ORIGINAL

THE SHOTGUN HOUSE IN NEW ORLEANS:

SURVEY OF AN ENDANGERED CULTURAL ASSET

PART I

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INTRODUCTION

The Purposes of Architectural History

"Who does your past belong to, today, Baby?"

(Rosanne Cash, "Seven Year Ache")

The traditional role of architectural history in Louisiana has been to document and interpret historic standing structures. This valuable work has had two central functions: The first is to provide a detailed record of the building practices and traditions of the past. Earlier traditions are *documented* so that we might better understand our own history and built environments. Excellence of design and craftsmanship has generally been emphasized. The second has been to *explain* the development of our historic built environments. In this, changes in building practices are often linked to broader historical events and to influential personages such as architects. In Louisiana, these might include such notables as Ignace François Broutin, Benjamin Latrobe, and James Gallier Sr. Large scale historical events such as the Louisiana Purchase and the Civil War, and socioeconomic factors such as the plantation economy and ethnicity are also linked to architectural developments. The transformation of domestic Louis XV French high style design in into the vernacular traditions of colonial New Orleans would comprise one example.

In both of these roles, Louisiana's architectural history has been exemplary. Sustained financial support from the federal government and from the Louisiana Division of Historic preservation have yielded one of the best records of historic standing structures now available. Louisiana may take pride in having one of the finest collections of Historic American Building Surveys of any state in the nation. In addition, scholars such as Fred B. Kniffen of LSU, and Samuel Wilson Jr., FAIA, of Tulane University, the original HABS projects of the 1930s, the architectural firm of Koch and Wilson, and the Friends of the Cabildo Group (authors of the *New Orleans Architecture Series* of volumes) have contributed

substantially to our fund of knowledge on the architectural history of the state. Through their studies, they have advanced our understanding of the history of significant individual buildings, building typology, stylistic evolution, the distribution of building types, and the historical development of several varieties of Louisiana's architectural traditions. It would seem that there is little more to accomplish in regard to our architectural history.

In one of the very few articles devoted to vernacular architecture published in the *American Anthropologist,* Rudolf Colloredo-Mansfeld described the social functions and symbolic associations of several house types in an Andean village (1994). He demonstrated that in an environment of economic development and globalization, architectural forms may become powerful symbols of new social status in remote and culturally conservative villages and towns. In this report I wish to expand upon this perspective to explore the ways in which people, including academically trained scholars, construct architectural histories of their own city to be used as tools employed in class-related struggles for political hegemony and race-related economic benefit. Under conditions of a major urban disaster, the fault lines within pluralized communities may become magnified and the lines of the conflict over scarce resources more starkly revealed. Architectural histories play a role in these conflicts. They become justifications for patterns of evaluation and discrimination through which people of different classes reveal their basic values and prejudices. We will ask how histories of material culture become co-opted as weapons in strategies of cultural production. I will also explore several of the ways in which patterns of resistance may be related to architectural creolization and the development of new architectural types by various social groups. Ultimately, I will explore some of the ironies and tensions in the interplay between the relative stability of vernacular architecture form and the dynamics of cultural conflict. In this, I reflect upon the question of whether in anthropology it is more advantageous to "combat essentialisms and to reify identify politics," or whether it is better to work to understand those unstated stable and non-political determinants of culture patterns which subtly envelop and structure our daily lives (Eriksen 2007:154).

Power in Post Katrina New Orleans – An Overview

> "In the wake of Katrina, class and race struggles will again rise to the surface. Which local stakeholders will play important roles in how federal funds are allocated for rebuilding the city, and who will receive the funds, and how these funds will be used?" (Dreier 2006:8).

Now, the impact of large-scale natural disasters in Louisiana is forcing us to rethink the role of architectural history and our relationships to our built environments. Hurricane Betsy in 1965 damaged many thousands of historic dwellings in New Orleans and as far as West Feliciana Parish. Worse yet, forty years later almost to the day, hurricane Katrina resulted in the flooding of eighty percent of the city. The collapse of the levees caused the devastation of tens of thousands of buildings in its historic districts.

"Historic neighborhoods, already pummeled by Hurricane Katrina, are now struggling to restore homes while also preparing for future challenges posed by rising sea levels and the likelihood of stronger storms" The World Monuments Fund listed New Orleans historic neighborhoods on its 2008 watch list as one of the 100 most endangered sites in the world (<http://wmf.org/> 8/13/07). New Orleans is acknowledged to have the largest number of wooden houses and the largest number of historic houses of any city in the United States. At the same time the city of New Orleans is using FEMA money to clear-cut thousands of endangered wooden houses in historically black neighborhoods. "A storm is brewing in New Orleans, and it has nothing—and everything—to do with wind and water. ...the city is using federal funding to sweep away historic, flooded, but repairable housing as ruthlessly as did Katrina. Yet city representatives assert they're simply trying to facilitate the recovery and protect the health and safety of residents...." For example, the "sister properties in this row of National Register-nominated properties have been placed on the latest demolition candidate list, despite the fact the owner has begun restoring some of them" (Fig. 2; National Trust 2007).[1]

The appearance of a strong racial and ethnic bias in the administration of the recovery process is widely acknowledged. In September of 2005, the housing stock of Orleans Parish consisted of 182,217 housing units, of which 71% or a total of 134,344 units (apartments, condos, duplexes, single-family houses) were damaged by Katrina, according to a recent census (Richardson 2007:2).[2] Flood depths varied from zero to deeper than twelve feet. Low-lying areas where minority residents resided were differentially impacted by the flood waters, but some middle class neighborhoods such as Lakeview were also heavily damaged (83.1% damage). The heavily African-American and largely middle class New Orleans East suffered 98.8% damaged houses, and the Lower 9th Ward, previously zoned by FEMA as "low risk" because of its levee protection, suffered 92.1% of its housing stock damaged (much of it now razed). "Many... families had lived in their shotgun-style houses for generations and owned them outright (Popkin, et. al. 2006:3).

