditch leading to Bayou Ataho was constructed in 1862 at the northern property line. As already noted, Phanor surveyed the line and agreed with his cousin Lestan that they would each give some land to accommodate the drainage way.[597]

Under normal conditions all drains would convey water to the bayous, but during floods the rising waters could flow in the opposite direction if they were not stopped. This reverse flow could be prevented by the construction of dams across the main ditches near the levees. The construction of a dam in 1861 on Bayou Congo has already been mentioned. Alphonse recorded similar efforts beside the lake during a flood in May 1866.

> "Women making a dam across the lake ditch to keep bayou Brevelle water out. Have about 75 acres corn in water. River rose 91/4 inches in 24 hours."[598]

There were several "shower houses" standing in the middle of the cotton fields. These shelters were intended for use during picking, to prevent picked cotton from getting soaked during sudden rainstorms, but they were also used as temporary storage places for other crops. There were three shower houses on the right hand side of the plantation. In Phanor's list of places where he was storing bales of cotton in 1862, he mentions "the three Shelters in the field."[599] The three shelters were called "the Shower house near the

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[594] R. A. B., 4/10/1862.
[595] R. A. B., 3/19/1860.
[596] R. A. B., 2/28/1861; see also R. A. B., 7/13/1862.
[597] Journalier, 3/19/1862 and R. A. B., 3/ 26/ 1862, 4/10/1862.
[598] R. A. B., 5/25/1866.
[599] R. A. B., 1862, end pages. A full quotation was given in the previous chapter.

lake," the "Middle Way Shower house," and the "last Shower house down." It seems likely that the shelters were spaced at intervals along the long turnrow that provided the main access to the various cuts on this side of the river. On the left side of the river there were at least another two shower houses. There was a "Shower house on Sandy Ridge," and a "shower house on front."[600] On this side it seems likely that these shelters were located along the central lane that gave access to the cuts.

PASTURES AND HAYFIELDS

According to the 1849 succession inventory, there were 200 acres of permanent pastures on the plantation. Most, if not all, of these were located in the northwestern corner of the plantation. In the records written in French this area was called the "savane," and in English it was called either the "big pasture" or the "woods pasture." In one of his early reference to the savane, Phanor noted building a log fence "*from the yard to the savane beside the bayou.*"[601] Areas beside the lake next to Bayou Brevelle were probably considered part of the savane in the succession inventory, but they were separated from the main savane by the lane to the bayou, and references to a "lake pasture" suggest it was a separate entity.[602]

Mares with colts, and milch cows were kept in the permanent pasture where they would sometimes be joined by other livestock such as sheep, mules and oxen. For example in 1862 and 1863 the overseer McNeely referred to keeping sheep and oxen in the Woods Pasture.[603] As we noted in the previous chapter the savane was improved by sowing clover and by planting shade trees including oaks and pecans.[604] There were probably several reasons why this part of the plantation was used as permanent pasture. Some of the soil was "stiff" and would have been difficult to plow, and the location beside the bayou and lake would provide water for the animals. Moreover the situation close to the heart of the plantation would make it easy to keep an eye on the animals when that was necessary, such as during foaling or lambing.

There were some pastures in other locations. Phanor referred to a "Front Pasture;" this was on the riverfront, but it is not clear from the references whether it was on the right or left bank.[605] It seems from the records that it was close to a lot in which rescue grass (*Bromus unioloides*), was grown. This fodder grass was grown in a lot beside "the old gin on this side," and in another beside the Quarters, but it was also grown across the river.[606] References to cultivating old pastures suggest some areas of the cultivated ground might have been allowed to "rest" in grass for a few years. For example during cotton picking in 1861, Pace referred to "Picking Back land old Pastor."[607]

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[600] R. A. B., 10/28/1860, R. A. B., 5/13/1867.
[601] Journalier, 1839, 1.
[602] See for example R. A. B., 6/8/1862.
[603] R. A. B., 12/27/1862, R. A. B., 4/18/1863.
[604] Journalier, 12/20/1856.
[605] R. A. B., 4/7/1862, 4/8/1862.
[606] R. A. B., 5/7/1862, 5/24/1862.
[607] R. A. B., 10/11/1861.

There were a number of hayfields on the plantation. Rescue grass was one of the main grasses grown, and Bermuda grass (*Cynodon dactylon*), was another. When the hay was cut the fields might be used for cowpeas, another fodder crop, or for pasturing livestock.[608] One of the hay fields was called the "deer lot" and another the "petit champ."[609] Both were located on the right hand bank. The exact location of the deer lot is not clear from the references, it seems to have been somewhere near the savane. The petit champ was next to the northern boundary of the plantation. It is possible that there was a change of name and they were one and the same place.

WOODS AND SWAMPS

In 1860 about one third of the area of the plantation was covered in woods and swamps. These "unimproved" areas occupied the "pays bas" alongside the bayous at the eastern and western margins of the plantation. We think that most of the woods had been cleared on the eastern side of the plantation by 1860, but that there still existed large expanses of woodland on the western side. Probably most of the land beyond the levee that divided Sections 38 and 51 had not been cleared.

One of the most important resources of the plantation in its early years had been the cypriere. As noted in an earlier chapter, the colonial system of land grants under both French and Spanish rule was designed to give each planter areas of swamp with their stands of bald cypress. In the 1830s and 1840s, Phanor made several notes in his journal about his workers cutting timber and making shingles in the cypriere. We do not know its exact location. We think it was probably west of the levee in Sections 38 and 88. Field notes attached to Alphonse's 1873 survey indicated a high frequency of cypresses in that area, and on the 1921 soils survey it was still marked as a swamp. Phanor's notes suggest that his men camped in the woods when they went to work in the cypriere, so it must have been at some distance from the Quarters. The importance of the cypriere seems to have declined by 1860, because there are few, if any, references to it in Pace's records. This can be explained by the acquisition of the tracts in the Pine Woods with the sawmill in the 1850s.

Cattle and hogs were allowed to roam through the woods and swamps. As noted in the previous chapter, each animal was branded to indicate ownership. Phanor's brand was PPP.[610] Some of the livestock belonged to Phanor's hands; we do not know how they were marked. In his journal for 1850, Lestan Prud'homme noted the opposition of most planters to the law allowing free range for animals, particularly hogs.[611] It is not clear whether opposition was caused by problems of trespass into cultivated areas or the difficulties of improving the condition and breeding of the animals under such a system. Pace remarked on the poor condition of many of the animals on a number of occasions.

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[608] See for example R. A. B., 5/2618/62.
[609] R. A. B., 2/26/1857, R. A. B., 1/8/1866.
[610] Notebook, 1841 – 45, 3.
[611] Lestan Prud'homme, 6/6/1850.

At least one hand was employed as a herdsman. He was probably employed to mind the valuable draft animals rather than the cattle and hogs.[612]

Hunting, shooting and fishing were favorite occupations of the men in the Prud'homme family according to Lestan's journal. He recalls going shooting with friends, including Phanor, on several occasions.[613] They would go shooting a wide variety of birds in open fields whenever they had an idle moment, but they would also arrange more protracted forays into the woods. The woods sheltered deer, raccoons and other types of small game, while bayous and swamps offered opportunities for duck hunting and fishing. The lake beside Bayou Brevelle was probably created in Emanuel's time to improve these opportunities near the Main House. The area must originally have been a swamp, which was then separated from the bayou by the construction of a levee. The big drain from Metoyer Point and the drain along the lane to the bayou funneled water to this lake. There was probably a dam that could be opened or closed to control water levels in the lake. In May 1861, Pace wrote: "Drain lake to Bayou good."[614]

CLUSTERS OF BUILDINGS, YARDS AND GARDENS

Most of the buildings on the plantation were clustered on the right bank of the river on the Rousseau tract, but there were a few buildings on the other bank, and shower houses away from the river in the fields. In the main cluster there were a wide variety of buildings including the Main House and its dependencies, the Doctor's House, the Overseer's House, the Quarters, a variety of agricultural buildings, and the cotton gins. Around and between these buildings were a number of yards and gardens. Some of the antebellum buildings are still standing. The archaeological survey indicates "the plantation's built environment was fairly stable after the 1830s."[615] But many questions about the plantation buildings and their ancillary spaces remain to be answered. Existing buildings are the subjects of Historic Structure Reports. The focus of this Cultural Landscape Report is the space between buildings.

The Yard, Oak Allee and Parterre Garden in front of the Main House

The area in front of the Main House was enclosed with a fence to form a yard. This was probably done at the time the house was built, or shortly thereafter, but the fence was rebuilt several times. In a memorandum written in 1860, Phanor observed that the front yard fence had been built in 1850 but many of the posts were already rotten, despite the fact that he had used a preservative salt. So the fence was rebuilt in April 1860, using posts of cypress that were "vitiolated."[616] Trees and shrubs were planted along the fencelines. In 1856 Phanor recorded planting 8 cedars (*Juniperus sp.*) along the length of

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[612] For example Pace noted during cotton picking in September 1860 that the herdsman was "with mules herd in swamp." R. A. B., 1860, 55.
[613] See for example Lestan Prud'homme, 10/18/1850, 1/31/1851, 2/26/1852.
[614] R. A. B., 5/20/1861.
[615] Miller and Wood, 2000, 58.
[616] Journalier, 1860, 52; R. A. B., 1860, 29 and 4/18/1860. Posts were dipped in a vitriol, probably copper sulphate, to preserve them.

the yard.[617] In March 1862, Phanor noted: "Men Cutting trees and shrubs along the fence on this side."[618]

Within the front yard were the oak allee and parterre garden. According to family tradition the oaks were planted soon after the house was built, and the parterre was added in the 1830s. They would have been well established by 1860. In 1861, Phanor noted that he had planted grape vines (*Vitis sp.*) along this "grande allee" four years earlier.[619] The plantation records tell us something about the contents of the parterre garden, but not much about its layout.

It is quite possible that the parterre's present layout dates to its original design, including long narrow beds lining the central brick walkway, flanked by a circle within a square to the north, and a circle within a smaller rectangle on the south of the walk. The use of simple geometric shapes such as circles, squares, hearts, etc., was a common vocabulary for a simple parterre garden of the period. The way that Phanor describes his plantings creates a picture of the parterre and larger garden as a place of horticultural experimentation and constant change. He was very interested in propagation and frequently transplanted seedlings from one area to another. He must have had a plethora of tamarind seeds, planting 40 seeds one day and 96 a month later. When Phanor mentions planting "*forty tamarind seeds along the flower bed border in the garden,*" the border he refers to may either be a planting of flowers along the perimeter of the vegetable garden, which was commonly done, or could refer to the borders flanking the entrance walk.[620] He planted one peeled tamarind seed next to the door, suggesting that while the bulk of the seed were planted with their peelings intact, he wanted to see what the results would be if he took the trouble to peel the seed first. Although we can assume from Phanor's use of the term "*flower bed,*" that there were blooming annuals or perennials within the parterre, the flower mentioned most often is the rose (*Rosa sp.*), with two planted to the left of the door, and cuttings planted to the "*right of the stairs at the foot of the square near the house.*"[621] Other flowers mentioned are violets (*Viola sp.*), and carnations (*Dianthus sp.*) or pinks. Phanor's mention of planting "*magnolia seeds near and under the cedar in the parterre*" calls into question the normal definition of a parterre as a sunny garden of low plantings within low borders, conceived to be viewed from above, for example from a gallery.[622] The citation suggests that a cedar tree already existed in the parterre, although it might have been located along the outer fence, but Phanor added magnolias (*Magnolia sp.*) to the parterre as well. These evergreen trees would have been useful as hedges or tall screens and border plantings, but would have quickly become a problem in a parterre where full sun was an important ingredient for healthy and successful blooms. Perhaps interested in a spring flowering ornamental that was also fruit producing, Phanor recorded planting plum and apricot (*Prunus sp.*) seeds "*along the length of the parterre in the garden.*"[623] These small and delicate trees would

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[617] Journalier, 9/17/1856.
[618] R. A. B., 3/15/1862.
[619] Journalier, 1861, 78.
[620] Journalier, 1861, 78.
[621] Ibid., 80.
[622] Ibid., 78.
[623] Ibid., 55.

have been in contrast to the dark and heavy foliage of the evergreen magnolias and cedars.

The Fruit and Vegetable Garden

We think the Prud'homme's fruit and vegetable garden was located north of the Main House. More precisely we think it occupied the square that became a pecan orchard and can be clearly seen as such on the 1941 aerial photograph. Phanor made many notes about the garden, but none of these clearly described its location. His entries indicate it was close to his house but do not reveal on which side. However, in 1867 Alphonse made several references to the garden fence that indicate the garden was on the north side. In March of that year new fences were being constructed in several places:

> "March 8 Friday. Cloudy & Cold all day. Women at land fence this side river. Men splitting pailings for garden. Ox team hall pailings & post. Heavy hauling....Carpenters work at garden pailings sharpening them P M."
> "March 9 Saturday. Cloudy & Windy All men at garden got through with it to Solomon's Cabbin. Short of pailings...." [624]

There were two Solomons on the plantation in 1867, the blacksmith and the carpenter. The archaeological survey has located the site of the blacksmith's forge north of the front yard.[625] The carpenter's shop is still standing beside the lane southwest of the Main House. A further reference to the garden fence in July makes it most likely that it was the blacksmith's forge that was being referred to in the quotation above. "July 1st Monday Rain all day – No work done – Planted few Potatoe slips & got out Ration. Carpenter fix garden fence from Kitchen to House."[626] The original kitchen was replaced in 1880 but it was almost certainly located at the northwestern corner of the Main House.[627] A fence running from the kitchen to the House would have been on the north side of the House, and when it turned north to the forge, it would have enclosed two sides of the square that later became the pecan orchard. This area would have been large enough to accommodate the many garden plantings listed by Phanor in his journals. On the other hand a fence running from the House to the kitchen and then turning south to the carpenter's shop would have enclosed the area immediately behind the House. This area was almost certainly part of the plantation yard behind the House, and seems inadequate to accommodate the family fruit and vegetable garden. Moreover, Phanor recorded gardening near the forge on two occasions, on one of which he planted "*6 seeds of Palma Christy near the cabin of the forge.*"[628] While not in themselves conclusive evidence, these references support the conclusion that the garden was close to the blacksmith's shop rather than the carpenter's cabin.

There is some evidence on the ground today that supports this conclusion. In his journals Phanor noted planting bois d'arc (*Maclura pomifera*), in the garden in 1856. Five years later he recorded cutting the bois d'arc, and three years later he recorded removing the

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[624] R. A. B., 3/8/1867, 3/9/1867.
[625] Miller and Wood, 2000, 75.
[626] R. A. B., 7/1/1867.
[627] Miri, Historic Structure Assessment Report, Main House, 1998, 8-9.
[628] Journalier, 1861, page 78; Journalier, 1865, "Plantations dans le Jardin et dans le Champ. Mars 2."

hedge: "*Uprooted the Bois d'arc around the garden.*" The hedge was replaced with a fence along which he planted grape vines.[629] However bois d'arc or osage orange readily resprouts from its base and roots so attempts to remove it can be ineffectual. Today osage orange is one of the common components of the fencerows on the north and west sides of the square we think was the site of the antebellum garden north of the House.

We do not know a lot about the layout of the fruit and vegetable garden, but good documentation for Phanor's activities in the space survives. In 1861 he mentions planting in the "*cabbage patch.*"[630] In 1863 Phanor has planted 9 yellow peach nuts "*along the length of the cabbage patch.*"[631] These references suggest that the cabbage patch was a sizeable area, and a distinct garden space, perhaps outside the kitchen or vegetable garden. During this period, Phanor also expanded his orchard, adding peaches, apricots, plums (*Prunus sp.*), hazelnuts (*Corylus sp.*), apples, and pears (from seed) (*Pyrus sp.*). He also ordered fruit trees from Affleck's nursery in Mississippi. Nut-bearing trees figure prominently in Phanor's records. He mentions pecan trees, and in December of 1856 he records planting "*24 black nuts along the length of the garden.*"[632] In February 1860 Phanor records cutting "*the tap roots of the pecans in the garden.*"[633] Perhaps this was a technique of controlling the height of the tree, making the fruit easier to gather. The cultivation of citrus trees would have been marginal this far north, and Phanor writes in a pocket notebook from the Civil War years that in order "*to protect the oranges from the frost*" the base of the trees should be covered with boards, shielding the trunk from the cold air.[634] Although viticulture was an integral part of most Louisiana plantation plantings, attempts at producing grapes suitable for good wine were unsuccessful in the heavy and wet Louisiana soils. Grapes were an important fruit crop for Phanor. He planted vines in several locations through the years, either gradually expanding his inventory of vines, or seeking better locations for growing healthy and productive vines. In January 1857 Phanor "*transplanted grape vines along the grande allee, as well as planting some vines along the fence between the yard and the forge.*"[635] A month later in February Phanor planted vines but he did not record their location. In 1862 he planted scuppernongs (*Vitis rotundifolia*), a native grape species, in the yard.[636] Perhaps his earlier attempts with European grapes had failed and he was testing the hardier native. Phanor persists in planting grapes through the war years, for example mentioning them in January 1864, when he planted vines "*along the garden's fence.*" Phanor's emphasis on the cultivation of vegetable and fruit crops over that of ornamental plantings is representative of the relative importance placed on these two aspects of gardening on Louisiana plantations of the period. Successful kitchen gardening required careful planning, and sustained cultivation and management. The production of food for family and guest consumption was basic to life on a plantation. The cultivation of an ornamental garden, on the other hand, was reserved for those who had the resources and

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[629] Journalier, 2/20/1856,Journalier, 6/28/1861 and 1/19-1/22/1864.
[630] Journalier, 3/5/1861.
[631] Ibid., 12/10/1863.
[632] Ibid., 12/20/1856.
[633] Ibid., 2/29/1860.
[634] Notebook, 1862-64, 3.
[635] Journalier, 1856-61, 78.
[636] Journalier, 2/14/1862.

labor force required to create and keep a garden as labor-intensive as flower borders and parterres. Phanor's journals demonstrate that he was intensely interested in both aspects of gardening, and that even while the Civil War raged nearly in "his own back yard," he sought the routine and the promise of a harvest in his home gardens.

The Doctor's Yard and Garden

The cottage that became the Doctor's House was regarded as a dependency of the Main House until it became a doctor's residence.[637] After the arrival of Dr. Hulen in April 1860, it almost certainly became a more separate place, and this affected the treatment of the areas around it. In February 1862, Pace recorded the building of a new "plank fence" around the Doctor's yard. In describing the posts he had used he also mentioned the Doctor's garden.[638] Unfortunately he did not say anything that would help locate the garden. In a parallel note in his journal, Phanor noted the construction of "*the fence between the Doctor and me and the field.*"[639] The field referred to here was probably the space between the Doctor's yard and the lane. We do not know what this field was used for, but we do not think it was part of the Doctor's yard.