While the current post-Katrina employment levels in New Orleans have returned to seventy-three percent of pre-storm levels, the housing stock is only sixty-three percent of that pre-Katrina. "There is currently a housing deficiency of just about 70,000 homes" (Richardson 2007:5). Under recovery, the population growth rate has greatly exceeded the combined growth rate of both restored and new permanent housing. For a time, FEMA trailers took up much of the difference, but those have now been condemned and removed due to the presence of formaldehyde. Apartment rents reported in the Brookings Institutions's *The Katrina Index* increased by just over forty-four percent from 2005 through 2007, while the New Orleans *Times-Picayune* recorded the increase in apartment rents at almost seventy percent, preventing many workers from returning to the city (Richardson 2007:7). Yet there is little desire among government officials to invest in preservation of the enormous number of endangered wooden structures.

The *Wall Street Journal* reported that the city of New Orleans plans to demolish approximately 10,000 hurricane-ravaged properties in Orleans Parish *just this year* (*Wall Street Journal* 2007).[3] Curiously,

this bulging list of doomed buildings includes homes that weren't damaged much by Katrina or that have already been significantly repaired—with building permits to prove it. Often, these owners don't know that their properties have been added to the demolition list. Warning letters that are supposed to be mailed to them never arrive. City officials also are required to post a sign at every property on the list, but owners report that hasn't happened. "The result is a bewildered scramble to save historic narrow shotgun houses, Creole cottages and a hodgepodge of other buildings officially deemed unsalvagable."

> IdaBelle Joshua worked hard to take care of her two-story house in the Lower Ninth Ward, even after Hurricane Katrina flooded it up to the roof and exiled her 150 miles away. She spent $5,000 to have the brick house gutted, $275 to clean it and then went to City Hall on July 5 to make sure 2611 Forstall St. wasn't on a list of derelict properties here facing demolition because of storm damage. Two city employees assured her that the house was safe, she says. Two days later, her nephew called. He had gone by to mow the lawn. But the house where Ms. Joshua and her late husband had raised three children was gone. It had been knocked down by the city. Since then, she has been trying to get an explanation, but with no luck. "I'm a 79-year-old senior citizen, crippled and can't travel, and I can't pay anybody," she says. "I will be dead and gone by the time I get any recourse from the city. It's a travesty." (Wall Street Journal 8/19/07, accessed at: <http://dangerblond.org/blog/?p=825>).

Almost four years after Katrina, large swaths of New Orleans remain largely abandoned. Here and there a FEMA trailer announces the presence of a pioneering resettler, but entire neighborhoods lie essentially abandoned due to lack of recovery funding. "Recovery is a daunting prospect. It is not certain whether many can afford to return–and it is not yet clear whether their old neighborhoods will ever be safe enough to inhabit. In addition to their homes and neighborhoods, these families have lost long-standing social networks, including large numbers of extended family living nearby (Richardson 2007:1;

5). The pre-Katrina median income of the parish was only $27,133.00. Over twenty-three percent of the population lived below the federal poverty rate and thirty-five percent of the families did not own a car (Dreier 2006:2). Under such circumstances, close kinship, extended families and friendship networks provided the only bulwarks against intolerable living conditions. The African-American neighborhoods had some of the most extensive kinship and family networks of any American city. All of this has been swept away, and is only very slowly being reconstituted (Bourne 2007).

A combination of bureaucratic timidity and dramatic changes in the announced priorities for recovery have seriously depressed the enthusiasm of former residents in making a commitment to return to their old houses. Many people have simply walked away from their properties, receiving little or nothing from insurance and federal and state support. In the decision-making process three issues, in particular, stand out: Urban Planning for recovery, the lack of consistency in recovery planning priorities, and the difficulty of obtaining recovery funding.

In 2007 this author participated as a committee member in the Historic Building Recovery Grant program, administered by Louisiana Rebirth program of the Louisiana Division of Historic Preservation. The aim was to provide financial assistance to homeowners of historic districts in New Orleans. Twelve hundred applications had to be perused and evaluated within the period of about two weeks. It was clear from the application process that several kinds of biases worked to disadvantage the less educated and the less well-connected. The application forms were lengthy and required many specifics of the financial and insurance histories of each property (after two to four weeks in polluted salt water the interior possessions of most low-lying houses were turned into a kind of oatmeal consistency with nothing salvageable). For people whose record keeping was less than well organized and well preserved, fully completing a successful application in a short period of time would have been difficult or impossible. Many applicants were simply down-rated because it was assumed that they were not financially equipped to complete their repairs with success, despite their need. Low income and lack of support with skilled grant writers translated into the failure of applications, as did other factors such lack of established connections with

contractors and builders. In general, the rather Kafkaesque procedures worked to the disadvantage of the elderly, the poor and the less educated.

The role of urban planning, and particularly, the much touted "New Urbanism" has played a negative role for those who live in the lower elevation sections of the city, including the heavily African-American populated areas such as the Desire, St. Claude, the Seventh and Ninth wards. It has set up an opposition between those residing in flooded neighborhoods and those who suffered little or no flooding. In January of 2006, the Bring New Orleans Back Commission published their "Action Plan for New Orleans: The New American City" (Roberts & Todd, LLC 2006). The Urban Land Institute's recommendations proposed six expansive areas of the devastated city which were designated "Areas for Future Parkland," drastically reducing the city's footprint, thus– intentionally or not– eliminating dozens of traditionally low-income neighborhoods (Houtman 2006). The low-lying Broadmore, St. Roch, New Orleans East, the Lower Ninth Ward, St. Anthony and Milneburg neighborhoods were not to receive development funding, and all buildings were to be razed. Under extensive pressure from local advocacy groups, particularly ACORN, Mayor Nagin relented and supported another plan with far more public input than the previous plan which had been constructed primarily by urban planners.

One of the most frustrating phenomena within the African-American community is promises by those in authority which are later broken or fail to materialize. Plans and goals stated by government officials that are not realized have a profound impact on the psychology and trust, and result in deep frustration with "the system." This is particularly resonant in the African-American community where people have a disproportional dependence on government services, and in emergencies, largess. In their attempt to make the long term recovery plans for the devastated communities of New Orleans more sensitive to community needs, the New Orleans city government commissioned another major long term recovery plan in 2006. The Unified New Orleans Plan held four rounds of city-wide district meetings, collecting the opinions of stakeholders. The result was an incredibly elaborate and detailed plan for

community improvement for each of thirteen planning districts. The overall introduction to the plan is over 316 pages long. "This cumulative and culminating plan would integrate the fifty previous plans into a comprehensive, citywide recovery plan that would serve as the 'official' recovery plan for the City of New Orleans" (UNOP 2007:13-15). This plan is supplemented by thirteen separate planning district reports, each a major development plan in its own right. For the Lower Ninth Ward, the plan promises the development of numerous innovations including new schools, job centers, a large integrated community center, parks and trails, and new public transportation and other infrastructure. Housing incentives of various kinds are also described. Unfortunately, costs have generally not been determined. The plan promises far more than it is likely to produce, given the state of political will and federal funding. There is great danger that it will be interpreted as another example of governmental "pie in the sky" planning promises with no follow through, resulting in even higher levels of frustration and alienation on the part of potential and actual community returnees.

About This Report

This report was generously funded by the Louisiana Division of Historic Preservation. It has several purposes. The first is to provide an overview of a seriously neglected component of the cultural landscapes of the city of New Orleans. Despite the fact that the shotgun house in all of its variants comprises approximately one half of all of the domestic wooden houses in the city, there is no architectural history nor has a survey been conducted to establish the significance of this important American vernacular building type. In the summer of 2009, Barrett Kennedy and Jay Edwards undertook a survey of portions of the city. That survey will be completed in the present grant year. The survey was conducted by conducting vehicle-based digital video recording of transects of Orleans Parish. These survey transects will be continued in the 2009-2010 grant year, and a complete report will be provided in Part II of this report.

Another purpose of the report was to provide an intensive look at one New Orleans neighborhood. We selected a neighborhood which was both endangered and rich in shotgun house history. Holy Cross, in the Lower Ninth Ward was completely surveyed and also documented using historical resources such as the Sanborn Insurance Maps. Portions of our findings are described in this report.

A final purpose of the report was to provide a new kind of architectural history, appropriate to the subject of urban vernacular architecture. In this, we had to rethink the principles, indeed the very foundations of the methodologies and presuppositions of architectural history. We strove for a more socially and human based approach to explaining the great transformations which occur in traditions of architecture. The early history of the shotgun house as a new form of history is presented in this portion of the report.

This report is not complete. Part II, to be submitted in 2010, will expand our survey of the city of New Orleans. It will also expand the history of the shotgun house by examining in greater detail dramatic developments which occurred in the last decades of the nineteenth century and throughout the twentieth century. This history will end with the attempts to reconstitute and restore the shotgun tradition in New Orleans.

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1. <http://www.nationaltrust.org/Magazine/story/index.htm> 8/13/07)

2. The 2004 population of Orleans Parish was 462,269 (Dreier 2006:2). In 2000 the population was 484,674. The African-American population was 66.6%, the white population 26.6 (Greater New Orleans Community Data Center <http://www.gnocdc.org/orleans/people.html>). New Orleans ranks among the nation's most racially segregated cities (2000 segregation index = 69; Dreier 2006:3).

3. (<http://www.nationaltrust.org/Magazine/story/index.htm> ; 2007)

II. AN ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY OF THE HOLY CROSS NEIGHBORHOOD

In this chapter we present an overview of the development of the Holy Cross neighborhood, with special emphasis on the cadastral layout and its subdivisions, and the architecture. We will also discuss the social development of the neighborhood and the impact of Hurricane Katrina upon the vitality of the area. The scope of our review will include all of the Holy Cross subdivision, the historical district, as well as the other streets outside of the designated historical district

1. Location:

Holy Cross is the located in the Lower Ninth Word of the city. As such, it is the most downstream neighborhood in Orleans Parish. It comprises that section of the Lower Ninth which lies between St. Claude Avenue and Peters Street or River Road (at the levee of the Mississippi River). As defined for our immediate purposes, Holy Cross is bounded by St. Claude Ave., the Mississippi River, Sister Street (the Industrial Canal) and by Delery St. (the Jackson Barracks), at the lower edge of Orleans and St. Bernard Parishes.

Universal Transverse Mercador coordinates (UTM's) for the corners of the boundaries of Holy Cross are:

15/786,980/3,318,240

15/787,040/3,317,620

15/788,920/3,317,700

15/788,580/3,317,200.