The Overseer's Yard

We do not know where overseers lived on the plantation before 1861. In 1839, Phanor made an entry in his journal that referred to planting corn at the overseer's place.[640] The overseer's place might well have been on a different site from the new house built for Pace and his father. During the week of January 12th 1862, men were making a yard around Pace's new house, constructing a paling fence and digging a well.[641] There is no mention of a garden but the yard probably contained a place for hogs. A couple of weeks after Seneca left for the war, Phanor wrote: "15 Saturday .....Fixing a lot and a pen for the old man to feed his breeding sows and pigs – made a trough of pigs - ..."[642] Phanor usually referred to Seneca's father as "old man Pace."

The Quarter's Yard and Garden

It seems likely that the Quarter's extended well south of the existing cabins, but we do not know much about the layout of the place. There was a yard around which the cabins were arranged. In December 1862, McNeely wrote:

> "10 Wednesday. Finished picking cotton by 12 o' clock. Cleaned up quarter yard in the afternoone wether fine for the seson...."[643]

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[637] The 1849 succession inventory refers simply to "an owner's house and dependencies" in its list of buildings on the plantation.
[638] R. A. B., 2/14/1862 and page 29.
[639] Journalier, 2/14/1862.
[640] Journalier, 4/5/1839. Phanor uses the word "piqueur" here instead of the usual term "econome;" so it is possible he was referring to a driver rather than an overseer, but it seems unlikely the driver had a place outside the Quarters.
[641] R. A. B., 1/12-1/24/1862.
[642] Ibid., 3/15/1862.
[643] R. A. B., 12/10/62. See also R. A. B., 7/1-7/2/1863.

The area was fenced with a log fence and somewhere within the yard or nearby the inhabitants kept some of their livestock. In 1865, soon after Phanor's death, Alphonse complained about the hand's hogs running into the yard near the Main House.

> "10 Sunday .....Hogs running loose over the yard. Shot at four with small shots & killed one of Alexis. Notified the negroes that I would kill all that came in yard."[644]

There was no mention of chickens in the records , but it seems likely that on this plantation, as on many others, slaves were allowed to keep their own chickens in their yard.

A garden for the Quarters was located close to the site of the steam-operated gin built in 1860. In March 1862, Phanor noted he was planting corn "*by the Gin and negroes' garden.*"[645] While he did not say which gin he was referring to, it seems certain it would have been the one nearest the Quarters. As noted in the previous chapter, the workers grew a variety of crops in their garden plots, including sweet potatoes and tobacco.[646] But they were allowed to grow their corn elsewhere. The location apparently varied from year to year, because in January 1857, Pace recorded: "Ploughs in Negroes corn land for cotton."[647] They might also have been allowed to grow some of their fruits and vegetables outside the garden plots, because Pace referred to dividing land with the Negroes for potatoes and watermelons.[648] It obviously made economic sense for a planter to encourage his hands to grow as much of their own food as possible.

The Main Yard of the Plantation

The main yard was usually referred to as "la cour" or "the yard" which indicates it was one space, though not necessarily a rectangle. It was located behind the Main House but we do not know its exact shape or limits. The space would have been defined primarily by the buildings within it; it is not known whether there was a fence around the entire yard or just around pens within the yard. The buildings provided shelter for draft animals and storage space for most of the harvested crops, except for the cotton which went to the separate gin yards.

One of the largest buildings in the yard was probably the stable. The plantation records contain several references to a stable, including one that mentions the storage of the "Negroes corn" in it, and another that records the building of a chimney.[649] Seneca Pace referred to it as a mule shed.[650] It would have been a large building if it had contained stalls for all the mules, as there were over 40 mules on the plantation in 1860, but some of the mules might have been left outdoors in a mule lot.[651] This pen was probably located close to the stable. It was enclosed by a fence and a "Cherokee hedge," which was

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[644] Journalier, 1864-1866, 12/10/1865.
[645] R. A. B., 3/28/1862.
[646] See for example, R. A. B., 3/16/1862. R. A. B., 4/2/1863, and 4/23/1863.
[647] R. A. B., 1/5/1857.
[648] R. A. B., 3/24/1860, 3/30/1860.
[649] R. A. B., 1/7/1860; R. A. B., 10/30/1863.
[650] R. A. B., 11/9/1857; R. A. B., 8/2/1861.
[651] R. A. B., 1/23/1860; R. A. B., 5/12/1862.

probably made up of Cherokee roses (*Rosa laevigata*).[652] Oral histories place "the old mule barn" north of the existing square crib. Further archaeological investigation is needed to determine the exact location.[653]

The existing square crib is probably the "large corn house" that was under construction in July 1857.[654] In 1861, Pace made detailed notes about the storage of corn on the plantation, and mentioned three corn cribs: a "little or old house," a "corn house by cistern," and a "corn house other side."[655] He was also putting corn in the "big house," by which he meant the cotton magazine or warehouse. The cotton magazine was much bigger than any of the corn houses, so the large corn house was sometimes called the "little mageazin at cistern."[656] The existing square crib stands beside a large cistern, so it can be identified as the larger of the two corn cribs on the right bank of the river. A reference by Alphonse to cleaning a corn crib in October 1867, suggests there was a third crib on this side. "Cleaned Corn Crib. Put shuck in White & Hominy Crib & Corn in small Crib at Hog Pen."[657] It is not clear which of these was the one Pace called the "little or old house."

Other buildings in the yard probably included a corn mill, a smoke house, and a potato house. As noted in the previous chapter, a new steam-powered corn mill was set up in 1860. We do not know where it was located, but for convenience it was probably somewhere close to the largest corn crib. The "smoke house in yard" was mentioned in the 1857 record-keeping book.[658] In February 1864, Phanor records killing 22 hogs and hanging the meat in the smoke house. In the previous month, 19 hogs had been killed, so the smoke house must have been a fairly large structure. Oral histories suggest the existing mule barn at Oakland is the old smoke house.[659] In October 1863, Phanor noted that half the sweet potatoes had been dug up and put in "the old potatoes house."[660] We do not know where this potato house stood but it was probably near the other storehouses in the yard.

The basement of the Main House was used for storing provisions and should therefore be considered as one of the storehouses associated with the yard. In 1857, for example, Pace noted the following: "April 8 I have now in Seler 91 Bbl of Pork 8 in other Room 6 under Galery total 105 Bbls Marked Mess AA etc. 200lbs."[661] We do not know much about the space immediately behind the House, but it seems likely that it was connected to the yard, and that provisions were taken in and out of the cellar from the rear rather than the front. The presence of some large oaks suggests there was open space to the rear of the House that had to be shaded. The "Servants House" that was being built in March 1862 was

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[652] R. A. B., 4/8/1862.
[653] Miller and Wood, 2000, 72-73.
[654] R. A. B., 7/27/1857 to 8/1/1857.
[655] R. A. B., 1861, page 40.
[656] Ibid., 11/13-11/15/1861.
[657] R. A. B., 9/2/1867.
[658] R. A. B., 3/18/1857.
[659] Malone, 1998, 55.
[660] R. A. B., 10/7/1863.
[661] R. A. B., 1857, end notes.

probably located somewhere in this area. There was a reference to building a "Necessary House" in August 1861, and while we do not know if this privy was for the occupants of the Main House, it is a reminder there would have been one or more privies near the House. And there was probably at least one chicken house, since we know the Prud'hommes kept chickens.[662] Today there are several old buildings behind the Main House that include two chicken coops, a storage shed which might have been a corn crib, a poultry-fattening pen, a wash house, and a three-seat privy. Some of these might well date from the antebellum period but the dates of construction are not known.[663]

Located somewhere in the vicinity of the plantation yard there were a number of livestock pens. Phanor's livestock moved around his plantation, finding their sustenance in the swamps and savane, and after harvest they were turned into some of the hayfields and cuts. But pens provided places where draft animals could be given special care, sheep sheared, and hogs fattened. Enclosures probably served multiple purposes, but some were given names that suggest a single function. We know there were a cow pen, a hog pen and a mule pen.[664] The location of the mule pen has already been discussed. The cow pen might have been used to hold either work oxen or milch cows. We have not found any reference to a place in which cows were milked, so we do not know if the cow pen was linked to a dairy. In March 1867, Alphonse instructed workers to make a fence around the old cow pen and plant turnips, so the cows or oxen must have been moved somewhere else.[665] The hog pen might have been located near the garden or near the lane. There were several references to hogs being penned temporarily in the lane, but in later years it was the practice to fatten them near the family garden – by then in a different location – so that they could be fed on garden waste.[666]

The lane ran on the south side of the Main House, and today a carpenter's shop, carriage house and two pigeonniers still stand beside the lane. It is likely that all of these buildings were there in Phanor's day. We know there was a carpenter's shop on the plantation in the antebellum period, and the shop that is there today might be the cabin that was built for Solomon the carpenter in 1862.[667] We know the pigeonniers date back to Phanor's time because he mentions having them cleaned and then storing ropes and bagging in them.[668] However, one of the pigeonniers is not in its historic location: the western one was moved about 20 feet away from its original position beside the lane in the 1950s. Although we have not found any reference to a carriage house in the plantation records, a carriage was one of the items listed in the 1850 succession sale so there was probably a place to house it. Unfortunately, we do not know much about the space between these buildings. We do not know if there was a garden on the south side of the House, or whether this area was separated from the front yard or the back yard. It seems likely that it was a place primarily devoted to work rather than leisure. Until the 1950s a plantation

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[662] R. A. B., 5/25/1862.
[663] Miller and Wood, 2000, 24 – 28.
[664] Journalier, 12/27-28/1865.
[665] R. A. B., 3/27/1867.
[666] R. A. B., 1/22/1864, 2/11/1864. Information on later practices from Prud'homme, Kenneth. Interview with authors 6/5/2000.
[667] R. A. B., 4/7/1862.
[668] Journalier, 3/12/1862; R. A. B., 3/12/1862, 4/27/1862.

bell occupied a central position in the space. It was suspended in a tower made of bois d'arc poles, and stood beside the lane south of the House. Alphonse referred to the bell in November 1865. He was having difficulties with his newly emancipated workers, so he insisted that the bell be rung to summon them to work in the morning.[669]

The plantation yard was by definition a workplace, nevertheless it was close to the Main House so appearances would have mattered. However its appearance remains a subject for speculation. The large live oaks were no doubt planted to provide shade. Cherokee roses were planted beside the mule pen, so there might have been more ornamental plants elsewhere. It seems likely that the yard would have been kept tidy in accordance with Affleck's principles of good management. One of the most important aspects of this would have been attending to its drains, so that it did not become a muddy morass after heavy rain, and there are references to cleaning drains in the yard in the plantation records.[670]

The collection of rainwater from the roofs of buildings into brick cisterns buried in the ground played a useful role in keeping the yard dry. There were several cisterns on the plantation. In addition to the one beside the corn crib that has already been mentioned, there was one beside the Main House, one next to the Doctor's House, one beside each of the steam-operated gins, and one beside one of the shower houses. Phanor complained in July 1862 of the water in a cistern across the river being "spoiled by a snake getting in & drowning."[671] So water in the cisterns was meant to be potable, and periodically cisterns were emptied for cleaning. Extant cisterns have been the subject of a separate archaeological study.[672]

Gin Yards

In 1860 there were three gin yards on the plantation: on the right bank there was one at the new steam-powered gin and another at the old mule gin, and on the left bank there was one at the old steam-powered gin.

The steam-powered gin on the right bank was rebuilt immediately after the Civil War and continued in operation into modern times, so we know its location. The layout of the buildings in the yard was recorded in the 1941 aerial photograph. It probably represented the antebellum layout of the yard, except for the fact that in 1860 the yard was fenced and by 1941 the fence was gone.[673] The location of the buildings and their orientation raise interesting questions. The new gin was built away from the river, behind the Quarters, and given a northeast–southwest orientation. We think the orientation can be explained by its location at the end of Phanor's "grand turnrow," which has been discussed in the section on Cultivated Ground. This location meant it was conveniently accessible from the fields, but not from the river. As noted in the previous chapter, bales of cotton were

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669 Journalier, 11/16/1865.
670 See for example R. A. B., 10/5/1860.
671 R. A. B., 7/8/1862.
672 Keel and Raupp, 1998.
673 R. A. B., 12/8/1860.

taken to the old gin yard for shipping in December 1860. It might be that in choosing a location away from the river Phanor was anticipating the arrival of the railroad. Lestan's journal reveals that Phanor was actively involved in efforts to bring a railroad to Natchitoches.[674] When it finally arrived later in the century, the location of the gin on the west side of the plantation had some advantages.

The location of the old mule gin and its yard has not yet been determined. Oral histories suggest it was located north of the Main House, but further archaeological work is necessary before the story can be confirmed.[675] After the new gin was finished, the old gin was used for storing carts. In 1860, Pace mentioned planting Bermuda grass and turnips in the gin yard, which suggests the yard was of considerable size. It included space for drying the picked cotton on scaffolds, and it included space for at least one kiln, which Phanor called the "mill kill."[676] The plantation had both a brick kiln and a charcoal kiln, but references do not make it clear where either was located.[677] The brick kiln might have been near the landing as in one reference Phanor wrote "Working at Brick Yard and Landing."[678] The charcoal kiln was probably near the forge since that was where the charcoal was used. The location of the forge has been determined by the archaeological survey. It stood near the river road, northwest of the Main House.[679] The gin yard might have included the forge, although the forge stood at some distance from the suggested location of the gin. A reference to planting peas in a lot next to the brick kiln might indicate there was a lot separating the gin yard and the forge.[680] The gin yard might also have contained the large cotton magazine or warehouse that has been referred to in the previous section. The cotton magazine would probably have been located somewhere near both the gin and the landing. In September 1863, Phanor noted storing corn in both the "old gin" and the "long magazine."[681] Because the work was being done on the same day, that note suggests the two places were in the same general area.

The first steam-operated gin was located on the left bank of the river. Although we do not know its exact location, we know it was near the northern boundary of the plantation. In his journal, Lestan Prud'homme describes a fire at the Langlais cabin. Langlais was living on the left bank on a plot of land located next to Phanor's tract. Lestan commented that the fire could easily have spread to Phanor's gin and two or three barns nearby.[682] That would place this gin yard directly across the river from the suggested location of the mule gin yard. The two or three barns mentioned by Lestan would have included a corn crib. There were several references in the plantation records that confirm the existence of a large corn magazine on this side of the river.[683] Another barn might have been a mule

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[674] Lestan Prudhomme, 12/29/1851.
[675] Miller and Wood, 2000, 72-73.
[676] R. A. B., 5/9/1862.
[677] See for example R. A. B., 1/20/1860; R. A. B., 5/9/1862.
[678] R. A. B., 7/9/1862.
[679] Miller and Wood, 2000, 75.
[680] R. A. B., 1862, end notes.
[681] R. A. B., 9/26/1862.
[682] Lestan Prud'homme, 1/16/1852.
[683] See for example R. A. B., 11/21/1857; R. A. B., 9/21/1863.

shed.[684] There were also some fenced lots for livestock on the left hand bank, which were probably adjacent to the yard. In October 1863, Phanor was storing some of his large corn harvest in "the 3 pens over river."[685] There was a hedge of Cherokee roses on this side of the river. It might have been planted beside one of the lots, in the same way as the hedge beside the mule lot on the right bank.[686]

CEMETERIES

Prud'homme family members were buried in the American Cemetery and the Catholic Cemetery in Natchitoches. But their slaves were probably buried on the plantation. One of the cuts on the left bank was called the Cemetery or Graveyard Cut.[687] We assume these were alternate names for the same place. This cut was located on the left hand side of the river, somewhere along the southern boundary of the plantation between the river and Bayou Noire. We know this from 1867 references to building fences beside it and along the boundary with Octave Metoyer's land. The cemetery might have been placed near the river for convenient access, but we do not know its exact location.

We have found no references to a cemetery on the right hand bank in the plantation records, but archaeological evidence collected in 1997 indicates there was a cemetery in the savane beside Bayou Brevelle that was used at least from 1853.[688]

RHYTHMS OF LIFE ON THE PLANTATION

The landscape of the plantation was animated by the presence of large numbers of people and animals. Over 150 people lived on the plantation, and nearly a hundred draft animals, to say nothing of the other livestock and varied wildlife populations. Every landscape has its distinctive rhythms of life. On the plantation all rhythms were closely tied to the seasons and the land, but there would have been sharp contrasts between the rhythm of the life enjoyed by members of the Prud'homme family, and the life rhythms of the enslaved workers and draft animals.

The overseer's record-keeping books compiled a daily record of work on the plantation, and it was this work that dominated the lives of the enslaved population. The field hands moved to the rhythms of the seasons, and the plantation records reveal a great deal of repetition from year to year as they followed the agricultural calendar of plowing, planting, hoeing, picking, ginning, etc. But within this predictable pattern, daily activities were an immediate response to the vagaries of the weather, as they sought to protect the cotton and corn from the hazards of flood, frost, and drought, etc. The field hands and the draft animals worked together during the plowing and planting seasons, but as crops matured most of the work in the fields would be left to the humans. The work was highly organized with the field hands operating most of the time in gangs. But it must be

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[684] R. A. B., 11/13/1857.
[685] R. A. B., 10/5/1863.
[686] R. A. B., 3/28/1867.
[687] R. A. B., 2/6/1857, R. A. B., 1/18/1860, R. A. B., 4/14/1862.
[688] Dr. Bennie C. Keel, personal communication, 2003.

remembered that about half the slave population escaped much if not all of the work in the fields because they were too young or too old, or had special tasks assigned to them as artisans or house servants. These people would have moved around the plantation separately from the field gangs, and spent most of their time in the various buildings and yards clustered at the heart of the plantation. We know almost nothing of the lives of the enslaved people when they were not at work. They were allowed to tend their own gardens on Sundays and on a few holidays, and at special times there were all-night celebrations with dancing and we presume music.

In contrast to the slaves, the planter and his family enjoyed a large amount of discretion over how they spent their time. The plantation records do not give much information on the daily activities of Phanor and his immediate family, but a picture of life amidst the extended Prud'homme family can be obtained from Lestan Prud'homme's journal. Phanor offered hospitality to his relations, friends and neighbors at both his plantation house, which Lestan seems to have visited almost daily, and his town house. A large amount of time was spent almost every day in the company of relatives and neighbors, paying or receiving calls, taking promenades, breakfasting, dining and supping together, conducting business and taking part in the social rituals of the day. In these rituals, the annual calendar of the Catholic Church and the Convent School for young ladies played a major part, determining dates when people left the plantation for Natchitoches, or returned from the town for the rural pleasures of the Coast and the Isle. A picture is provided of a very cohesive society with a characteristic French Creole appreciation for good food, wine and company, and plenty of leisure for men to hunt, shoot or fish and women to pay visits and converse. Despite the freedom, daily life did seem to follow a predictable rhythm, in part because of the limited opportunities for varying its tenor. The weather was always a concern, and not just because it could affect plans to ride to a neighboring plantation, go to town or enjoy a day's shooting or fishing. Underpinning the privileged lifestyle was the all-important cotton crop. Lestan's diary contains a regular commentary on the weather and the prospects for a good or disappointing crop, despite the fact that he disclaimed any interest in farming, and, when he had to watch the weighing of cotton, it made his head spin.[689] Moreover, rainfall determined the level of the water in Cane River. Everyone was interested in this since it affected their ability to cross the river, and the arrival and departure of steamboats with freight and passengers. And the diary makes it clear that planters continued to fear floods, despite the diversion of the main flow of the Red River into the Rigolet de Bon Dieu. Indeed one gains an impression that planters were anxious about many things, and they saw themselves as gamblers chancing their luck each year in their cotton fields as well as on their racetracks. So there were more similarities than one might expect between Lestan's journal and Pace's record-keeping books. They both emphasize the dominant role of Nature in the daily lives of all the inhabitants on the plantation.