2. Early History of the Area and Important Landmarks:

The name Holy Cross derives from the order called the Brothers of Holy Cross, who settled in New Orleans in 1849. The order included priests, brothers and sisters who established an orphanage for boys and girls who survived a plague. This orphanage went on to serve as a very prominent school for New Orleanians for years to come and still to this day, even though it is now at a new location. They brothers of Holy Cross purchased a tract of land in 1859, and in 1871 purchased the Reynes Plantation at Dauphine and Reynes streets (Wikipedia).

The first members of the Ursuline religious order for women arrived in New Orleans in 1727, and later settled in the area that would come to be known as the Holy Cross area. They founded schools, asylums and orphanages who administered to the needs of the poor. However, when the Ursulines first came to New Orleans in 1727, a place they described as a "mud hole," they were credited with providing the first decent medical care and helped raise girls shipped over from France as "marriage material" for the predominately male population in the area. The land for the second convent was obtained in 1811. The convent was again moved (uptown) when the Industrial Canal construction displaced them in the second decade of the Twentieth Century (Sacred Destinations).

The United States government constructed The New Orleans Barracks in 1834-35 along the downtown side of Holy Cross, at the parish line. They were renamed Jackson Barracks in 1866. This strip of land still remains the lower boundary of Holy Cross. The Industrial Canal (Inner Harbor Navigational Canal) was constructed in 1923. It is a 5.5 mile long waterway connecting Lake Pontchartrain to the Mississippi River. The area had been the home to the

Ursuline Academy which had to be razed in order to make way for the new canal. The Sisters had already decided to move back uptown by the time plans for the canal were in place.

In the Eighteenth century sugar plantations crowded together along the banks of the river in what is now Holy Cross. This section of the riverbank developed because light and heavy industries could take advantage of the Mississippi River. Its proximity to New Orleans was important. The first rail lines from New Orleans were extended into the area shortly before the Civil War. Lumber mills, slaughter houses, brick kilns, distilleries and other light industries gradually gave way to heavier industries in the late Nineteenth and early Twentieth centuries. Slaughter houses were prevalent on the lower riverfront in New Orleans. The first one was the Crescent City Livestock and Slaughter House Company chartered in 1869. Slaughter houses had to be located on the outer perimeters of the city limits. In 1880 the Butcher's Union Slaughter House and Livestock Landing Co. bought squares 57 and 58 in Holy Cross which were by the Mississippi River. Only towards the end of the nineteenth century were the increasingly narrow long lots subdivided into suburban lots and sold to landowners. Several of the industries remained and prospered so that today the riverfront is about half taken by industrial and commercial enterprises. Between the foot of Egania Street and St. Maurice Ave., ships and barges are loaded and unloaded at the Andry Street and the Alabo Street Wharfs (Greater New Orleans Community Data Center).



Aerial Photo of Holy Cross Riverfront 1972. HNOC 1987.166.2.1127.

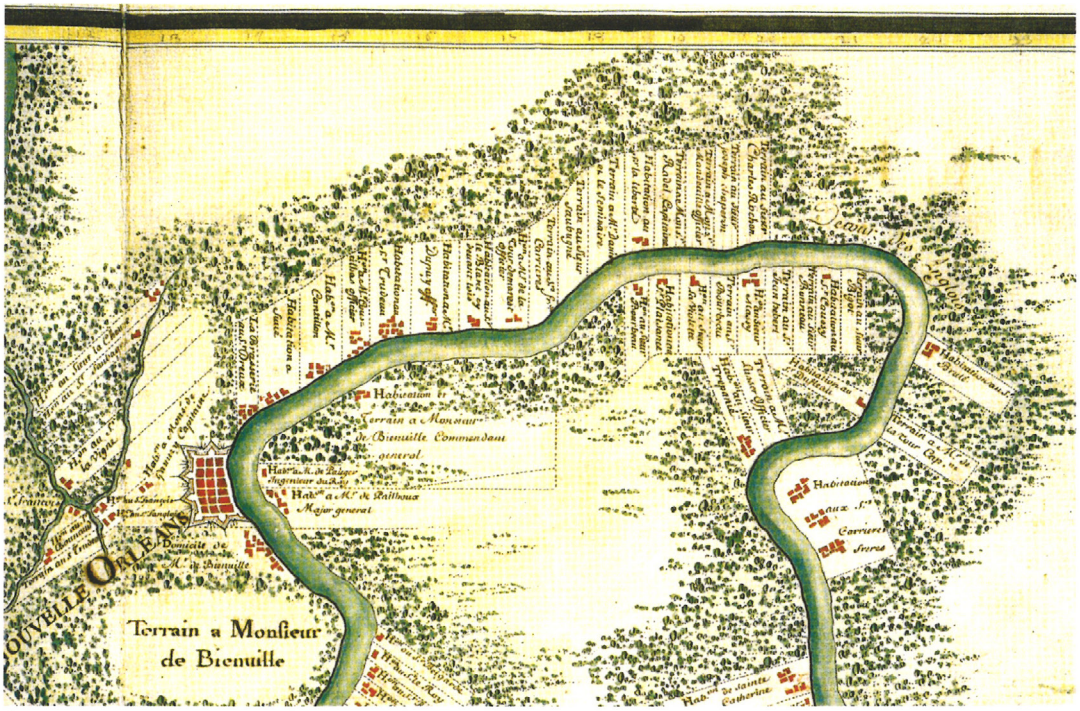
In the late 1800's, African Americans and European immigrant laborers from places such as Germany, Italy and Ireland, moved into the Holy Cross area, even though the area was associated with disease and flooding (Greater New Orleans Community Data Center). The area was not one of the most affluent. Land was cheap and there were job opportunities in the riverfront industries. It has remained home to mainly middle to lower income working class families over generations and is predominately African American. In that year twenty-five houses were enumerated for the census in the uptown section of Holy Cross between Sister and Deslonde streets. That population was 62% white and 38% African-American. Thirty-one

percent of the white population was foreign born – mostly Germans (Corps of Engineers 2005, 89).