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[689] Lestan Prud'homme, 10/4/1850.

CHAPTER FIVE:
EXISTING CONDITIONS

SOURCES

Members of the research team visited Oakland in October 1999, June and August 2000 and March 2002. A survey of the landscape of the property was made in October 1999. An inventory was made of the vegetation, and photographs were taken to document the existing condition of important features in the landscape. Members of the Prud'homme Family and NPS staff were interviewed in June and August 2000, and a study was made of the wider landscape surrounding the NPS property in 2002. This account of existing conditions at Oakland is based on those surveys and interviews, plus the Draft General Management Plan for the Cane River Creole N.H.P., the archaeological report and historic structure assessments, and a number of unpublished reports prepared for the Superintendent.[690] An aerial photograph taken in 1998 was used to study the areas surrounding the NPS property. Copies of that photograph were obtained in both black and white and in false color infrared. The latter was particularly useful for the study of vegetation and drainage patterns.[691]

The following description of existing conditions is organized under the same headings as the description of historic landscape characteristics in Chapter Four. It is illustrated by an Existing Conditions Plan, which is based on the landscape survey work done in 1999, by the 1998 Aerial Photograph, and by photographs taken by the research team.

PROPERTY BOUNDARIES

The Oakland Unit of Cane River Creole N.H.P. comprises approximately 45 acres of land around the Main House. It is only a very small part of the original Emanuel Prud'homme Plantation, which under Phanor Prud'homme totaled over 1900 acres. It is also only a small part of the post war Oakland Plantation, which under J. Alphonse Prud'homme exceeded 1600 acres. The boundaries of the NPS property have been drawn to include the cluster of historic buildings round the Main House, but they exclude most of the historic landscape. Some of that remains in the ownership of the direct descendents of Emanuel, Phanor and Alphonse, but some of it has passed into other hands. The pattern of land ownership along Cane River has become ever more complex as estates have been subdivided under Louisiana's inheritance laws. But some of the old section lines – colonial arpent lines – can still be clearly seen. For example, across the river on what became Ataho Plantation after 1873, the boundaries of the Rousseau tract still form property boundaries and are marked by lines of trees, ditches and roads - see the 1998 Aerial Photograph.

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[690] Dingman, 1998, Cane River Creole NHP General Management Plan and Environmental Assessment, Draft, 1999; Miller and Wood, 2000; Miri (3 reports), 1998; Bitzel and Pepper, 2000; Neidinger, 2000; Conzelmann, 2002.

[691] USDA, FSA Aerial Photograph ref. NAPP 10807 202X, scale 1" = 400 feet.

The northern boundary of the Oakland Unit follows a colonial arpent line – the northern limit of Section 104. This is followed by Highway 494 & 119, which now forms the northern and eastern boundary of the property. On the eastern side this modern highway has been built on top of the old river road. The western boundary of the property is a straight line drawn at the edge of the woodland pasture that was originally known as the savane. This line is extended southwards cutting across the line of the historic lane and then crossing a large plowed field, turning southeastwards to join Highway 494. So while around the northern half of the NPS property the boundaries follow historic landscape features, those around the southern half follow modern lines and cut through historic landscape features. Along Highway 494, fences mark property boundaries; elsewhere they are generally unmarked, except for the remnants of a barbed wire fence at the edge of the woods in the northwestern corner – see the Existing Conditions Plan.

SPATIAL ORGANIZATION

The Main House stands near the center of the Oakland Unit, and in its immediate vicinity fences mark the division of its domestic landscape into yards and gardens. To the south a grassy dirt track runs from east to west, from the Plantation Store across the middle of the property to the woodland beyond its western boundary. The rest of the NPS property is divided into a number of areas by hedges that have grown up along fencelines – see the 1998 Aerial Photograph and Existing Conditions Plan. Some of these fencelines are old established features of the landscape, and some are relatively recent additions, but it would be very difficult for a visitor to discern the old from the new.

It would be obvious to a thoughtful observer that the Main House with its scatter of dependencies and old farm buildings must have been the center of a much larger agricultural property. But the relation of the NPS property to any larger historic landscape could only be guessed at, and the historic arrangement of the landscape within the NPS boundaries would be very difficult to discern.

CANE RIVER AND THE BAYOUS

Cane River is now a lake formed by dams located both upriver and downriver. The upper dam is located about two miles north of Natchitoches and the lower dam about two miles above Magnolia Plantation. The water level in the lake does not fluctuate significantly so it maintains a constant width and depth throughout the year. The river is no longer an artery for transporting people and goods, but it is a center for recreational activities, including fishing and boating. Clusters of small houses and mobile homes line its banks in many areas, including the bank opposite the NPS property. Some of these homes are lived in year round, but others are weekend or vacation homes.[692] Where there are residences, the banks are generally kept open as lawns, but elsewhere they are thickly lined with trees and shrubs. The steep bank in front of the NPS property at Oakland is well covered with trees and shrubs, which partially obscure views across the river. The river itself is best seen from the bridge carrying Highway 119 – see Photograph # 1.

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[692] Chaffin, 1988.

The bayous have changed less in the way they function and have retained more of their natural appearance. Water levels still fluctuate within their channels and some swamp cypresses stand in the woodlands that line their banks – see Photographs # 2 and # 3. An artificial levee constructed in the antebellum period still runs along the eastern bank of Bayou Brevelle and separates it from the lake on the Prud'homme Family property. But the incidence of flooding in the Cane River region has been much reduced since the construction by the Corps of Engineers of an extensive system of levees alongside the main channel of the Red River. The flatness of the land and the serpentine courses of rivers and bayous are now the main reminders that most of this region lies in a floodplain.

ROADS AND LANES

Highway 494 & 119 occupies the position of the old river road on the right bank of the river in front of the Main House at Oakland – see the 1998 Aerial Photograph. To the north, this highway cuts off Keator Point. As it leaves the riverbank it at first follows the route of the old cut off, but then continues along a more southerly route. To the south the highway divides, with Highway 119 crossing the river to run down the left bank. There are two bridges side by side, an older steel truss structure, which is closed to traffic, and a newer concrete beam structure on the downstream side. These bridges stand just upstream from the position of the ford that was used in the late 19th century. On the right bank Highway 494 veers away from the river and heads southwest across Prud'homme land. It runs beside the abandoned Tenant Cabins and almost certainly bisects the yard of the old Quarters.

The line of the Lane to Bayou Brevelle can still be seen on the ground but it is now grass-covered in many places. The dirt track that begins at the Plantation Store and runs westwards across the field now used as a parking lot follows roughly the same course as the historic Lane – see Photograph # 4. At the second Pigeonnier, the track leading south to the Tenants' Cabins marks the position of the dogleg in the Lane. At a point behind the Doctor's House the Lane turned west, while the track continues south past the ruined Overseer's House to the Tenants' Cabins – see Photograph # 5. The abandoned stretch of the Lane runs westwards between a line of old pecan trees and a hedge that separates it from the plowed field – see Photograph # 6. After a couple of hundred yards, that hedge turns north cutting across the line of the Lane, and in the field, on the other side of the hedge, plowing has obliterated all signs of the Lane.

Within the wider landscape around the Oakland Unit, a few other historic roads still exist. Across the river, the Bon Dieu Road is now Route 1220. It runs along the southern margin of the old Rousseau tract, crosses Bayou Ataho at the original bridging point, and passes New Nazarene Church en route to the levee beside the Red River. Nothing remains of the central lane that gave access to the cuts on the Rousseau tract, but a farm lane still follows the old northern boundary of Emanuel's plantation. On the right hand bank, the cut off across Metoyer Point has been abandoned, but further downstream farm tracks still divide Sections 40 and 39 and 39 and 38 – see the 1998 Aerial Photograph.

CULTIVATED GROUND

The plowed field around the maintenance compound in the southwestern corner of the property is normally left fallow. As there is no fence along its outer boundary, it appears to be a part of the large field beyond when that field is also left fallow. That large field is still owned by the Prud'homme Family. While it is open to the southwest, the plowed field is visually separated from the rest of the NPS property by the unchecked growth of the hedgerow on its northern and eastern sides – see Photograph # 7. There a barbed wire fence is overgrown by a variety of species that commonly colonize fencerows including mulberry (*Morus sp.*), chinaberry (*Melia azedarach*), privet (*Ligustrum sp.*), and devils-walkingstick (*Aralia spinosa*), plus honeysuckle (*Lonicera sp.*), blackberry (*Rubus sp.*), and other vines.

In the wider landscape of the Cane River Region, the historically dominant crops, cotton and corn, remain important.[693] But these have now been joined as staples by soybeans and grain sorghum, and the agricultural landscape has been transformed over the past 50 years, as tenant sharecroppers have given way to mechanized agribusiness. The patchwork of cuts, which could be seen on the 1941 aerial photograph, was beginning to disappear in the 1950s. It has now almost completely gone. The patchwork has been replaced with a more uniform pattern of much larger fields, many over 100 acres in size. This new landscape can be seen on both sides of the river, on Oakland Plantation property and on the Ataho Plantation – see Photograph # 8. It has already been noted that the central lane on the Rousseau tract has disappeared along with the cuts it served. Similarly, on the right bank, the grand turnrow that ran southwest from the site of the 1860 gin has disappeared.

The new landscape is more open than its historic predecessors. The antebellum plantation landscape had miles of carefully maintained fences separating the cultivated ground from the areas where livestock were allowed to roam. Today there is no free ranging livestock so only pastures are enclosed. In the tenancy period, more areas were allowed to stand idle and to develop some tree cover. For example, according to the 1941 aerial photograph, Sandy Ridge on the left bank had become a stretch of waste ground with a patchy cover of trees and shrubs. All evidence of this landscape feature has now been removed by mechanized plowing. So the landscape presents a more uniform appearance and differences in soil texture and drainage, which once led to variations in land use, can now be largely ignored.

Some of the large drainage ditches created in the antebellum period are still in operation on both the Oakland and the Ataho sides of the river. They can be clearly seen on the false color infrared version of the 1998 aerial photograph. Only parts of the two drainage ditches leading to the Lake beside Bayou Brevelle remain in operation. The drain from Metoyer Point has been cut by changes in property boundaries, and the other drain is no longer connected to the Lane to Bayou Brevelle. Gutters in what remains of the Lane are now overgrown and no longer serve to drain the area around the farm buildings and the Main House. Overall there is a less intricate network of drainage in the new landscape.

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[693] Soil Conservation Service, 1990; General Management Plan, 1999, 125.

The network of water furrows associated with the patchwork of cuts has vanished along with the cuts.

PASTURES AND HAYFIELDS

Areas north of the Main House were used as pastures and hayfields in the antebellum plantation period, but tenant sharecroppers later plowed some of these. Today all these areas are in grass and are maintained by mowing.

The field in the northwestern corner of the Oakland Unit might be the area that was known as the Deer Lot or *"Petit Champ"* in the antebellum period: it was subsequently a cotton field. It now has a cover of Bahia grass (*Paspalum notatum*), and it is designated in the Draft General Management Plan as the site for the visitors' parking lot.[694] There is no clear division between this field and the field in the northeastern corner of the property, though at one time they were separate cuts. The northeast corner field lies north of the old Pecan Grove, and there are several pecan trees in the field. The large trees on the western edge were known as the "Four Sisters."[695] Highway 494 &119 borders this field on two sides and telephone lines cut across its northeastern corner. There is a post and wire fence alongside the road and a number of trees have grown up on the fenceline. This scatter of trees includes hackberries (*Celtis occidentalis*), eastern red cedars, (*Juniperus virginiana*), and chinaberries.

There used to be a fence between the cuts in the northeast corner and the old pasture facing the river, but there is no division now. There is a group of catalpa trees (*Catalpa bignonioides*), near the vanished fenceline. There are a few more near the Cook's Cabin that stands on the western edge of the field, beside the old Pecan Grove. This field facing the river has been in grass for a long time and it might be the area referred to as the Front Pasture in the antebellum records – see Photograph # 9. In the 1930s it was the site of a fishing camp.

To the west of this northern section of the NPS property there is an area of woodland pasture that remains in the ownership of the Prud'homme family, see Photograph # 10. This woodland extends to Bayou Brevelle. Almost certainly, this is the area Phanor Prud'homme called his *"Savane."* It continued to be used as a pasture throughout the rest of the 19th and all of the 20th century. In the 20th century it was called the Small Pasture. Trees have been planted in this area at various times and the amount of tree cover has probably varied, but there is a very remarkable degree of continuity of use over the last two centuries. South of this woodland pasture there used to be the Hayfield and the Lake Pasture. Both can be clearly seen on the 1941 and 1958 aerial photographs. However, an expansion of the cultivated ground has greatly reduced the extent of these areas, and what is left of them is now indistinguishable from the Small Pasture.

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[694] General Management Plan, 1999, 42.
[695] Prud'homme and Duggan Interview, June 2000.

WOODS AND SWAMPS

There are no woodlands on the 45 acres owned by the NPS. Historically the woods were located in the swampy "*pays bas*" on the eastern and western borders of the plantation beside the bayous. Today there are narrow remnants of these woods alongside both the Bayou Brevelle and Bayou Ataho. West of the NPS Oakland Unit, the lake created beside Bayou Brevelle in the antebellum period still exists and is now surrounded by woodlands. But to get some idea of the historic character of the woodland swamps, it is necessary to take Route 1220 – the old Bon Dieu Road – and explore the undrained areas along Little River.

CLUSTERS OF BUILDINGS, YARDS AND GARDENS

The Yard, Oak Allee and Bottle Garden in front of the Main House

The Allee of live oaks, (*Quercus virginiana*), dominates the Front Yard – see Photograph # 11. There are five pairs of oaks. Judging by their size, most of the trees were planted in the time of Emanuel Prud'homme, but two trees are much smaller than the others and must be replacements. The NPS is rightly concerned about the health of the oaks, given their historical and aesthetic significance and the potential risk to visitors from falling limbs.[696] As part of a program to ensure their longevity, parking cars is no longer permitted in the Allee. There are two other large trees in the Front Yard, a pecan tree (*Carya illinoensis*), on the north side and a live oak to the south – see Photograph # 12. The live oak is in poor condition and poses a risk to visitors because of its position beside a path to the area currently used for visitors' parking.[697]

The antebellum parterre garden is now called the Bottle Garden. It is very likely that the garden retains its original pattern of flowerbeds even though lines of upturned bottles have replaced the original boxwood borders – see Photograph # 13. An inventory has been made of 667 of the bottles, which is estimated to be about one quarter of the total number.[698] Many of the bottles are 19th century wine, beer and soda water bottles. The garden is enclosed on three sides by fences. The front fence is a wooden picket fence and is painted white; the side fences are made of chain link. The garden is entered from the Oak Allee by a small wooden gate in the center of the picket fence. Inside, a narrow brick path leads to brick steps, which rise to the front gallery of the House. The path bricks are laid in lines with an alternating north-south and east-west orientation. The path has a definite camber and stands slightly higher than the adjoining ground. The narrow paths in the rest of the garden are bare earth, and they tend to become muddy when it rains.

In the beds outlined by the bottles, ornamental bulbs, perennials and some shrubs survive from the past. Many of the species that survive in the parterre and its immediate area are plants known to have been popular in Louisiana gardens during the period from the house

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[696] Dingman, 1998.
[697] Ibid., 6, tree no. 15.
[698] Neidinger, 2000.

construction forward. The most persistent are bulbs, tubers and corms. These have survived despite a lack of consistent maintenance and changes in the environment such as increased shade from the tree canopy and drainage problems. These perennials include daylilies (*Hemerocallis sp.*), native iris (*Iris sp.*), lycoris (*Lycoris sp.*), crinum (*Crinum sp.*), St. Joseph lilies (*Hippeastrum* x *Johnsonii*), zephranthes (*Zephyranthus candida*), amaryllis (*Amaryllis sp.*), parrot plant (*Gladiolus natalensis*), canna lilies (*Canna sp.*), and wood ferns (*Dryopteris sp.*). A few remnant roses survive but are in decline. Four o'clocks (*Mirabilis sp.*) are found throughout the garden. These annuals re-seed prolifically, and, though valued for their fragrance at twilight, are difficult to control. Woody shrubs surviving in the garden are camellia (*Camellia japonica*) - near the house, flowering quince (*Cydonia sp.*), nandina (*Nandina domestica*) – against the front fence, and popcorn spirea (*Spiraea sp.*).

At the foot of the steps to the gallery there is a brick threshold. Here the bricks have been laid in a herringbone pattern. On either side of the steps there is a crape-myrtle (*Lagerstroemia indica*), which has been pollarded in the traditional manner. Wooden handrails and steps have been added to the original brick steps to facilitate public access to the House.

At the opposite end of the Oak Allee, the entrance from the highway to the Front Yard is framed by an overhead sign. Supported by cast iron columns, the sign reads: "Oakland 1821." Below this there is a cattle guard and to one side there is another sign that reads: "National Bicentennial Farm 1785." A post and rail fence separates the yard from the highway; inside this there is a row of crape-myrtles, with a few larger trees, mostly hackberries and pecans. These larger trees are probably volunteers; the crape-myrtles would have been planted. There are no plantings along the northern or southern sides of the yard. Along the north side there is a fence of hogwire. On the south side, a post and rail fence runs between the Plantation Store and the Carriage House. A gateway beside the latter allows visitors to enter the yard from the field used for parking. A small swale drains the area south of the allee towards this field. Most of the ground in the Front Yard is covered with turf dominated by St. Augustine grass (*Stenotaphrum secundatum*). At the base of each live oak there is a mound of exposed roots. These areas are now being mulched rather than planted or mown, as part of the program to protect the trees. In spite of the heavy mulching, bulbs persist and bloom below the trees, including lycoris, zephranthes, and flags (*Iris sp.*).

The Yards at the Sides and Back of the Main House

There is no clear division between the spaces at the sides and back of the House, nor any major differences in character. On the south side of the House, there is a small chain link enclosure around a flight of steps to the gallery – see Photograph # 14. Apart from the grass on the ground, the enclosure is empty of plants. Over time the turf forming grasses have probably built up the level of the ground around the house. Outside this enclosure, a line of crape-myrtles divides the space on this side of the House from the Front Yard. At one end of this line, there is a Japanese magnolia (*Magnolia quinquepeta*), and at the other end a southern magnolia (*Magnolia grandifolia*). This line is the only evidence of

ornamental planting left in this area. Some picnic tables have been positioned in the shade of the trees. On the south side of the space a post and wire fence divides it from the field beyond.