By way of contrast, by the 2000 Census report Holy Cross was 87.5% African American. Fifty eight percent of the residents were renters, with the remaining being homeowners (New Orleans Neighborhood website). The population density in 2000 was higher on average than that in the City of New Orleans, with Holy Cross having 5,046 people per square mile compared to 2,684 people per square mile in New Orleans (New Orleans Community Data Center).

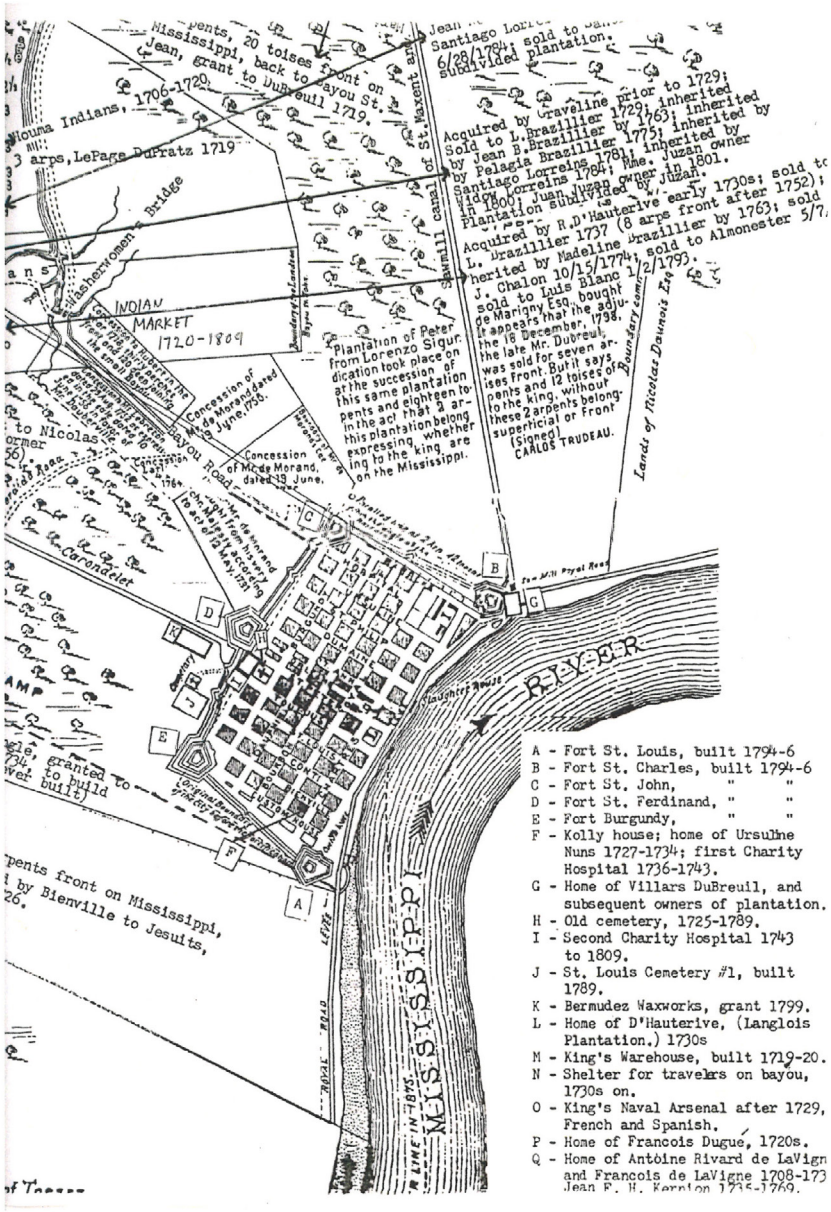
3. Historic and Modern Cartography:

The historical development of the Holy Cross neighborhood may be followed through the many dozens of historic maps of the area left by French, Spanish and American cartographers. Early French land concessions which would eventually comprise Holy Cross begin with the 1723 *Carte Particulaire* of the New Orleans area. At this time the term "habitation" was employed to refer to a developed land grant which had a proprietor living upon it. Among the grants which would later become Holy Cross are included: "La Brasserie au Sr. Dreux," and "La Habitation à Mr. Cantillon." Their concessions were divided into long lots which extended over a mile back from the river.



1723 Carte Particuliere of New Orleans and surrounding territory.

There seem to be no Spanish period maps of the area of Holy Cross which designate concessions clearly, though there are property surveys of individual plantations.