The Carpenter's Shop is the first in a line of outbuildings which defines the western edge of the yard at the back of the House – see Photograph # 15. A post and hogwire fence connects the buildings. A large pecan and a very large live oak shade the yard – see Photograph # 16. The health of both trees is the subject of some concern given their age and location where people are likely to gather.[699]

The kitchen projects into the back yard, and on the north side of it there are three mayhaws and a number of small fruit trees, a peach and two figs (*Ficus sp.*). Most of them are situated near the fence that separates the yard from the Pecan Grove to the north. There are no steps to the gallery on the north side of the House, and along the basement walls there is a line of nandinas (*Nandina domestica*), of various sizes – see Photograph # 17. Just beyond the fence, due north of the parterre, there is a very old chinaberry tree (*Melia azedarach*). Chinaberries were one of the most valued ornamentals of the first half of the 19th century.

The ground at the sides and back of the House is covered with a turf similar to that in the Front Yard, but somewhat worn near the steps at the back of the House. Poor drainage is a concern around the House, particularly as the floor in the basement is at or below the level of the surrounding ground. On the north side of the kitchen and the main building, there are small swales to lead water to the edge of the yard, but these no longer connect to any larger drainage system. In the past, rainwater from the roof of the House was caught and channeled into cisterns. There are three cisterns still in existence beside the building, but none are operational.

The Pecan Grove

There are only ten pecan trees left in the Pecan Grove – see Photograph # 18, with another seven or eight in the surrounding fields. Many of the pecans are old and some have a number of dead branches. In addition to the pecans, there are a few live oaks and catalpa trees on the east side of the grove near the Cook's Cabin, and several groups of honey locusts (*Gleditsia tricanthos*), on the western side near the fencerows. There are overgrown fencerows on the western and northern boundaries. These contain fragments of barbed wire fences, and thickets of woody species, including hackberries, Osage oranges, honey locusts, trifoliate oranges (*Poncirus trifoliate*), smilax, (*Smilax sp.*), and grape vines, (*Vitis sp.*). The fenceline on the eastern side has gone, but a single Osage orange probably marks its former position.

The grass in the Pecan Grove has not been mowed with the same frequency as that in the adjacent yards and fields, and the composition of the ground layer is more diverse. There is a patch of irises (*Iris sp.*), daylilies (*Hemerocalis spp.*), and spider lilies (*Lycoris*

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[699] Dingman, 1998, 7, trees nos. 18 and 20.

radiata), in a low spot near the north east corner – see Photograph # 19, and a patch of wild onion (*Allium sp.*), near a small shed at the southern edge of the grove.

The Doctor's Yards

There are four enclosures around the Doctor's House. The main yard has remnant ornamental plantings in a lawn; the others, which are at the side and back, are more overgrown and appear to have had more utilitarian characters.

Four large live oaks shade the main yard. The two trees at the back of the house are particularly massive and their branches overhang the building. In front of the house a few ornamental trees and shrubs are arranged in lines on either side of the path to the front door – see Photograph # 20. These ornamentals include flowering quinces (*Chaenomeles speciosa*), Burford hollies (*Ilex cornuta 'Burfordii,'*) crape-myrtles and nandinas. Near the foundations of the building and along the fencerows, patches of spider lilies and spiderwort (*Tradescantia virginica*), continue to poke up through the grass. A track leads to the front gate, which is recessed away from the highway – see Photograph # 21. Beside the gate, there is a small Farm Bureau Member sign.

To the south of the main yard there is a second enclosure of about the same size. At the time of our survey, this area had not been mown for several years. The long grass was being invaded by privet, honeysuckle, and poison-ivy (*Rhus radicans*). At the back of this yard there is a small enclosure, which is almost completely overgrown. Behind this, stands a barn, now used as a storage place by the NPS. The barn is at the southern end of a fourth enclosure, which stands beside the dogleg in the Lane to Bayou Brevelle. This contains a number of small structures, including a chicken coop.

The fences around all these yards are made of a variety of materials, including hogwire and chicken wire, strung between wooden and metal posts. In some places, fences are sagging badly, and elsewhere gaps in the fences have been closed with sheets of roofing tin. Trees of various sizes and ages line the fences; they include water oaks (*Quercus nigra*), pecans, hackberries, chinaberries and red cedars.

The Area around the Tenants' Cabins

In this triangular shaped area at the southern end of the Oakland Unit, there are three tenants' cabins left standing and the ruins of a fourth. The most northerly cabin is known as the Overseer's House. A track that continues the north-south line of the plantation Lane passes in front of this cabin and heads towards the cabin in the point of the triangle – see Photograph # 22. Circulation within the area is now governed by the pattern of mowing in the long grass. There are few signs of the east-west turnrows that once ran through this area.

The area is fairly open, but two large live oaks cast some shade. The larger oak stands beside the third cabin – see Photograph # 23. Other trees in the area include chinaberries, hackberries, Chinese tallow trees (*Sapium sebiferum*), and paper mulberries

(*Broussonetia papyrifera*). There is a persimmon tree (*Diospyros virginiana*), beside the ruins of the fourth cabin. At the time of our survey we did not observe any signs of herbaceous garden plants around the cabins.

The entire area is secluded by the trees and shrubs that have grown up along the fencerows on all sides. The fence along the highway is a mixture of hogwire and barbed wire, like the fence beside the Doctor's Yard. The trees beside the highway include hackberries, pecans, American elm (*Ulmus Americana*), and some small live oaks. The growth beside the road is not yet as thick as the hedge beside the plowed field on the western side of the area.

The Areas around the Farm Buildings

The farm buildings are scattered alongside the dirt track that runs from east to west across the middle of the Oakland Unit. The track begins beside the old Plantation Store. In front of the Store, a pecan tree and Osage orange shade a grassy patch beside the highway, which contains two gasoline pumps, a mailbox and a cistern – see Photograph # 24. A "No Parking" sign is attached to one of the trees. North of the Store the rail fence beside the highway is lined with crape-myrtles. South of the Store there is a barbed wire fence beside the highway and this is lined with jujube trees (*Ziziphus jujuba*) – see Photograph # 25. The tops of these trees have been lopped off at a height of about six feet. A modern metal gate, painted green, gives access to the field south of the Store. This field is now used as a parking lot by visitors to the Main House, so there is a network of tracks in the grass. At its northern edge, near the gap between the Store and the Carriage House, there is the first of two pigeonniers and a couple of Osage orange trees. At the time of the survey, there was a small enclosure at the western edge of the parking lot field. This has now been removed.

The second pigeonnier marks the place where the dirt track divides in two, one branch turning south and the other continuing westwards. The main group of farm buildings stands on the north side of the track heading west – see Photograph # 26. The Mule Barn, Cotton Picker Shed, and Tractor Shed share an approximate north-south alignment, and are spaced about 50 to 75 feet apart. The spaces between the buildings are shaded by two large live oaks. Like the adjacent live oak behind the Main House, the large limbs of the oaks are a potential hazard and the health of the trees must therefore be protected. In the space behind the Tractor Shed and north of the Cotton Picker Shed there are an old privy and a cistern. Beyond these there is a clump of trees at the southern end of the fenceline beside the Pecan Grove. Species in this clump include honey locust, catalpa and live oak. At the time of our survey there were two pecan trees standing in the gap leading into the grove, but one of these was dead and has since been removed.

Another more scattered group of farm buildings lies south of the track leading westwards. The largest building is the Square Crib, beside which the brick top to a large cistern forms an eye-catching feature in the landscape – see Photograph # 27. The cistern lies in an enclosure on the southeast side of the Crib. Two post and wire fences make this enclosure. On its east side, it is open to the track that runs behind the Doctor's House. On

its south side it is open to the grassy Lane that used to lead to Bayou Brevelle. Across the Lane, there is a cattle corral – see Photograph # 28. A plank fence encloses two rectangular spaces, in one of which there are the remains of a cattle chute. A tangle of vines covers the abandoned fences.

To the west of the Square Crib, there are two structures in the middle of small clumps of trees. The most northerly is a building that retains its roof but has lost its walls – see Photograph # 29. It is shaded by a hackberry and several honey locusts and boxelder (*Acer negundo*). Nearby, a similar thicket hides the remains of a livestock dipping trough, which is sunk into the ground. Between this trough and the Square Crib there are a number of humps and hollows that suggest there were other enclosures and perhaps structures in this area that have vanished.

The Gin Seed House

The Seed House that stood next to the 1860 ginhouse has been adapted to serve as a center for Park Maintenance – see Photograph # 30. At the time of our survey, the area around the Seed House was enclosed with temporary plastic fences to form a compound in the middle of the plowed field. The compound is reached from a dirt track beside the hedge next to the Tenants' Cabins.

CEMETERIES

There is no cemetery within the Oakland Unit, but there is a cemetery nearby. This is located beside the Bayou Brevelle in the woodland pasture. It is thought that it was a cemetery for Oakland tenant families, and further research is planned by the NPS. Nothing has been done yet to confirm the presence of a slave cemetery on the right bank of the river.

RHYTHMS OF LIFE ON OAKLAND PLANTATION UNIT

No one lives at Oakland. The NPS staff goes about its duties, and visitors wander about the property during open hours, but the rest of the time the place stands empty. However, in its current condition, with areas of long grass, overgrown fencelines and stag headed trees, the unit offers attractive habitat for a variety of wildlife.[700] Birds, such as meadowlarks and sparrows, small mammals, such as mice, shrews and moles, reptiles and insects inhabit the long grass meadows and hedgerows. Lizards, snakes, frogs, and possibly salamanders hibernate in hollow trees, and there large insect populations serve as food for birds, amphibians, reptiles and small mammals. These creatures probably attract larger predatory species, including raccoons, foxes, bobcats, and opossums plus owls, falcons and hawks. The presence of the river on one side of the property and of woodlands stretching to Bayou Brevelle on the other increases the accessibility of the unit to various wildlife populations. Protection of these natural values is a proper concern of the NPS.

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[700] Conzelmann, 2002.

LEGEND

- Burford Holly
- Catalpa
- Cedar
- Crape Myrtle
- Chinaberry
- Fig
- Hackberry
- Honey Locust
- Jujube
- Live Oak
- Osage Orange
- Paper Mulberry
- Pecan
- Pine
- Popcorn Tree
- Prunus spp. (Cherry Laurel)
- Southern Magnolia
- Water Oak

- Property Line
- Dirt Track
- Drainage ditch/Swale
- Telephone Pole
- Fence-row Vegetation

SOURCES:
USGS Aerial Photographs (1941, 1958, 1998)
National Park Service Oakland Plantation
Context Map (Drawing #494/80012 8/97)

NOTES:
- Exposed roots, ivy, nandina, hackberry, and various bulbs and perennials surround bases of live oaks in Main House allee
- Metal arch over Main House driveway reads "Oakland 1821"
- Sign at front entry reads "National Bicentennial Farm - 1785"
- Turf around Main House typically a variety of St. Augustine

Hwy 494 & 119
Wood Post Wire Fence
Wood Post Barbed Wire Fence
Telephone Lines
Bahia Grass Field
Small Pasture
Wood Post Barbed Wire Fence
Pond w/ Iris
Intermittent Wood Post Barbed Wire Fence
Cook's Cabin
Allium Patch
Pecan Grove
Shed
Cistern
Wood Post Hog Wire Fence
Outhouse
Wash House
Propane Tank
Fattening Pen
Main House
Cistern
Tractor Shed
Shed
Cisterns
Rail Fence
Live Oak Allee
To Tenant Cemetery
Chicken Coops
Bottle Garden
Gate (to front yard)
Bahia Grass Field
Straw Baler
Cattle Guard
Cotton Picker Shed
Mule Barn
Sign
Carpenter's Shop
Japanese Magnolia
10' Pipe
Propane Tanks
Shed
2nd Pigeonnier
Carriage House
Store
Cistern
Gas Pump
Gas Pumps & Mailbox
Dirt Track
1st Pigeonnier
Dipping Vat
Concrete Pilings
Wood Post Hog Wire Fence
Wood Post Barbed Wire Fence
Garage
Square Crib
Pipe
Wood Post Barbed Wire Fence
Wood Post Hog Wire Fence
Line of lane to Bayou Brevelle
Cistern
Doctor House
Corral
Shed
Shed
Rail Fence
Hwy 494 & 119
Cattle trough
Coop
Gate (to Doctor's Yard)
Cane River Lake
Cultivated Field
Mound in Paper Mulberry Stand & Remnant Fence Pieces
Cistern
Barn
Overseer's House
Wood Post Hog Wire Fence
Disused Steel Truss Bridge
Seed House
Wood Post Barbed Wire Fence
Cattle Troughs & Spiggot
Hwy 119
Slave/Tenant Cabin
Cotton Gin Ruins
Ruins
Cistern
Privet Clump
Wood Post Hog Wire Fence
Slave/Tenant Cabin
Cultivated Field
Hwy 494

N

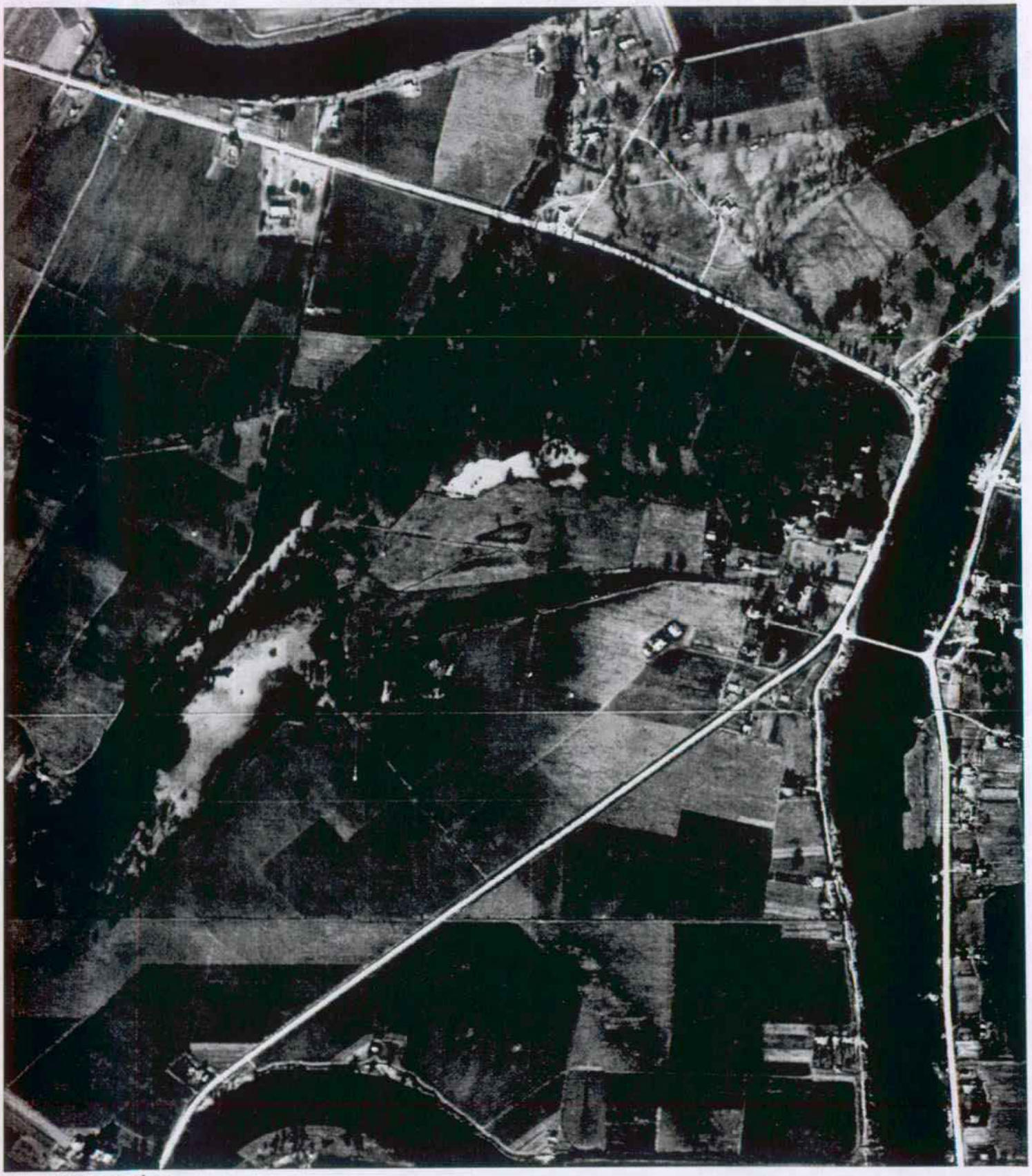
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Oakland Plantation

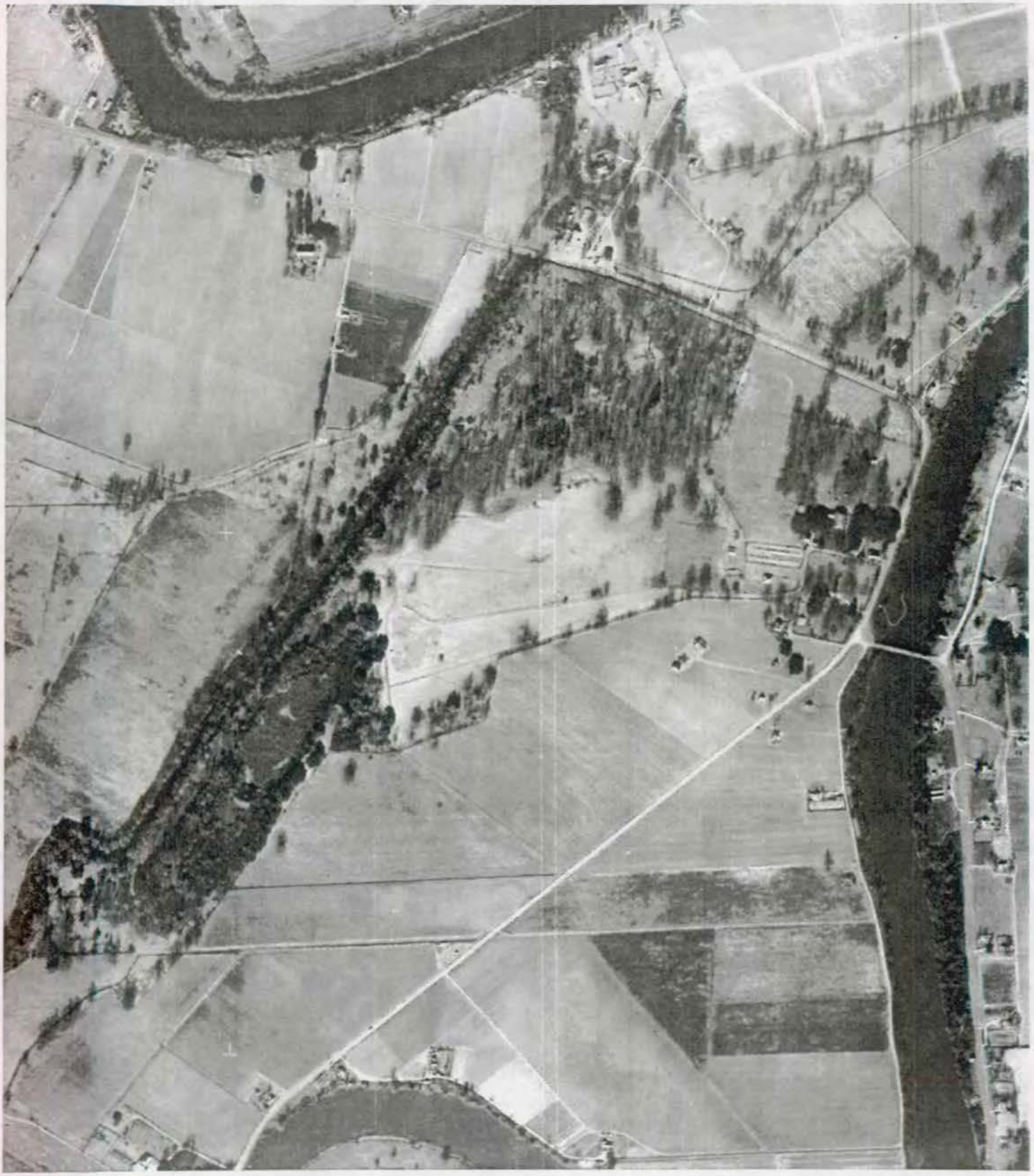
Existing Conditions Plan

Natchitoches Parish, LA

Cane River Creole N.H.P.: Oakland Cultural Landscape Report



kland Plantation
rial Photograph 1941
tchitoches Parish, LA
ne River Creole N.H.P.: Oakland Cultural Landscape Report



ıkland Plantation
erial Photograph 1958
ıtchitoches Parish, LA
me River Creole N.H.P.: Oakland Cultural Landscape Report



ıkland Plantation
erial Photograph 1966
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ıne River Creole N.H.P.: Oakland Cultural Landscape Report



kland Plantation
rial Photograph 1998
tchitoches Parish, LA
ne River Creole N.H.P.: Oakland Cultural Landscape Report

EXISTING CONDITIONS: LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS



Photograph # 1
Cane River: looking towards Oakland from the old bridge.
Credit: Ian Firth 2002.