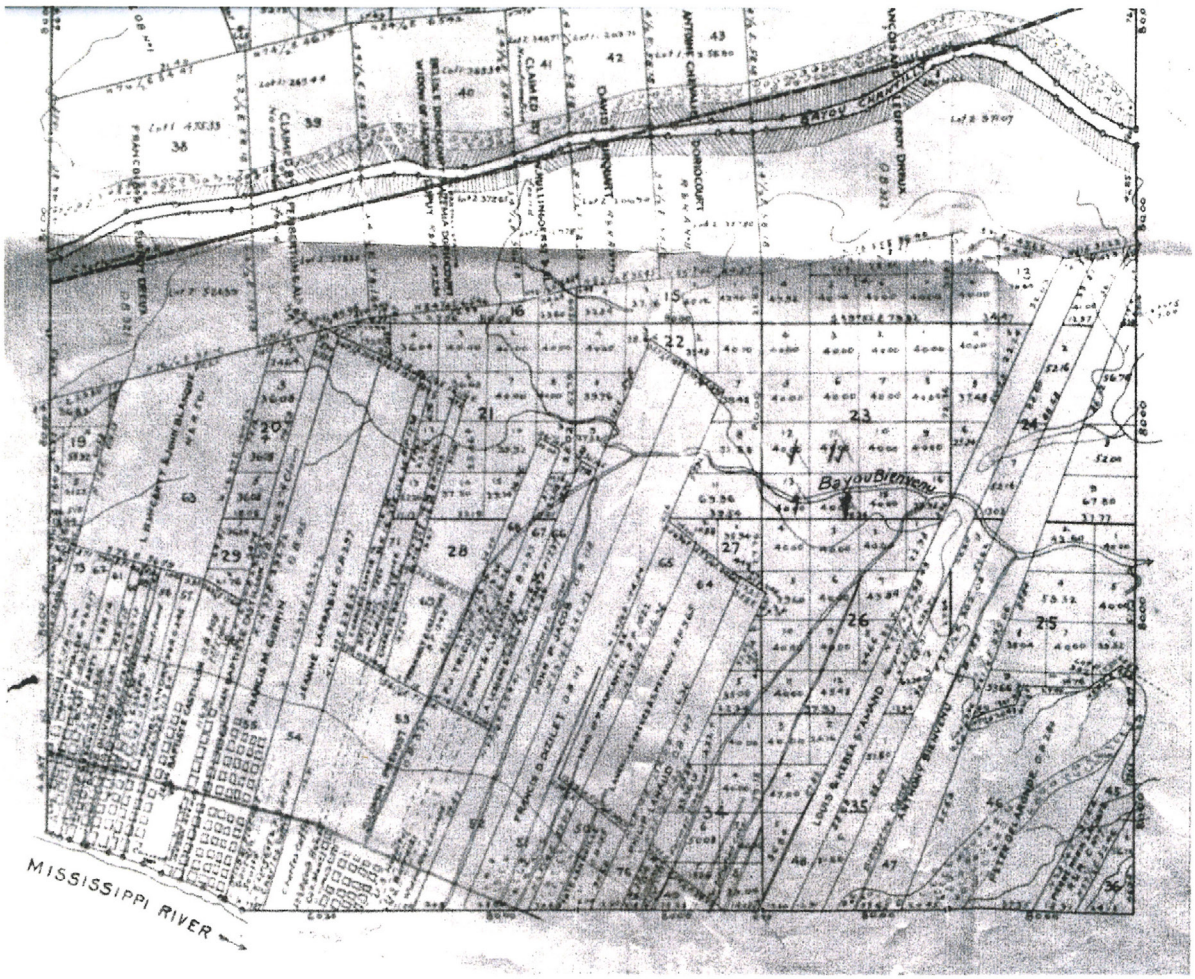
Segment of the Trudeau Map of 1798 with notes added by Edna Freiberg 1980.

Following the Louisiana Purchase, concessionaires were required to prove that their lands had been in productive use for the previous ten years. Such claims are found in the American State papers (not consulted for this research). Beginning about 1812, with the period of statehood, the process of dividing Louisiana into the Township and Range system began. Earlier concessions were given section numbers and unsurveyed lands were divided into townships and

sections – one square mile blocks of land. The first comprehensive survey was completed in 1830 by A. S. Phelps, D.S. For the Holy Cross area it lists a number of sections. Those on the river and extending back the standard depth of 40 arpents were as follows beginning upstream:

1. Jean Baptiste Castillon Sec. 56.
2. Francis M. Guerin Sec. 55.
3. Jeanne Larrable Sec. 54.
4. Solomon Prevost and Chas. Caffin Sec. 53. (U.S. Barracks in this section).
5. John Jacob Sec. 52.
6. Francis D. Dizilet Sec. 51.
7. Francis B. Languille Sec. 50.