Photograph # 2
Bayou Brevelle.
Credit: Stephanie Gibbs 1999.



Photograph # 3
Bayou Ataho.
Credit: Ian Firth 2002.



Photograph # 4
The Lane: looking west from beside the Plantation Store.
Credit: Ian Firth 2002.



Photograph # 5
The Lane: view south from the second Pigeonnier.
Credit: Pat Deyo 1999.



Photograph # 6
The Lane: looking back towards the Doctor's House from the end of the Lane.
Credit: Ian Firth 2002.



Photograph # 7
The Fallow Field: view through the fencerow beside the Lane.
Credit: Ian Firth 2002.



Photograph # 8
Cultivated Ground: view across Ataho Plantation land.
Credit: Ian Firth 2002.



Photograph # 9
The Front Pasture: looking towards the Cook's House from the gallery of the Main House.
Credit: Ian Firth 2002.



Photograph # 10
The Small Pasture: this is almost certainly the same place as the "savane."
Credit: Ian Firth 2002.



Photograph # 11
The Front Yard: view from the gallery of the Main House to the front gate.
Credit: Ian Firth 2002.



Photograph # 12
The Front Yard: view from the gallery of the Main House to the Carriage House and Plantation Store.
Credit: Ian Firth 2002.



Photograph # 13
The Bottle Garden: close up of bottles edging a flowerbed.
Credit: Ian Firth 1999.



Photograph # 14
The Side Yard: looking from the gallery on the south side of the House towards the Carpenter's Shop and Mule Barn.
Credit: Ian Firth 2002.



Photograph # 15
The Back Yard: view towards the Carpenter's Shop, Mule Barn and Chicken Coops.
Credit: Stephanie Gibbs 1999.



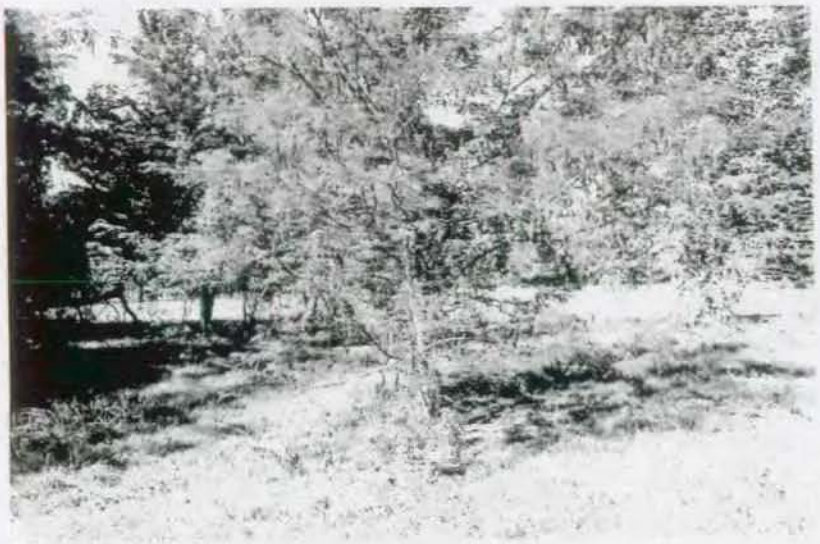
Photograph # 16
The Back Yard: view past the large live oak towards the House.
Credit: Pat Deyo 1999.



Photograph # 17
North Side of the Main House: view towards the fruit trees.
Credit: Pat Deyo 1999.



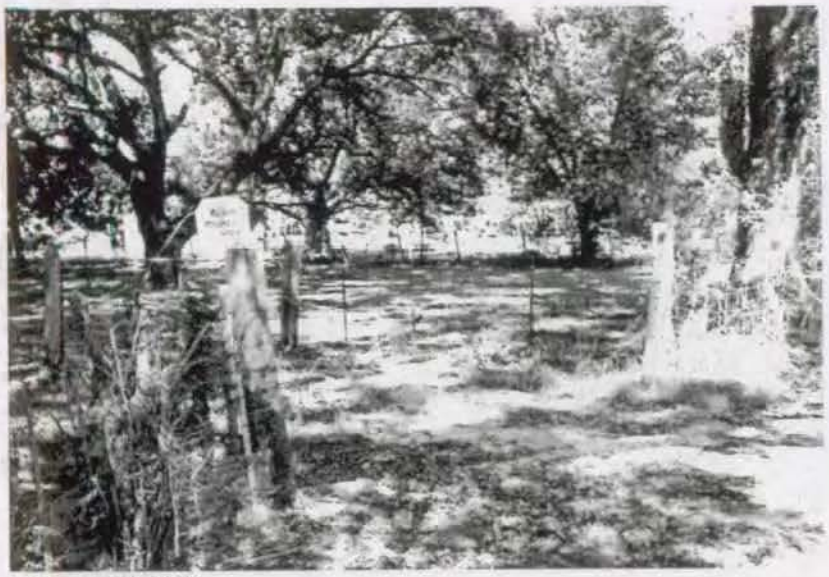
Photograph # 18
The Pecan Grove: looking south from the center of the grove.
Credit: Stephanie Gibbs 1999.



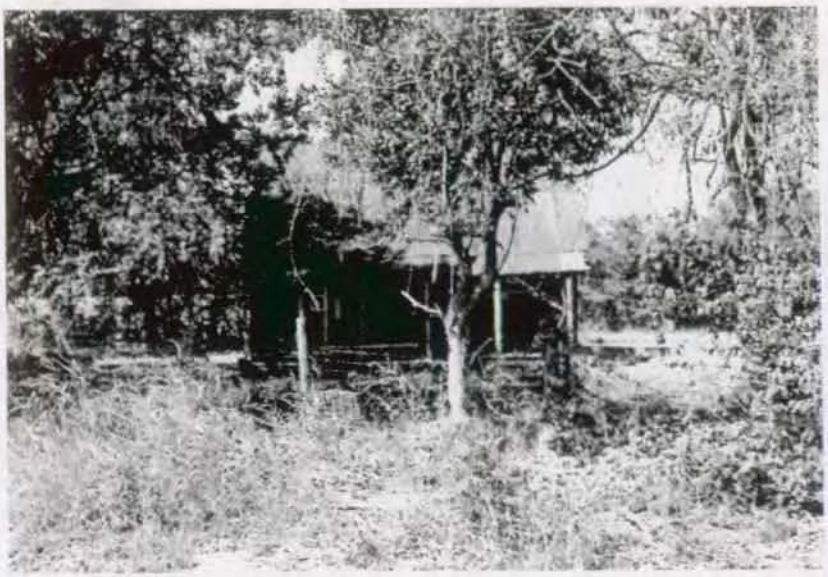
Photograph # 19
The Pecan Grove: looking north from beside the iris patch.
Credit: Stephanie Gibbs 1999.



Photograph # 20
The Doctor's Yard: the space in front of the House.
Credit: Stephanie Gibbs 1999.



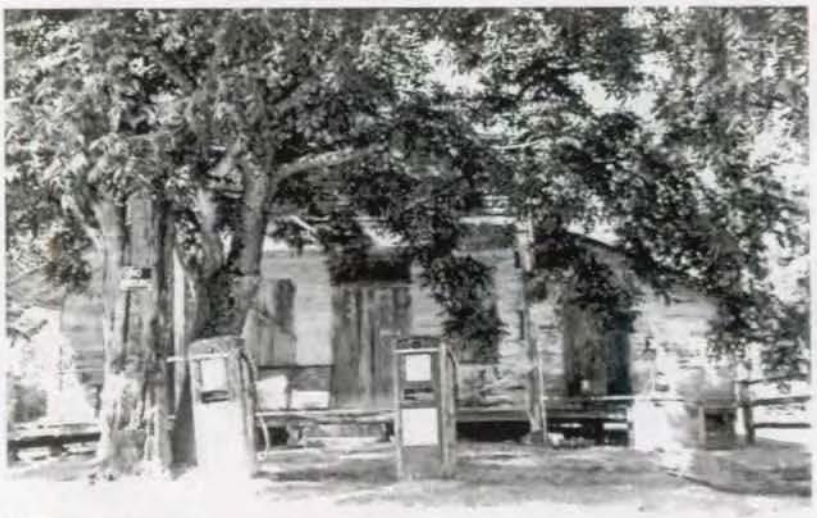
Photograph # 21
The Doctor's Yard: the front gate.
Credit: Ian Firth 1999.



Photograph # 22
The Tenants' Cabins Area: the southernmost cabin.
Credit: Ian Firth 1999.



Photograph # 23
The Tenants' Cabins Area: a large live oak shading the easternmost cabin.
Credit: Stephanie Gibbs 1999.



Photograph # 24
The Plantation Store: gas pumps in front of the Store.
Credit: Stephanie Gibbs 1999.



Photograph # 25
The Field South of the Store: jujube trees beside the highway.
Credit: Stephanie Gibbs 1999.



Photograph # 26
Farm Buildings: view past the second Pigeonnier to the Mule Barn and Carpenter's Shop.
Credit: Ian Firth 1999.



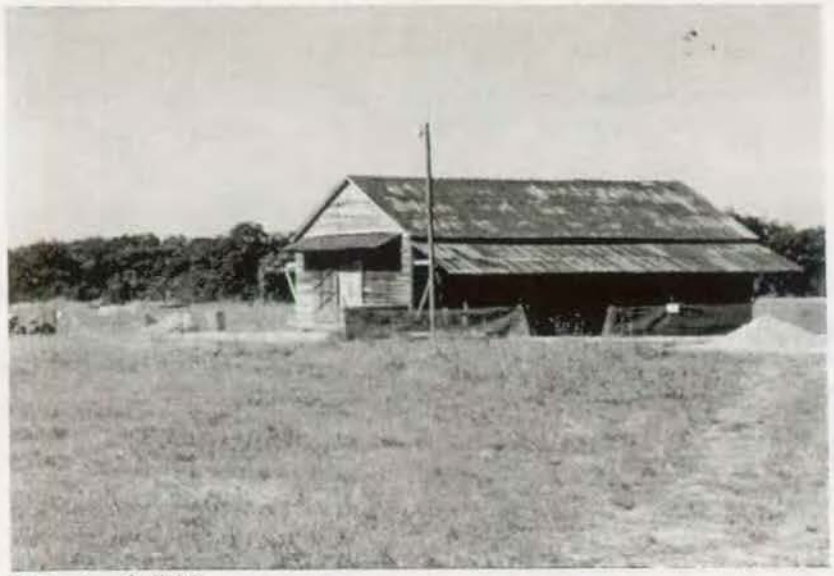
Photograph # 27
The Square Crib: note mouth of brick cistern in foreground.
Credit: Ian Firth 1999.



Photograph # 28
Cattle Corral: with overgrown fences.
Credit: Pat Deyo 1999.



Photograph # 29
Ruin of Farm Building: located northwest of the Square Crib.
Credit: Ian Firth 1999.



Photograph # 30
The Gin Seed House.
Credit: Ian Firth 1999.

CHAPTER SIX:
PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

INTENT

Our intent in providing these preliminary conclusions and recommendations is to provide guidance for planning for the reception of visitors, on-going preservation maintenance operations, and development of interpretation programs. Plans have been made to develop a parking lot for visitors in the field in the northwestern corner of the Oakland Unit, and to develop a center for the reception and orientation of visitors in the Plantation Store. These recommendations address the question of circulation between these points on opposite sides of the property. Fencerow management is an issue of particular concern to park maintenance because of the overgrown character of many areas. So these recommendations address the question of which fences and stretches of fencerow vegetation contribute to the historical significance of Oakland. Interpretation programs face the problem of how to help visitors appreciate the character of the original plantation landscape when the Oakland Unit only contains 2% of the antebellum acreage. So we discuss a variety of resources that might be used in interpretation programs.

These preliminary recommendations are based on the historical research completed for Part One of the Cultural Landscape Report, and a survey of materials collected for Part Two. A more complete set of recommendations should follow the completion of the historical research for Part Two.

HISTORICAL CONTINUITIES AND CHANGES

Within and outside the NPS boundaries, the present day landscape of Oakland is the result of both remarkable historical continuities and radical changes. The important continuities include continuities in ownership, habitation and land use. Before its acquisition by the NPS, the plantation had remained in the possession of the same family for six generations. It is the only one of the several antebellum Prud'homme plantations to remain in the possession of the Prud'hommes into the present day. Paralleling the continuity of ownership was a continuity of habitation not only by the Prud'hommes but also by a number of African American families. The latter began their association with the place in a condition of enforced servitude, but remained after emancipation as tenant sharecroppers. And throughout its history, the plantation has been devoted primarily to the same land use – the production of cotton. This had taken place within a favorable natural environment, which provides a moist subtropical climate and a remarkable depth and richness of alluvial soil.

The radical changes include shifts in property boundaries, alterations in the natural setting and social context, and revolutions in agricultural organization and technology. The shifts in boundaries occurred as the property was handed from generation to

generation. The most important changes came in 1873, with the division of Phanor's plantation into Oakland and Ataho plantations, and in 1919, with the subdivision of J. Alphonse's Oakland into smaller units. The most important alterations in the natural setting have been to the hydrology of Cane River: the reduction in water levels in the 19th century, and its impoundment in the 20th century. The most significant changes in the social context were the emancipation of the slaves after the Civil War, and the emigration of the tenant sharecroppers after the Second World War. These social upheavals provoked reorganizations of the plantation as a business enterprise, with the replacement of the slaveholding plantation system by the sharecropping system in the 1860s, and its replacement by a modern agricultural business in 1960. The change from enslaved labor to sharecropping was not accompanied by any revolution in technology: the land continued to be worked by the muscle-power of draft animals and humans. But the second reorganization was accompanied by, and indeed driven by a revolution in technology, as machines replaced animal and human labor, and agricultural production became capital rather than labor intensive.

The result of these historical continuities and changes is a complex landscape that represents multiple layers of history. Features associated with each of the generations that occupied and worked the land over the past two centuries survive, but they are not always easy to distinguish. Features associated with different periods are not neatly separated into different zones; rather they have been interwoven across the plantation through a repetitive process of use and disuse, partial removal and replacement, and adaptation and reuse. So within each area on the plantation, such as the Pecan Grove, the Bottle Garden, or the area with the Tenant Cabins, there are reminders of different periods in the history of Oakland.

SIGNIFICANCE AND INTEGRITY

A full evaluation of the historical significance and integrity of the landscape of the Oakland Unit must await the completion of Part Two of the Cultural Landscape Report. The following summary is based on the research already completed and on the findings of other studies; these include the preliminary overview by Ann Patton Malone, the archaeological investigation and several historic building assessments and a historic structure report.[701]

The Oakland landscape has national historical significance as an example of the evolution of a Southern cotton plantation. It is associated with the development of the plantation system from its origins in the colonial period, through its apogee in the first half of the 19th century when it was dependent on slave labor, followed by its controversial adaptation to emancipation via tenant sharecropping, until its transformation into modern agribusiness in the second half of the 20th century. Oakland represents a celebrated regional variation of the Southern cotton plantation, one that was developed by French Creole planters on the fertile floodplain of the Red River in northwestern Louisiana.

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[701] Malone, 1998, Miller and Wood, 2000, Miri, 1998, Draft HSR Prud'homme's Store, 2001.

The Prud'hommes' plantation is both a typical, and an exceptional example of this regional type. In terms of its size, land use and levels of production, it was typical of properties developed by the upper class of large slaveholders. In the antebellum period, Phanor's plantation conformed closely to the picture presented by Menn in his statistical analysis of Red River plantations operated with 50 or more slaves.[702] After the Civil War, the evolution of Oakland illustrates both the advantages and difficulties of the sharecropping system. What makes Oakland an exceptional example of a Red River plantation is the richness of the historical record. The record is found not only within the voluminous Family Papers, but also in an extensive oral history project conducted by Ann Patton Rose, and in the fabric of the buildings and the landscape preserved at Oakland.

However, over the past 40 years, the historical record provided by the landscape has become considerably more difficult to read. Outside the boundaries of the NPS property, this difficulty is due to changes wrought by modern agricultural operations. Within the boundaries of the Oakland Unit, the difficulty is due to a period of disuse and neglect. The evolution of the landscape is documented in aerial photographs.[703] In the earliest photograph, which was taken in 1941, the process of modernization is represented by the highway that cuts through Oakland, but the landscape is still one of small cuts and a scatter of sharecroppers' cabins. The effects of the demise of the tenant sharecropper system can be seen in the 1958 and 1966 photographs. The landscape beyond the central cluster of buildings has become simplified with larger fields and fewer cabins, while inside the central cluster sheds have been added for machinery. In the latest photograph, which was taken in 1998, there are obvious signs of disuse in the center of the plantation.[704] The patchwork of small enclosures around the buildings has become obscure as some fencelines have been removed and others overgrown. The center of the plantation is now separated from the agricultural land to the southwest by thickets of vegetation along new fencelines.