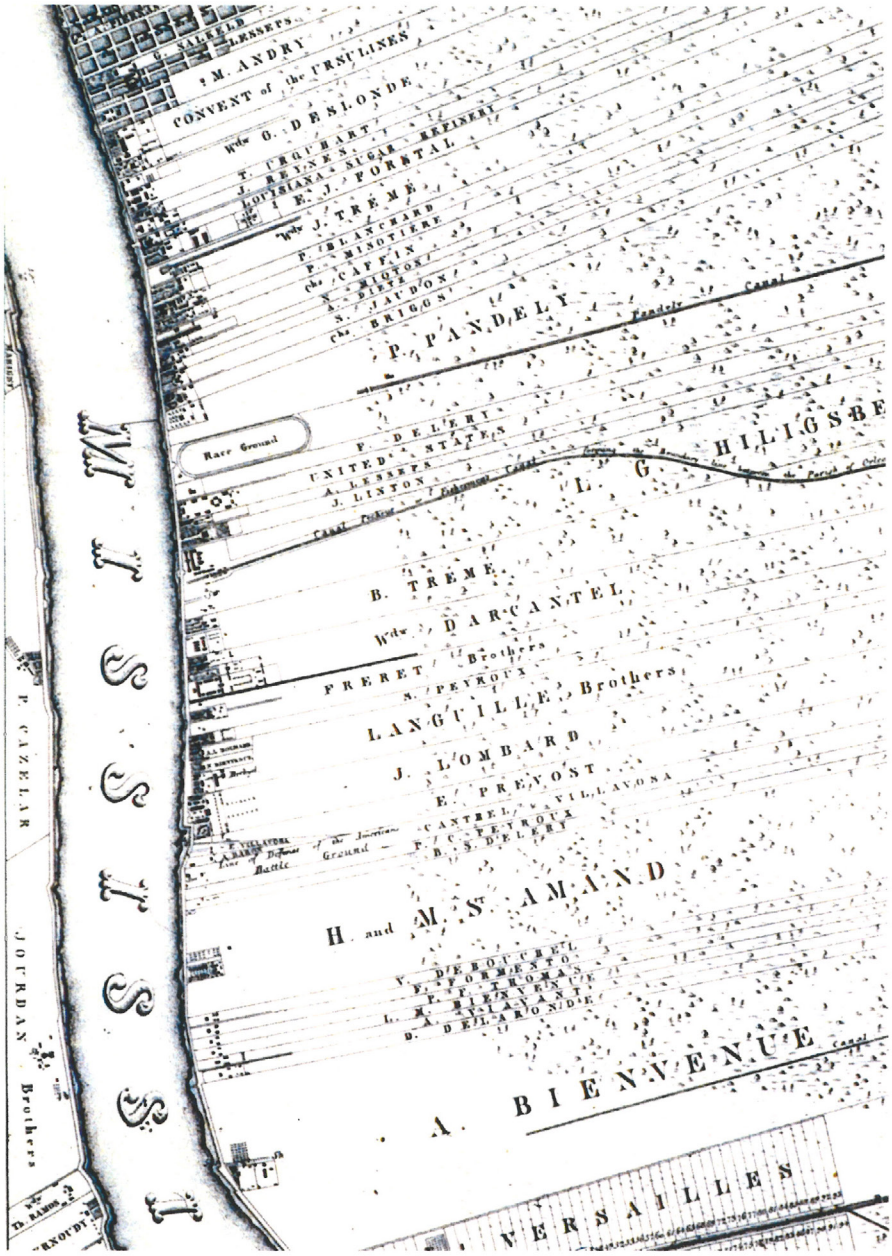
Other "back bruslie" sections were recorded behind these. Particularly notable is that of Chas. Caffin, behind that of Prevost (Sec. 53). His concession will eventually become a portion of the Jackson Barracks. These land grants (probably as of about 1819), are recorded in Louisiana T.12.S, R.12.E. (HNOC MSS 403, Folder 9455), and were later updated and corrected in 1873 and again in 1919 (HNOC Mss. 403, f. 9461).



An 1830 Cadastral Map of T12S, R12E, updated. The several squares in what is now Holy Cross adjacent to the Mississippi River are almost certainly future plans or wishful thinking. The Soloman Prevost concession is where the U.S. (Jackson) Barracks will be built. Courtesy Historic New Orleans Collection, MSS 403 f 9461.

Beginning in the 1830s, the process of subdivision of the large concessions had begun. Even the 1830 survey shows the properties being divided into squares, almost certainly wishful thinking at this early date. Louisiana Sugar Refinery purchased a tract of land in 1834. Adjacent land next to the sugar refinery as well as behind it was purchased by M.J. Lizardi and by 1869 he had subdivided the property into 87 squares with 561 lots. This Lizardi Subdivision plan was unusual in that there were many smaller-than-usual lots facing Forstall Street in this subdivision.

In 1834 a highly detailed and accurate map of the New Orleans area by Zimpel demonstrates just how completely the cultural landscape had been transformed in the previous two decades or so.



The 1834 Zimpel Map of New Orleans (detail). Below the Deslonde concession, Holy Cross is beginning to be developed along the Mississippi waterfront. Courtesy Historic New Orleans Collection.

Now Holy Cross is divided into no less than sixteen roughly parallel long lots; the owners are as follows:

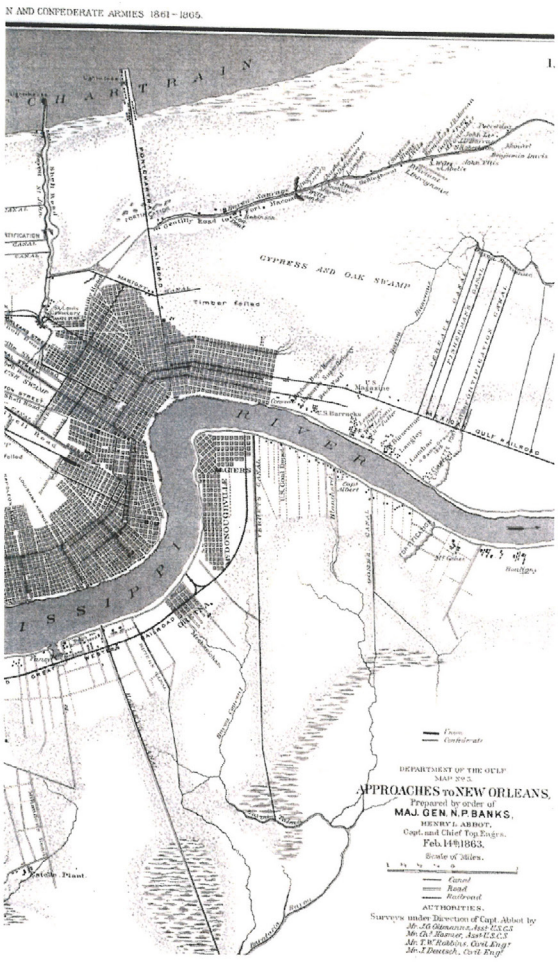
Below the Convent of the Ursulines (later, industrial Canal)

1. Widow G. Deslonde
2. T. Urquhart
3. J. Reynes
4. Louisiana Sugar Refinery
5. E. J. Forstal
6. Widow J. Tremé
7. P. Blanchard
8. F. Misotrère
9. Chas. Caffin
10. N. Mioton
11. A. Dietz
12. S. Jaudon
13. Chas. Briggs
14. P. Pandely (racetrack concession)
15. F. Delery
16. United States.