RESTORATION

We recommend that the spatial organization of the landscape of the Oakland Unit should be restored to its condition in the late 1950s and early 1960s. At that time there was still evidence of the historic presence of tenant sharecroppers, although the landscape had been almost emptied of tenants and stood ready for the modern era of machines. We consider this restoration to be essential in order to orient visitors to the landscape of both the sharecropping and slaveholding periods, and to assist them in understanding its historic characteristics.

The historic spatial organization is well documented in the 1958 and 1966 aerial photographs. The following treatment recommendations are based on an analysis of those photographs, assisted by interviews with Kenneth Prud'homme and Vivian Prud'homme

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[702] Menn, 1964.
[703] USDA 1941 aerial photograph CQJ-8A-52; USDA 1958 aerial photograph CQJ-1W-36; USDA 1966 aerial photograph CQJ-1HH-159.
[704] USDA 1998 aerial photograph NAPP 10807 202X.

Duggan. While the landscape continued to change between 1958 and 1966, these changes did not alter the spatial organization. The most noticeable changes were in the number of farm buildings and the access route to the Gin Yard. A complete set of recommendations will require the completion of the research for Part Two of the Cultural Landscape Report, and the determination of a more precise end-date for the historic period.

Three steps should be taken to restore the historic spatial organization of the Oakland Unit: the restoration of the Lane to Bayou Brevelle, the reestablishment of the pattern of enclosures, and the reopening of views to agricultural fields and pastures beyond the Unit's boundaries. Locations where actions are recommended are indicated in the Preliminary Treatment Plan.

The Lane to Bayou Brevelle

The Lane is one of the oldest and most important features of the plantation's layout. The line of the Lane within NPS boundaries still exists, but it is no longer clearly visible and only parts of it are used. It should be restored and used to guide visitors as they move from the new parking lot to the Plantation Store, and from the Main House to the Tenant Cabins.

The Lane was fenced throughout its course by post and wire fences. The alignments can be clearly seen in the aerial photographs and their construction can be seen in photographs from Prud'homme Family albums. A few lengths of fences remain. These should be repaired where necessary. Other stretches are missing and should be replaced. There were two gates across the Lane, one at the highway and one near the Square Crib, and a number of other gates, which gave access to adjacent enclosures. All the historic gateways should be reestablished, and gates conforming in type to the historic ones should be reinstalled.

The surface of the Lane was mostly exposed dirt, kept free of grass by traffic. The surface drained to side gutters. The historic character of the cross section can be most clearly seen in the abandoned stretch of road beyond the Square Crib. The character of the surface can be recovered through regular use, but an alternative means of drainage will have to be sought. The side gutters originally drained west towards the Lake, but that drainage system has been disrupted by the reformation of the cultivated fields to the west of the Unit's boundaries.

The Pattern of Enclosures

At all periods in the history of the plantation, there was a strong contrast between the landscape around the cluster of buildings at its northern edge and the wider landscape of agricultural production. The areas around the buildings were fenced into small enclosures, while the wider landscape had large stretches of open fields. The uses of the small enclosures changed, but we think the overall pattern together with the distribution of buildings remained relatively stable from the antebellum period onwards. This pattern of enclosures has become fragmented and overgrown. It should be restored in order to

provide a framework for interpretation of the historic landscape. To achieve this, a combination of the following actions is recommended.

The historic fences enclosing the Yards around the Main House and the Bottle Garden should be preserved. There are questions about the fences on the south side of the House and Bottle Garden. These should be answered in research for Part Two of the Cultural Landscape Report.

The historic fences along the highway should be preserved. Recommendations have already been made by Bitzel and Pepper for the management of the rows of crape-myrtle and jujube trees. These recommended the removal of all volunteer trees and vines to minimize competition with the historic trees.[705] We agree that volunteer vegetation that threatens the health of the crape-myrtles and jujube trees should be removed, but other volunteers should be left in place. Historic views of these fencelines indicate the presence of some volunteer trees and vines. It is important to maintain the same level of care and maintenance as obtained in the historic period and not to upgrade this, unless there are threats to human safety or historic resources.

The historic fences around the Doctor's Yards should be restored. These fences require repair and the removal of some of the thickets of trees, shrubs and vines that have overgrown them. Again the historic level of care should be a guide to the appropriate level of maintenance activity. The historic views indicate there were some fenceline trees and shrubs present in 1958 and1966, particularly along the fences around the outer edges of the property.

Fences around the Pecan Grove should be preserved, restored and, where necessary, reconstructed. Remains of fences on the western and northern sides of the Grove are lost in thickets of trees, shrubs and vines. These thickets should be thinned, but not removed as they were present in the historic period. Care should be taken to leave a representative population of Osage orange trees in the thickets. As discussed in Chapter Four, we believe the presence of Osage orange in these fencerows represents the regeneration of trees planted by Phanor Prud'homme around his fruit and vegetable garden. There was no fence on the eastern side of the Grove by 1958, so this side should be left open to the Front Pasture.

There should be a post and wire fence separating the Front Pasture north of the Front Yard from the cuts in the northeast corner of the property. That fence continued the line of the fence on the north side of the Pecan Grove. It should be reconstructed.

There are some remnants of the post and wire fence that followed the northwestern boundary of the property beside the Prud'homme's Small Pasture. This fence should be restored to deter visitors from trespassing onto private property.

There are now only two fences left beside the Square Crib. The historic pattern of enclosures in this area can be seen on the aerial photographs, and is remembered by

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[705] Bitzel and Pepper, 2000.

Kenneth Prud'homme. However the pattern changed between 1958 and 1966, so restoration should be delayed until the completion of the research for Part Two of the Cultural Landscape Report. There were probably a variety of fence types, because the enclosures were used for a variety of activities, but we have not yet found photographs that illustrate their historic character and construction. Reconstruction will have to take account of the need for more archaeology in this area to locate the site of the antebellum mule barn.[706]

Views to Agricultural Fields and Pastures

The relationship between the central cluster of plantation buildings and the agricultural fields and pastures can only be appreciated if historic views are restored and maintained. Views to the southwest are now impeded by the development of dense thickets of trees and shrubs along a new fenceline. This fence runs northwards from Highway 494 to the Lane to Bayou Brevelle, and then north from the Lane before turning west to cross the boundary of the NPS property. Apart from the stretch beside the Lane, this fenceline is a non-historic addition and it should be removed.

The removal of the fence between the plowed field and the Tenants' Cabins would leave the cabins standing in the open field. This was the situation at the end of the historic period and it should be restored. Recommendations for the treatment of the yard around each cabin should be developed in Part Two of the Cultural Landscape Report.

The removal of the fence north of the Lane to Bayou Brevelle should make it possible to reconstruct fences along their historic alignment in the area of the Hayfield between the Lake Pasture and the Small Pasture. Changes beyond the NPS boundary have meant the Hayfield has disappeared, so it is important to restore fencelines within the Oakland Unit to help indicate its historic presence. On this western side of the property there are good views into Little Pasture. These views should be maintained.

It might become necessary to erect a boundary fence to prevent trespass by visitors to the Oakland Unit onto private land. We have already recommended the restoration of the historic fence alongside Small Pasture. Elsewhere a boundary fence would not follow any historic alignment. Therefore, a type of wire fence should be selected that would be invisible from a distance, so that it would not obstruct historic views.

RESOURCES FOR INTERPRETATION PROGRAMS

The interpretation of the antebellum landscape at Oakland presents a number of challenges: the landscape has undergone major changes since the demise of the plantation system; the Oakland Unit contains only 45 of the 1904 acres in Phanor Prud'homme's Plantation in 1860; moreover, there remain many gaps in our knowledge of the antebellum landscape. To meet these challenges it will be necessary to develop some innovative programs, for it is not possible to rely on a recreation of the historic scene. It will be necessary to look beyond the boundaries of the Oakland Unit. Fortunately the

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[706] Miller and Wood, 2000, 72-73.

structure of the Cane River Creole N. H. P. encourages this sort of outreach and the development of a regional perspective. The following suggestions highlight a variety of resources that might be employed in programs to interpret the landscape characteristics of the antebellum plantation.

Property Boundaries

The Period Plan presented in Chapter Four is based on the survey done by Alphonse Prud'homme for the 1873 division of the plantation. We compared this historical document to U.S. Geological Survey topographic maps and aerial photographs. Some of the colonial arpent lines are very visible in the present landscape. The best examples are the boundaries of the Rousseau tract on the left bank. A drive along Route 1220 allows one to look across this tract from one arpent line to the other. The road takes one to Bayou Ataho, the eastern limit of Emanuel's property. Returning towards Oakland, the views across the open fields give some ideas of the great extent of the antebellum cotton fields. On the western side of the river, places where the modern highway network intersects the boundaries of Phanor's plantation can be identified. They might be marked with roadside signs.

Spatial Organization

Arpent lines and the Oak Allee in front of the Main House are the only evidences in the present landscape of the imposition of a geometric order on the landscape in the antebellum period. We have hypothesized that the lanes on either side of the river also followed straight lines. We think the 1941 aerial photograph supports this idea. This geometry stood in strong contrast to the serpentine lines of rivers and bayous. Anyone looking at a topographic map or aerial photograph of the region can appreciate the complexity of these natural floodplain forms.

Cane River and the Bayous

The conversion of the river to a lake has radically altered its hydrological characteristics. Other engineering works have greatly reduced the frequency of flooding in the region. Some idea of people's obsessive concern about water levels in the antebellum period can be obtained from historical documents. For example, Seneca Pace's entries in Affleck's books made careful note of the rise and fall of the river and the passage of steamboats. Lestan Prud'homme made frequent references to planters' fear of floods in his journal.

The best view of the river/lake is now obtained from the bridges beside Oakland. The disused steel-truss bridge could provide an excellent location for telling the story of the river.

Cultivated Ground

A transcript of Seneca Pace's entries in the "Daily Record of Passing Events" for 1860 is presented in Appendix Two. This record provides a vivid picture of the unremitting cycle

of work in the fields. Similar records are available for other years. The calendar format could be useful in giving the historical record immediacy. Visitors could find out exactly what was happening on any particular day in the year. Ideally the calendar of work should be seen from several viewpoints, including those of planter, overseer and enslaved worker. Unfortunately the historical documents relating to Oakland only provide the first two viewpoints. It is necessary to look elsewhere for the enslaved workers' viewpoints, but these have to be used with caution and many uncertainties will remain.

Most of the plantation's cultivated ground now lies outside the Oakland Unit. Some use could be made of the extant plantation buildings to tell the story of growing cotton. Unfortunately, some of the most important buildings in this context are missing, including the three gins and the original mule barn. Again, it is necessary to look for parallel examples elsewhere, and here the buildings at Magnolia Plantation are a valuable resource. Cotton remains an important crop in the region, so, although there are many differences between an antebellum cotton field and its modern equivalent, interpretation could use the modern landscape as an entryway into the past.

Pastures and Hayfields

The same documentary sources provide information on the important role played by livestock on the antebellum plantation. The Oakland Unit includes some of the areas used to house and fatten livestock, though, unfortunately, the original mule barn and other buildings no longer stand. Just off-site the Small Pasture is almost certainly the area Phanor called the "savane," and views into this woodland pasture could be an important resource for interpretation programs.

It is important to try to convey the variety and complexity of livestock management on the antebellum plantation. For example, valuable draft animals were carefully tended, while cattle were generally left to look after themselves, sometimes with disastrous results. The plantation was not self-sufficient and had to replenish its stock from a variety of sources. Again the regional perspective is important, including in this case the connection to the Prudhomme brothers' ranch in Texas. Instructions on how to reach the ranch give some idea of what was involved when cattle were driven from there to the plantation.

Woods and Swamps

Small stretches of woodland swamps exist in the region and convey something of their primeval appearance, though without stands of large swamp cypresses. A drive towards the Red River reveals a few such places along the Little River. By 1860, the sawmill in the Pine Hills was supplying most of the lumber needs of the plantation. Unfortunately, we have not yet discovered its exact location. The Kisatchie Hills remain well forested, but little remains of the long leaf pine community that Phanor knew. However the importance of these resources is recorded in the historical documents, and the tangible evidence can be found in the structure of the plantation buildings.

Clusters of Buildings, Yards and Gardens

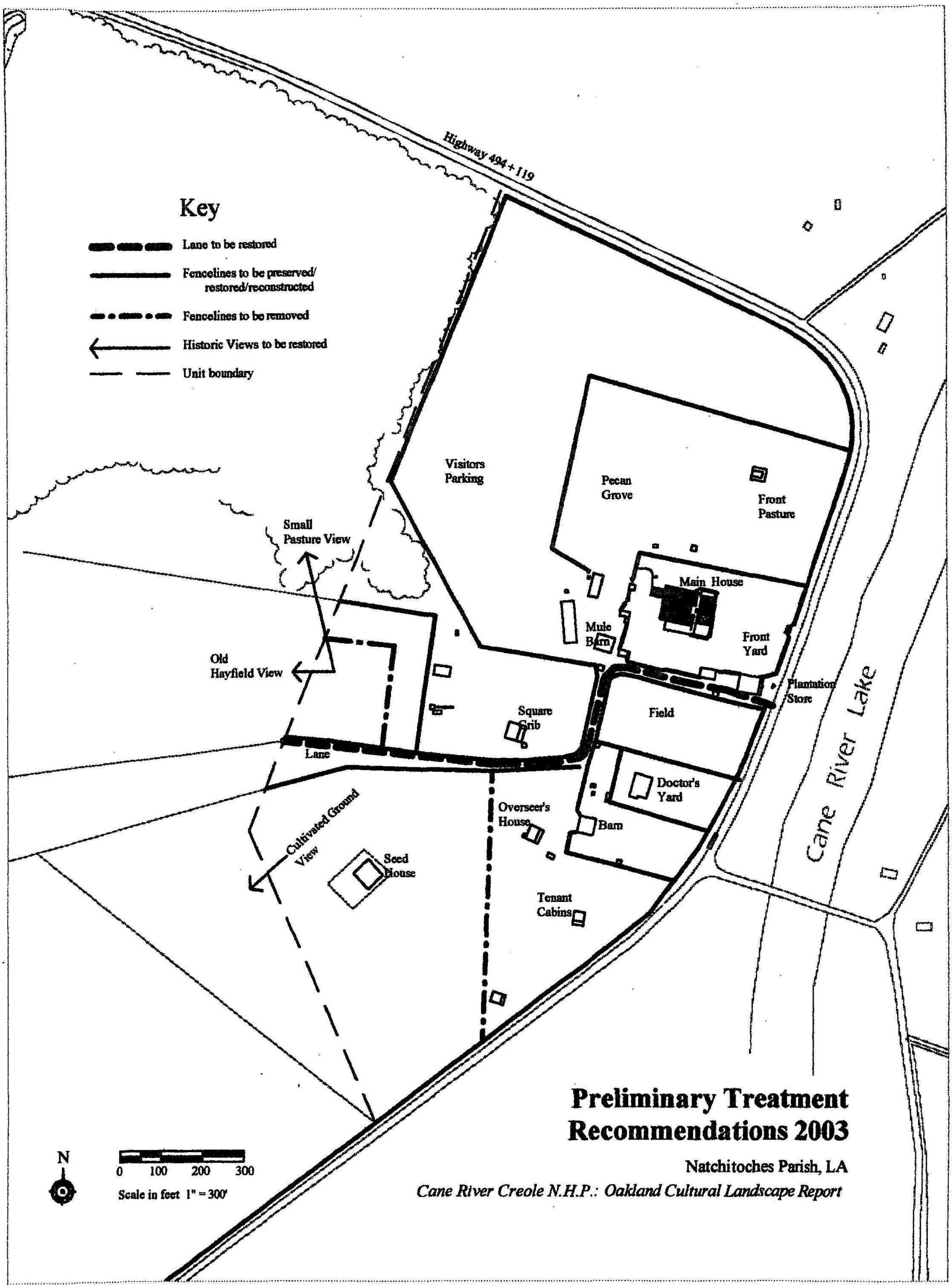
We still have many questions about the spaces around the collection of antebellum buildings at Oakland. The historical documents provide some information about the domestic spaces around the Main House, rather less about the workspaces around the agricultural and industrial buildings, and say almost nothing about the Quarters. Clearly there is a need for more research, and particularly more archaeological investigation around the workspaces and the Quarters. On-going archaeological investigations could become a feature of the interpretation programs, enabling visitors to witness the process of historical research.

Cemeteries

The only references found in the historical documents from the antebellum period to a cemetery on the plantation suggest it was across the river. Again further research is necessary to ascertain more precisely its location, before its preservation and interpretation could be considered.

Rhythm of Life on the Plantation

Obviously, much has changed in the rhythm of life at Oakland since the antebellum period. It would be interesting therefore to identify continuities so that the past could become more real. The restoration of the spatial organization of the landscape to its condition circa 1960 should provide an opportunity to compare the late 1850s and early 1860s with the late 1950s and early 1960s. This could be done using entries in the 19th century Cotton Plantation Record and Account Books, and the 20th century Prud'homme Bros. Ledgers. Reading these records side-by-side one is struck as much by the daily continuities as the differences. There was a rhythm to lives driven by the exigencies of growing cotton in this particular place that extended across the generations. Using these historical documents and the partially restored landscape, an interpretation program could make the recent and familiar past a means to access a more distant and alien time.


Key
Lane to be restored
Fencelines to be preserved/ restored/reconstructed
Fencelines to be removed
Historic Views to be restored
Unit boundary
Highway 494 + 119
Visitors Parking
Pecan Grove
Front Pasture
Small Pasture View
Main House
Mule Barn
Front Yard
Old Hayfield View
Plantation Store
Square Crib
Field
Lane
Doctor's Yard
Overseer's House
Barn
Cultivated Ground View
Seed House
Tenant Cabins
Cane River Lake
N
0 100 200 300
Scale in feet 1" = 300'
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Cane River Creole N.H.P.: Oakland Cultural Landscape Report

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Prudhomme Family Papers 1788-1997, Southern Historical Collection (#613)
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Note: folders marked with an asterisk contain items wholly or partly in French.

Series 3: Financial Materials

3.1.1. Correspondence

*Folder 142: Correspondence, 1840-50.
*Folder 143: Correspondence, 1850-51.
*Folder 144: Correspondence, 1852-53.
*Folder 145: Correspondence, 1854.
*Folder 146: Correspondence, 1855-1865 and undated.
*Folder 147: Correspondence, 1866-67.
*Folder 148: Correspondence, 1868.
Folder 153: Correspondence, 1900-1918.

3.1.2. Account Ledgers

*Folder 163: Compte Courant de Phanor Prud'homme, 1837-1841;
and Compte Courant Phanor Prud'homme, 1842-1848;
and Compte Courant of Phanor Prud'homme, 1836-1849.
*Folder 165: Compte Courant de Phanor Prud'homme, 1858-1865.
Folder 166: Plantation and Other Accounts, J. Alphonse Prud'homme, 1866-1878.

3.1.5. Plantation Journals and Records

Folder 267: Phanor Prudhomme Cotton Book, [overseer's slave work record] 1836.
*Folder 268: Journalier de Phanor Prud'homme, 1837-1839.
*Folder 269: Journalier de Phanor Prud'homme, 1839-1842.
Folder 271: The Cotton Plantation Record and Account Book, 1852 and 1866.
Folder 272: The Cotton Plantation Record and Account Book, 1857;
*Folder 273: Journalier de Phanor Prud'homme, 1856-1861.
and Journalier de Phanor Prud'homme, 1861-1864.
Folder 274: The Cotton Plantation Record and Account Book, 1860.
Folder 275: The Cotton Plantation Record and Account Book, 1861.
Folder 276: The Cotton Plantation Record and Account Book, 1862.
Folder 277: The Cotton Plantation Record and Account Book, March 1863 to March 1864.
*Folder 278: Journalier de Phanor Prud'homme et J. Alphonse Prud'homme, September 1864 to January 1866.
Folder 279: The Cotton Plantation Record and Account Book, 1867.
*Folder 287: Miscellaneous records, 1839-1880.

3.2.9. Livestock Records

*Folder 462: Stud Book, 1847- 1857.

3.2.10. Lumber and Sawmill Books

Folder 468: Sawmill Accounts 1860-1862.

3.2.13. Pocket Notebooks

*Folder 477: Pocket Notebook of Phanor Prud'homme, 1843;
and Pocket Notebook of Phanor Prud'homme, 1841-1845.
*Folder 478: Pocket Notebook of Phanor Prud'homme, 1852;
and Pocket Notebook of Phanor Prud'homme, 1854;
and Pocket Notebook of Phanor Prud'homme, 1855.
*Folder 479: Pocket Notebook of Phanor Prud'homme, 1855;
and Pocket Notebook of Phanor Prud'homme, 1856.
*Folder 480: Pocket Notebook of Phanor Prud'homme, 1860-1861;
and Pocket Notebook of Phanor Prud'homme, 1861-1862.
*Folder 481: Pocket Notebook of Phanor Prud'homme, 1862-1864.

3.2.19. Succession Records

*Folder 512: Succession de Emmanuel Prud'homme and Catherine Lambre 1849-1850. (Folder includes Final Account filed by Phanor Prud'homme; list of amounts payable to various individuals; Saw Mill receipts, and accounts for La Vacherie du Texas a J. Bte. Prud'homme and P. Prud'homme.)

Series 6: Maps and Plats

Folder 679: OP 613/6
Copy of a State Land Plat, Northwestern District of Louisiana, Township 8 North – Range 6 West, July 24 1837.
Copy of a State Land Plat, Northwestern District of Louisiana, Township 8 North – Range 7 West, circa 1840.
Folder 680:
Plat of lands on Old River, T8NR7W, belonging to Messrs P. P. Prud'homme, P. B. Alles, John Prud'homme, no date.

Northwestern State University of Louisiana, Watson Memorial Library, Cammie G. Henry Research Center

Map Collection

Folder 1087: Map of Natchitoches Parish, Louisiana, for sale by E. B. Welch. (No date, circa 1910)
Folder 1363: Parish Maps of Louisiana captured from the Confederates: 41-50 Natchitoches Parish.

Folder 2131: Copy of a State Land Plat, Northwestern District of Louisiana, Township 8 North – Range 6 West, John Dinsmore Jr. Dep. Surveyor, June 1 1827.

Irma Sompayrac Willard Collection

Copy of Lestan Prud'homme Journal, 1850-1852. (Original is in the Howard Tilton Memorial Library, Tulane University, New Orleans.)

Natchitoches Parish Courthouse, Natchitoches, Louisiana

Succession of Pierre Phanor Prud'homme, Final Account filed by J.A. Prud'homme, 3rd July 1869. Succession Bundle 1384.

Partition of Land, J. Alphonse Prud'homme and P. Emmanuel Prud'homme, Recorded April 2nd 1873, Map of the plantation, Surveyor J. Alphonse Prud'homme. Notarial Record Book 65, #14015.

Copies of Prud'homme Family documents provided by Ann Patton Rose, Ph.D. Research Historian, Luling Texas

Note: the location of the original document is given in parentheses where known. Items marked with an asterisk are wholly or partly in French.

Land Ownership Documents

Emanuel Prud'homme Land Claims, 1812. (Prud'homme Family Library.)

Correspondence: Marshall Carver to Lester Hughes, re. The American State Papers, Emanuel Prudhomme Claim No. B 1850. (Attached to a letter from Hughes to Lucille Prud'homme, 5/12/1958 in Prud'homme Family Library.)

Plat, Emanuel Prudhomme, 700 acres, Red River, Commissioners Certificate B, No 1850. Sections 44 and 104. Surveyed by Joseph Irwin, January 1816. (State Land Office, Baton Rouge, La.)

Succession Documents

*Succession de Catherine Lambre, epouse d'Emanuel Prudhomme. Inventaire, December 6th 1849. (Natchitoches Parish Courthouse.)

Estate Sale of Emanuel Prudhomme, May 1st 1850. (Natchitoches Parish Courthouse.)

Succession of Suzanne Lise Metoyer, Petition filed Jany. 4th 1853; Inventory filed Feby. 24th 1853. (Natchitoches Parish Courthouse.)

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*Correspondence, Phanor Prud'homme to Madame Jean Roques, nee Marie Adeline Prud'homme, Nantes, France, June 22, and July 29, 1865; translation by Eve Mouton. (Prud'homme Papers, Tulane University, New Orleans.)

Prud'homme, Lucile Keator. "Prud'homme Family, Natchitoches, Louisiana 1714-1979." Typescript, 1979. (Prud'homme Family Library.)

Baker, Marietta. "Prud'homme Family Tree." Social Studies 303 term paper, Fall 1964. (Location of original not recorded.)

Interviews

Prud'homme, Kenneth and Vivian Prud'homme Duggan. Interview with authors. Oakland Plantation, June 5th and 6th 2000.

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Bitzel, Paul and Charles Pepper. "Landscape Observations/ Recommendations, Cane River Plantations." Report to the Superintendent of Cane River Creole NHP, February 18, 2000.

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Index to Landscape Characteristics in Oral Histories Collected by Ann Rose

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2. Vivian Prudhomme Flores with Gene Flores; April 22, 1997
3. Mayo Prudhomme; April 2, 1997
4. Kathy Prudhomme Guen; November 14, 1997
5. Mayo Prudhomme; Apri126, 1997
6. Kenneth Prudhomme; April 14, 1997
7. Julie Prudhomme with Annette Berry Prudhomme; March 15, 1997
8. Ethelyn Cloutier; ...23, 1985 "Restricted"
9. Kenneth and Sally Prudhomme; Nov 13, 1997
10. Mayo Prudhomme; April 26, 1997
11. Kenneth Prudhomme; March 11, 1997
12. Kenneth Prudhomme with Sally Prudhomme; May 5, 1996
13. Kenneth and Mayo Prudhomme; March 25, 1996
14. Mayo Prudhomme and Vivian Prudhomme Flores with Denise Poleman; Nov 24, 1997
15. Sally Calhoun Prudhomme; April 14, 1997
16. Vivian Prudhomme Flores; March 5,1996
17. Annette Berry Prudhomme; Julie Prudhomme and Mayo Prudhomme; March 15, 1997
18. John and Kathleen Batten and Daisy Prudhomme; April 20, 1997
19. Denise Flores Poleman; Nov 15, 1997
20. Alphonse and Lucile Prudhomme; Feb 12, 1989
21. Mayo Prudhomme; March 7,1996
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23. Michael Prudhomme; Nov 24,1997
24. Mayo Keator Prudhomme, Jr.; April 19, 1997
25. Daisy Prudhomme; May 2,1997
26. Kenneth Prudhomme with Sally Prudhomme; June 5, 1996
27. Lucille Prudhomme; no date

Tenant Interviews

28. William Smith and Solomon Williams Family; Nov 25, 1997
29. Camille Metoyer with Frank Metoyer; April 16, 1997
30. Alvania Williams; Oct 5, 1997
31. Elnora Robinson Helaire; March 14, 1997
32. Ivory D. Hamilton Augustus; Oct, 13, 1997
33. Atlas Helaire, Lucinda Page Helaire and Clara Roberson Johnson; May 2, 1997
34. Orentha Davis Helaire; Sept 6, 1997
35. Lawrence Helaire, Sr.; March 14, 1997
36. Lawrence Helaire, Sr.; March 6, 1997
37. Lawrence Helaire; March 6, 1997
38. Lawrence Helaire with Frankie Hoover; April 18, 1997
39. Family of Clement Claiborne; May 6,1997

RIVERS -BAYOUS –DRAINS

Source	Topic
3	pumped lake water to house for bathing, dishwashing; drinking water from cistern until water line came through – there were no wells
3	2 ponds dug for shiners (fish bait sold in store)
3	crawfish pond
6	river transportation
7	big lake; crawfishing
7	water skiing on Cane River and swimming
8	Bermuda Road – road followed river
8	Steamboats tied up at Typo Plantation
8	slave hid silver by lake when Yankees came
8	story: box of gold buried near dam on bayou
8	Battle of Bermuda Bridge
8	Bermuda Bridge "haunting" story
12	aerial tour with ref to lake, slave-made levee
13	Battle of Bermuda story
14	Bayou Luce in Kitsatchie National Forest
15	blew up beaver dam
20	flat ferries and pulling ferries by ropes across river; bridge built in 1912
20	Red River rapids
22	swimming in river
23	crawfish pond
24	crawfish pond
27	Murphy's Lake
27	took wares down Red River to New Orleans
27	Oakland "raised cottage type" rests on 6' high brick pillars because of Red River flooding; tied boat to top step of house; was called Cane River but still had overflow from Red River.
27	most of transporting furniture for house, etc, done by river to barges and unloaded in front of house
27	story of Gen. Patton and "Battle of Bermuda Bridge"
30	baptized in Cane River
31	cistern dried up when didn't rain -- bathed in river and washed there; no running water until 1966
35	gathered herbs at Bayou Luce
36	bridge built in 1910; ferry before that
37	camping out at Bayou Luce
38	Pratt's Bridge – Pratt's Place
38	Bayou Brevelle
38	gathering herbs for filet, sassafras at Bayou Luce
38	whites chased blacks under Bermuda Bridge

PRUDHOMME PROPERTY

Source	Topic
9	Bicentennial Farm in 1986
9	Bermuda Plantation split
11	property on east and west sides of river divided by two brothers
12	Pratt's Bridge with large oaks and fact that they don't own property there any more.
14	Bermuda Plantation split into Oakland and Atahoe after Civil War
14	getting farm "going again" after war
14	Bicentennial Farm: Oakland, then Magnolia
20	ancestors started farming around 1785 on Cane River
23	amount of land owned and leased by Prudhomme Brothers
26	tour of Oakland via aerial map to determine sites to be put on base map and changes over time
27	Oakland bought about 1795 or '97. Emanual P. worked land about 19 yrs before he bought it. Raised indigo and tobacco and sugar cane (but bore got in it). Was probably cleared for farming before then. 1795 or 97 decided to try cotton on large scale – 1st to try it in Louisiana Purchase Territory.
27	After Civil War, two brothers (Alphonse & Emanuel) came back and father died in 1865 so they decided to pull plantation back to a working plantation; money was gone; gin had been burned. When they got it on a paying scale then they decided to divide it. Alphonse (oldest) kept side of river with home (175.5 acres). Emanuel got 524 but with no buildings on other side of river, so had to build house.
27	home is on National Register for Historic Homes so stopped Highway Department plans to take part of yard to make bend in road for new bridge

CIRCULATION ROUTES

Source	Topic
6	road to Brevelle Station right beside store
6	Road -- roads followed river; steamboats tied up at Typo Plantation
8	Cherokee thickets on both sides of road --ground fog
9	land use patterns and "the lane"
12	aerial tour -- ref to road to Brevelle Station
14	Natchez Lane
14	access road to cemetery
14	road along river -- State Road 494
16	railroad station at Bayou Brevelle and road
16	main road along river
16	location of river road
17	cruising river on barge -- Gayonne Osmose -- especially to see Christmas lights & fireworks at Natchitoches
20	Cane Break Lane
20	ref to what goods store sold and how goods were transported
27	ref to time it took to travel in 1892 by horse and buggy
35	lake called Bayou Brevelle -- raced horses there for fun

CULTIVATED GROUND

Source	Topic
4	last ones to farm cotton at the plantation
8	Murray's Field dug up by treasure hunters
9	land use patterns
10	lay-by season – too late to do work in field
11	share cropping beginning and how it worked
11	reference to what share croppers grew
11	cotton season – picking, ginning
11	agricultural cycle
11	plowing done with mules until '48 or '49
11	varieties of cotton
11	mule-drawn cotton planter used
11	boll weevil referenced
11	first insecticide use and airplane spraying
11	cash crop was cotton; corn was feed and for home cooking; pecans case crop
11	hay for mules from Johnson grass and Bahia grass; mule-driven baler used
13	land cultivation by mule – 1st tractor in '49
14	cotton production and cotton press
14	horses at Magnolia
15	contract farming
17	cotton grown "everywhere they could put it in the ground"
18	mechanization and people moving away
18	cotton picker/tractor; poisoned cotton with Paris Green
18	farming systems "half hands" and "cash crop or wage" system; cotton primary crop
20	traditions about planting times
20	good cotton crop if no rain between July 15 and Aug 15 – or roses or tomatoes or corn
20	Paris Green to poison caterpillars on cotton
20	ancestors started farming around 1785 on Cane River
23	ref to cotton and soybeans being crops and amount of land owned and leased by Prudhomme Brothers
23	hoeing cotton -- vines and morning glories were a problem -- and hank picking; evolution of farming equipment
27	Raised indigo and tobacco and sugar cane (but bore got in it). Was probably cleared for farming before then. 1795 or 97 decided to try cotton on large scale – 1st to try it in Louisiana Purchase Territory.
27	After Civil War, two brothers (Alphonse & Emanuel) came back and father died in 1865 so they decide to pull plantation back to a working plantation; money was gone; gin had been burned
27	in 1924 colored help – no slaves; raised mostly cotton – the money crop – cattle, and pecan crop
27	farming done by mules; first tractor in 1948
27	sharecroppers – 5 or 6 Negro families lived at Oakland and made percentage of crop
33	share cropping/picking cotton, growing sugar cane and canning food
34	farming on shares
35	started "going to the fields" at 8 yrs
35	picked cotton at night by full moon "moonlight party" – festival of eating & drinking & picking
36	"fourth renter" and "half hands tenants"
39	mechanization

PASTURES, WOODLOTS & WETLANDS

Source	Topic
6	cow lot
6	hog pens, lake pasture, small pasture, hay field
6	fences
12	aerial tour -- ref to changes in fence lines and fields

BUILDING CLUSTERS

Source	Topic
1	chicken houses and gathering eggs
1	"slipping under house into the Mammy's room and in the wine cellar"
3	old commissary, the store – supposedly carpenter shop
3	store was post office
3	description of store
3	fish camp house (cook's house and its original location)
3	blacksmith shop location
3	slave quarter's location and overseer's house location
3	pigeonnier moved – ate squabs
3	garconniere referenced
3	carriage house and shed, engine room, carpenter shop, mule barn, square crib, cotton picker shed, and original big barn referenced
3	chicken houses, fattening pen, washhouse, 3-holer, fishing cabin, outhouses referenced
3	square crib use and big jug cistern
3	hog pen, fattening pen and cattle dip pen and wagon shed
3	overseer's house and cook's house
3	poteau en terre – Gabe Nargo's cabin; other cabins ref'd
3	seed house and gin building and boiler room
3	pre-Civil War gin location
3	blacksmith's shop
3	Doctor's house, barn and gristmill, tower with water tank and liquid batteries
6	commissary added on to or remodeled
6	ref to pigeonnier being moved and eating squabs; wood shingles on pigeonnier
6	outhouse for the store; down the lane was a small shed for storage of mule equipment
6	carriage house, or garage
6	fences and other pens in the yard; fattening coop and feed house were moved in the 50's for more yard for flowers – drug them on big timbers with tractor
6	carpenter shop, blacksmith shop and mule barn
6	pigeonnier and lane
6	mule barn as early smokehouse
6	"quarters" and cow lot
6	2 houses moved for fishing camp
6	old blacksmith shop location
6	cotton gin burned by Yankees
6	original home site east of Big House
6	warehouse
6	cabin under big oak (wash woman's or cook's house) and who lived there
6	Nargo's old house location -- post "en terre" with dirt floor

6 another cabin and remnants of old house for cotton gin; closed in '41 or '42
6 slave cabins
6 warehouse at river and river road .
7 store and post office
9 store -- gathering place and post office
9 roof slate came from LeComte house -- previously wood shingles
11 1st plantation house location where river is now -- was post enterre
11 syrup mill
11 south cabin
11 cotton gin and steam engines and how it all worked and when closed
12 aerial tour -- all buildings located, plus lake and slave-made levee, grain bins, etc.
14 first post office across river
14 fish camp
16 comments on all structures and buildings; old house location
16 slave quarters burned
16 six dirt floor rooms under house and their contents and history
17 Gin built after Civil War in present location. Location of first gin unsure. Cotton planted "everywhere they could put it in the ground. "
22 chicken coops out back
23 store and what people bought
25 recalled 8 tenant houses
27 house built in 1821
27 first home begun in 1818 with 4 or 5 rooms by 1821; before that lived in house already on land out on river bank with pecan tree in backyard that had round pecans. Red River began caving in west bank so built house farther back.
27 Oakland "raised cottage type" rests on 6' high brick pillars because of Red River flooding; tied boat to top step of house; was called Cane River but still had overflow from Red River
27 description of house, especially stranger's room
27 house construction: hand-hewn heart cypress, mortise and pin with adobe walls (mud, Spanish moss and deer hair). Adobe means "mud walls" in Spanish and "bousillage" in French. Hand-made, sun-dried bricks made at Oakland used for foundation. Glass came from Switzerland. Brought dining table from France so long they couldn't open it, so knocked out wall, took off back gallery and extended dining room to present size
27 discussion of evolution of rooms
27 gin burned with 1000 bales
27 Yankees burned houses on river but Phanor was sick in bed and servants begged them to leave it
28 Metoyers lived in overseer's house
31 talk about slave cabins in Oakland
35 ref to cabin walls
36 grocery store and weight station
36 description of house with clay and moss mixture for floor
36 location of smokehouse, syrup shed, outhouse, blacksmith shop
38 Dr. Keator's old house
38 Gabe Nargo's and other houses in Quarters south of Oakland's Big House and other cabins around Oakland
38 warehouse and seed storage house
38 old Levy building

GARDENS, YARD AROUND HOUSES, ORCHARDS, ALLEES OF TREES, AND SPECIFIC TREES

Source	Topic
1	Walking on roots of oak tree in front yard
1	"Pawpaw" who "took great pride in mowing his lawn."
1	pond "back behind the plantation" and "tall stately oak trees," duck blinds, and crawfishing
1	threw food from back porch to chickens and turkeys
2	wedding reception at Oakland
2	cotton bales stacked around yard
2	flowers – Jacob's ladders, jonquils; tenant women "really worked their yards"
2	bonfire at Melrose overlook
2	reference to "first house"
3	fenced vegetable patch (main kitchen garden); overseer's job to tend garden
3	pecan orchard, tennis courts, and grape vines
5	sand pile "where the driveway loops around that oak tree"
5	cut cedar tree for Christmas tree and pine greenery
5	several fruit trees south of pigeonnier – fig, "asloe, the black thorn that can make the little wild plum" and 2 pear trees
6	orchard with cotton or corn planted around the trees
6	bois d'arc trees; lane by a cedar tree
6	fences and other pens in the yard; fattening coop and feed house were moved in the 50's for more yard for flowers – drug them on big timbers with tractor
6	magnolia tree with sink close to it where big pecan tree died
6	flower garden remnants in tenant cabin area – flowers in front – vegetables behind and cow
6	baseball diamond and tennis court
7	Easter egg hunting in garden
8	treasure tree – old pine tree
9	"Horse Soldiers" changes to gate, flower yard gate, fence, and cattle guard
9	formal garden and pond – from English box to bottles
10	grapes and wine making
10	sand pile where driveway loops around oak tree -- children played there
10	cut cedar for Christmas tree and pine greenery for decoration
10	Easter egg hunt in yard
13	tennis parties in front yard
13	garden by square crib – vegetables they grew there
13	dipping vat use
15	tennis court referenced
16	tour of Oakland: chickens in back yard, wisteria arbor, grape vines on side porch
16	rose garden and vegetable garden
16	no fruit orchards – pecan orchard
17	lots of flowers in spring; watched bluebirds from front porch. Crape myrtles over steps made "almost a pink tunnel that you'd have to walk under."
17	used to be rose arbor close to gate
17	Lulu brought bulbs from St. Louis -- rain lilies or pink ladies
18	tennis court at Oakland
18	cut Christmas trees – usually pines
18	hard fruit orchard -- pears, peaches, and apples; plums, figs. "We used to string four-o'clocks" made necklaces or coronets

19	chickens were in backyard where grass in now; overview of formal flower garden -- bottle garden. Description of different bottles
19	comments on blooming period of different plants; greenhouse and gazebo
20	wear lead to prevent poison ivy
20	Christmas tree and greenery – all day affair
23	chickens in yard – no grass
23	ref to big oaks
24	ref to rocks, oak tree, and merry-go-round
27	had big garden
29	Ranie Metoyer tended cattle and took care of yard
29	had swept yard – "then somebody got a lawnmower"
30	everybody had big gardens – mustard, cabbage, turnips, peas, okra, tomatoes, peaches, plums, picked up pecans
31	had dirt yard with fence
31	had garden and chickens
32	had flowers in yard – still are Jack's ladder and lilies there; had verbenas
32	had chickens and garden; raised mustard greens, cabbage greens, sweet potatoes, tomatoes
35	had big vegetable garden – planted by almanac
35	shucked and shelled corn by hand
36	grass in yard – used hoe to chop weeds – no mower; grew roses, lilies
36	garden rotated for fresh ground
37	tornado damage to trees
38	big cottonwood tree
39	had vegetable garden and tobacco patch and cane patch
39	used mullen, Jerusalem tree, bitter weed to make medicine; elderberry wine; sassafras for filet gumbo

CEMETERIES

Source	Topic
3	cemetery location and cedar trees
5	All Saints Day -- scrub gravestones, trim grass and place fresh flowers on all graves
6	cemetery, wire fence, crosses
7	washed stones and slabs in cemetery near All Souls Day Week and put flowers
8	St. Paul's cemetery and old Lee's camp
10	scrub cemetery gravestones at All Saint's Day; trim grass and place fresh flowers on all graves
14	cemetery and access road to it
16	cemetery location
20	plantation cemetery
33	ref to St. Paul's Church and cemetery
33	old St. Paul graveyard "they plowed it up" and brush arbor
36	St. Paul's and cemetery
38	cemetery on Prudhomme place near Bayou Brevelle and iron crosses
39	brush arbor burial ground – St. Paul's Baptist

SMALL SCALE FEATURES

Source	Topic
2	plantation bell
3	syrup kettle for sugar processing
3	wash line
6	bell gate
6	bell tower made of bois d'arc
6	cisterns – no wells
6	remains of old cistern for water for steam engine – replaced in early 1920's with oil burner, diesel engine
6	Claiborne baskets
6	gate to slaves quarters
7	5 cisterns within 50 or 100' of house
8	slave threw silver in well when Yankees came
9	brick bases for entrance gate; brick vase by flower yard built
9	columns put up for gate; sign hung
9	"Horse Soldiers" changes to gate, flower yard gate, fence, and cattle guard
9	troughs and spigots on southern end
11	hay for mules from Johnson grass and Bahia grass; mule-driven baler used
11	mule-drawn cotton planter used
13	syrup mill mentioned
13	bell – community time piece
14	outhouse
14	cattle troughs moved as needed
14	sugar pots used for water troughs
14	for Horse Soldiers movie: put dirt over cattle guard; changed front gate from wire to wood and split rail fence
14	current Oakland sign and gate referenced
18	cotton picker/tractor; poisoned cotton with Paris Green
20	put silver in old well during Civil War; dug it up later
20	plantation bell
20	ref to what goods store sold and how goods were transported
23	evolution of farming equipment
28	hardware and hinges for house made by Soloman Williams --iron worker on plantation
32	had hogwire fence and outhouse
33	ref to hidden treasure
33	ref to syrup mill, can grinding, and cane beer
33	ref to hidden treasure
34	cane grinding; syrup mill
35	ref to cistern
35	ref to outdoor privies
36	syrup shed and outhouse location
38	cook pot for plantation
38	gate to Quarters in intersection at bridge -- wooden gate. Kept cattle and houses and mules there; had a bois d'arc hedge
38	syrup mill
39	hand-made cotton baskets & hand baskets; chair "bottoms"; sewing machine; quilts; furniture descriptions
39	fattening coop use

SURROUNDING PROPERTY & LOCATIONS VISITED

Source	Topic
9	Bermuda community boundaries
12	Oaklawn, Cashmire, Pratt's Point, Point Place and other houses along Hwy 494
12	Blocks listed on plat and who owns or owned the property
12	Ref to start of FHA -- bought land & divided it and put up "bam and house and sold them to small farmers and financed it"
14	Brevelle Station and Bayou Luce in Kitsatchie National Forest
14	Kisatchie
14	brick slave quarters at Magnolia
15	age of Fish Hatchery Road house
16	Typo Plantation
16	Metoyer home and land
18	ref. to spending day in Kisatchie National Forest in summer – swim, picnic, explore
18	got electricity in 1940
18	house at Riverside Plantation built in 1896
25	Kisatchie Hills vacation
26	properties along Cane River with present and former owners' info
27	Live Oak Plantation and Twin Lakes area, Murphy's Lake
27	Natchitoches Indians and healing waters – Hot Springs Arkansas mineral springs – hot wells; first permanent white settler at springs. Slaves, Indians and white settlers interacted with each other.
36	Bermuda Dance Hall
38	Ataho Plantation
38	St Mary 's Church on Bobby Bayou

OAKLAND PLANTATION CLR

NOTES ON SOURCES FOR THE NARRATIVE HISTORY IN PART TWO

Prud'homme Family Papers, 1788-1997, Southern Historical Collection (#613) University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Series 3: Financial Materials

3.1.1. Correspondence

Folder 147: Correspondence 1866-1867.
Includes correspondence between J. Alphonse Prud'homme and cotton factors and dealers in agricultural machinery; also state officials about the registered livestock brand PPP.

Folder 148: Correspondence 1868.
Includes letters containing Alphonse's comments on the attitude of the freed workers.

Folder 149: Correspondence 1869-1876.

Folder 150: Correspondence 1878-1888.
Includes Alphonse's letters to factors about pork and other supplies, similar to some of his father's prewar correspondence.

Folder 151: Letter Copy Book 1889-1891.
Copies of letters to various merchants and suppliers.

Folder 152: Correspondence 1890-1899.

Folder 153: Correspondence 1900-1918.
Includes letter from Alphonse about the frequency of flooding on the Cane River, also letters about land sales and agricultural machinery.

3.1.2. Account Ledgers

Folder 166: Accounts 1866-1878.
Includes accounts for 1866 and 1867 showing wages earned by freed workers on a monthly basis. In 1866, workers were categorized according to "abilities," and paid from $4 to $15 per month, with deductions to pay for a hospital nurse and school tax. The system continued in 1867 with a slight rise in wages. In 1868, most workers switched to a sharecropping contract and the account books changed accordingly with a balance sheet based on days worked and rations drawn. Later years show the balance based on a worker's share of the crop minus the value of goods obtained from the plantation store. Typical items obtained

from the store included: pork, russets, shoes, beef, coffee, and Christmas cash advances.

Folders 167-169: Account Books 1878-1893
Accounts indicate the importance of non-farming activities as sources of income for J. Alphonse Prud'homme.

3.1.5. Plantation Journals and Records

Folder 271: The Cotton Plantation Record and Account Book, 1852 and 1866.
Alphonse Prud'homme's entries for 1866 are made in ink on the same pages as the earlier entries in pencil. The entries document the resumption of the agricultural routine after the death of Phanor and the end of the Civil War.

Folder 278: Journalier de Phanor Prud'homme et J. Alphonse Prud'homme.
Alphonse made the entries after November 1865. These include information on the development of new work arrangements with the freedmen.

Folder 279: The Cotton Plantation Record and Account Book, 1867.
Alphonse's entries indicate where the various crops were planted that year.

Folder 280: Oakland Plantation: P. Phanor Prud'homme's Planting Record, 1942-1961.
Records the crops planted by each sharecropper/tenant, names the tenants and their assigned cuts. Gives some information on methods of cultivation, use of pesticides, etc. There is also a list of vegetables planted in the family garden in 1945. This record indicates that by 1954 there were only two sharecroppers left, and after 1956 only one – Charlie Helaire. He continued to work on a shares basis into the 1960s.

Folder 281: Prud'homme Bros. Ledger 1964.
J. Alphonse Prud'homme III made the entries. There are a remarkable number of echoes in these entries of those made 100 years earlier by the plantation overseer. The record includes a balance sheet, a list of equipment and a gin account.

Folder 282: Prud'homme Bros. Ledger 1965.
Entries follow the same pattern as those made in the previous year.

Folder 283: Ledger 1966 and 1867.
Entries document Al's efforts to establish a new cotton plantation in Mexico.

Folder 284: Ledger 1969-1971.
Entries were only made intermittently.

Folder 285: Ledger 1974-1978.
Entries include discussions of the financial difficulties facing cotton farmers.

Folder 286: Ledger 1979-1984 and 1987-1988.
Intermittent entries. Alphonse III died 6/13/1988.

Folder 288: Miscellaneous Records 1915-1982.
Records include a list of tenants' cabins on the plantation in 1918. There were 30 cabins on Oakland Plantation, 3 at Gongre Place and 2 at Coquac. There is also an inventory giving the acreages in different types of land use, and a list of gin hands in 1918.

3.1.8. Tax Statements and Other Assessments

Folder 389: Tax Statements 1945-1950, J. Alphonse Prud'homme II.
'Phonzy' lists his occupations as "Merchant, Farmer, Postmaster." The tax returns indicate the relative importance of these three sources of income. They also indicate the profitability of the various agricultural enterprises including cotton , cattle and pecans.

3.2.3. Cotton Records

Folder 406: Cotton Book 1940-1941.
Shows the calculation of payments to each sharecropper for the cotton produced.

Folder 407: Cotton Receipts and Correspondence, 1831-1876.
Receipts, for bales of cotton sold by factors in New Orleans, show change of agents after Civil War.

3.2.4. Gin Records

Folder 414: Gin Book 1893.
Index lists 60 people with accounts at J. Alphonse Prud'homme's gin.

Folder 435a: Gin Book 1939-1940.
Contains mainly the accounts of sharecroppers, and only a few other people.

Series 4: Legal Papers

Folder 554: Wills and Successions, 1919-1924: for J. Alphonse Prud'homme I and Elisa Prud'homme.

Series 6: Maps and Plats

Folder 679: OP 613/6.
Among these maps and plats are an undated map of Oakland showing the railroad crossing the eastern side of the plantation, and a 1919survey showing the division of the plantation between the four heirs of J. Alphonse Prud'homme.

Series 7: Photographic Materials

7.1 Photographs

Folder 34/P-613: Prud'homme Family 3rd and 4th generations.
Includes an early view of the porch at Oakland, with pole structures visible in the garden.

Folder 35/P-613: Prud'homme Family 5th generation 1890-1940.
Includes views of the lane and bottle garden.

Folder 36P-613: Prud'homme 6th generation 1930 – 1951.
Includes a view of the garden area on the south side of the Main House (1938), and snow scenes of the oak allee, bottle garden and lane(1940).

Folder 60/P613: Oakland Plantation - buildings 1901-1968.
Views of the riverbank, plantation store, a pasture beside an "old cabin," the lake beside the Bayou Brevelle, and the lane beside the bell tower.

Folder 61/P613: Oakland Plantation – fishing camp scenes 1933-1934.
Views of camp buildings north of Main House and groups that rented them.

Folder 64/P613: Oakland Plantation – renovations 1953.
Views of all sides of Main House.

Folder 66/P613: Oakland Plantation – tools form 19th century.
Tools displayed in basement of Main House, including those made by Solomon the Blacksmith.

Folder 67/P613: Oakland Plantation – tours in 1963, 1971 and 1972.
Views of the front yard where cars were parked and tickets checked.

Folder 68/P613: Oakland Plantation – miscellaneous outdoor views.
Collection includes photographs of the bottle garden from the 1920s through the 1980s; the backyard in the 1940s and 50s, and the river road in front of the Main House.

Folder 77/P613: Bermuda Bridge.
Views illustrate character of river before impoundment.

Folder 81/P613: Pets.
Includes close up of paths in bottle garden, 1972.

7.2 Photograph Albums

Folder 95/P613 – Prud'homme Family Albums.

Album One has photographs of the front bottle garden and the garden on the south side of the Main House in the 1950s.
Album Two has photographs of the front garden and Oak allee in the 1960s.
Album three has more photographs of the front garden in the 1960s.

Folder 98/P613 – Oakland Plantation Scenes.

More photographs of the bottle garden and garden on the south side of the Main House in the 1960s.

Series 10: Other Materials

10.14 Scrapbooks

Folder 775: "Bermuda Gleanings."

Newspaper clippings with social news of Oakland during four weeks in July and August 1890. The accounts include a reference to a proposed "horse-car railroad" to link the store at Oakland to the railroad at Brevelle Station.

10.15 Miscellaneous

Folder 873a: Garden Book.

A list of roses grown in the garden with their locations; no date, probably around 1908.

Collections of Photographs of Oakland Plantation

Photographs in the Prud'homme Family Papers at Chapel Hill.

Notes on this collection can be found in the section on the Family Papers above.

Photographs in albums belonging to Mrs. Vivian Prud'homme Duggan.

This collection includes scenes from the 1920s through the 1950s. Areas shown include the following: oak allee, bottle garden, north side of the Main House, pecan grove, fish camp, blacksmith's shop, back yard, rose garden south of the Main House, the Store, lane, bell tower, field near Doctor's House, hay field, lake near Bayou Brevelle, river road and Cane River. The bottle garden is particularly well documented from the 1920s onwards.

Copies of photographs from the Prud'homme Family with notes by Jason Raupp, Southeast Archaeology Center, October 1999.

28 photographs of Oakland with notes incorporating comments by Mayo Prud'homme and other family members.

Copies of photographs from the Prud'homme Family collected by Ann Patton Rose, Research Historian, Luling, Texas.

Collection includes photographs of cotton fields, a cornfield, the gin yard, and the pecan grove around the turn of the 20th century, during the life of J. Alphonse Prud'homme.

Prud'homme Family Home Movies and videotapes in the collection of Cane River Creole N. H. P.

" Home Movies, Mayo S. Keator." beginning 1929.
" Lulu and Papa's 65th Wedding Anniversary." 8/12/1989.
" Remembering Oakland" – conversations with Kenneth and Mayo Prud'homme; Bennie Keel, Southeast Archaeology Center, 1998.

Aerial Photographs.

Coverage is available from the following years: 1942, 1950, 1954, 1955, 1958, 1966, 1972, 1978, 1981, 1989, 1994, and 1998.
A copy of the earliest photograph (which was taken 1/19/1941) has been obtained from the National Archives and Records Administration, NWCS – Aerial, College Park, Maryland.
Reference: RG145-CAN#1243-CQJ-8A-52. Scale 1: 20,000.
Copies of the 1958 and 1966 photographs have been obtained from the USDA, FSA Aerial Photography Field Office, Salt Lake City, Utah.
References: CQJ-1W-36 and CQJ-1HH-159, scale 1" = 400 feet and 1" = 200 feet..
Two copies of the 1998 cover have been obtained one B&W and one false color infrared: reference NAPP-10807- 202X, scale 1" = 400 feet. The latter is useful in detecting drainage and vegetation patterns.

Phanor Prud'homme's Plantation
Period Plan Circa 1860

Natchitoches Parish, LA

Cane River Creole N.H.P.: Oakland Cultural Landscape Report

Antoine Prud'homme's Plantn

Octave Metoyer's Plantn

F. Roubieu's Plantn

Narcisse Prud'homme's Land

Schelettre's Land

Achille Prud'homme, Scroggins and Gonore's Land

John Bte. Prud'homme's Land

Narcisse Prud'homme's Land

Cane River

River Road

Red River

Bayou Metoyer

Gut Off

Gut Left

Levee & Drain

Lane

Yard

Savane

Field- Divided into Cuts

Gmael Turnrow

Woods & Swamp

Right Bank

Left Bank

Sarah Ridge

Lane/ Bon Dieu Road

Key:

- Plantation boundary
- Section lines
- Flow in river/ bayou
- Road or lane (known location)
- ? Road or lane (uncertain location)
- Fence
- Drain
- L- Landing (exact location unknown)

Major Buildings

- ■ - Building location known
- ■ 1- Main House
- ■ 2- Cottage/ Doctor's House
- ■ 3- Overseer's House
- ■ 4- Mdm. Benjamin Metoyer's House
- ■ 5- Square Crib
- ■ 6- New Steam-Powered Gin
- ■ 7- Forge
- □ - Building location uncertain
- A- Slave quarters (layout unknown)
- □ B- Langlais' Cabin
- □ C- Old Mule Gin
- □ D- Old Steam-Powered Gin
- G Fruit and vegetable garden

Notes:
-Property lines from 1818 survey
-Topographic features and water boundaries from 1983 USGS Quadrat
-Plan compiled by Ian Firth and Eric Baugher: April 21, 2003

North

0' 100' 200'

Scale: 1"= 100'

Contour Interval= 5 feet

494/60001 1 of 1