Note that with the exception of some land still owned by the Caffin family, all of the land of Holy Cross has changed hands. Many of these land divisions have plantation or industrial buildings close to the river. Building is now rather crowded along the crest of the

natural levee, but behind that, almost completely given over to undeveloped or agricultural lands. Subdivision into suburban lots has not yet begun.

A "Plan of New Orleans" in 1860 shows that the Mexican-Gulf Railroad has been extended along St. Claude Ave., which now runs into the Holy Cross area. However, the lands below Poland St. are not shown as being subdivided (NONA Acq. No. 1979.282). A Civil War map of 1863, the Dept. of the Gulf Map No. 5, Approaches to New Orleans, Prepared by order of Maj. Gen. N. Banks, by Henry L. Abbot, Cap. and Chief Top Engineer, shows Marigny and Bywater fully subdivided into squares, but no suburban development below the Ursuline Convent (future Industrial Canal).



Listed in Holy Cross are:

The Orphan Boy's Home

The Urquard's Sugar Refinery

A Brick Yard

U.S. Barracks and the U.S. Magazine.

An 1863 Civil War period military Map of New Orleans. Courtesy Historic New Orleans Collection 1974.25.18.122.

Two rail lines extend into Holy Cross (HNOC Acq. No. 1974.25.18.122). Thus, it appears that no development of subdivisions occurred until after the Civil War.

In 1876 the first Sanborn Insurance Company maps were published for the city of New Orleans. The early maps do not extend as far as the Holy Cross neighborhood, which is yet to be fully subdivided into lots. They extend only to Cluet Street in Bywater. The following year, Ino F. Braun, surveyor and architect, completed a detailed, large scale survey of urban New Orleans for what the Robinson Insurance Company. The detailed surveys are held by the Southeastern Architectural Archive at Tulane University. A great deal of information is provided on individual properties including: a footprint of each structure, color coding for the materials of roof and wall construction, the number of stories of each structure, and special information on the functions such as sheds and warehouses. This is the first comprehensive survey to include information on structures which extends as far as Holy Cross.

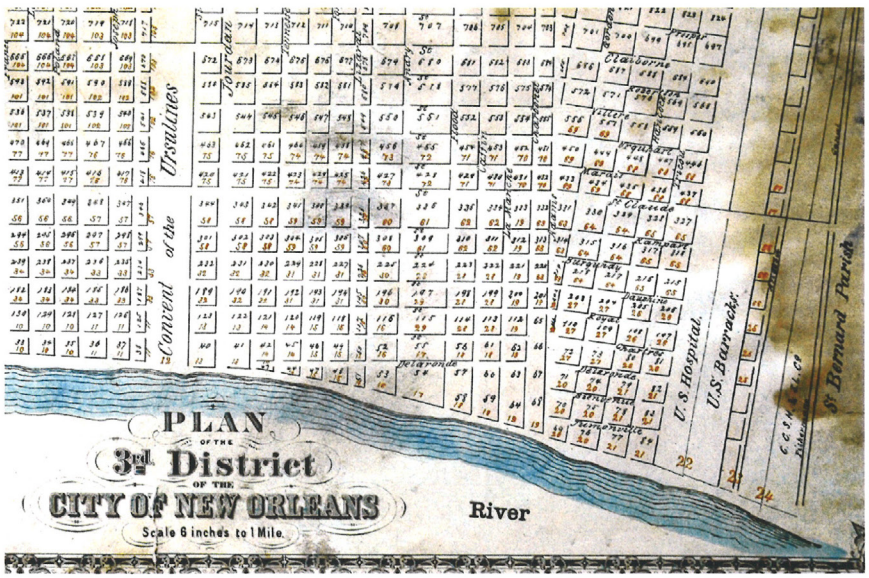
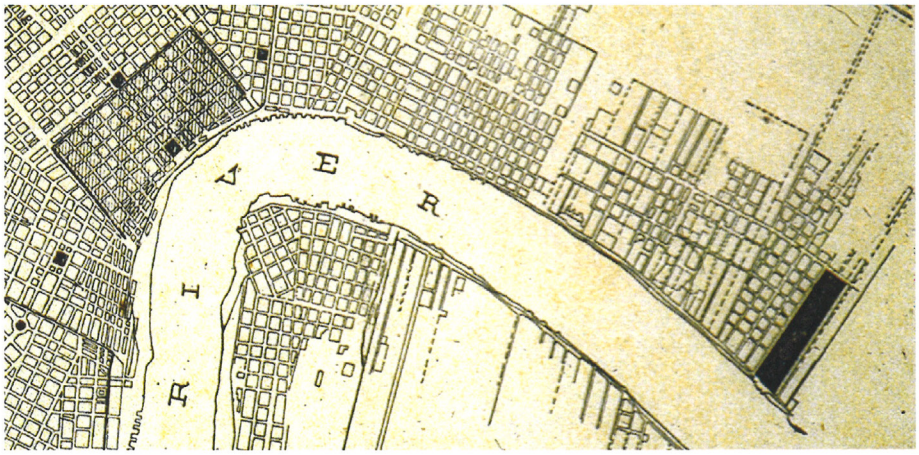


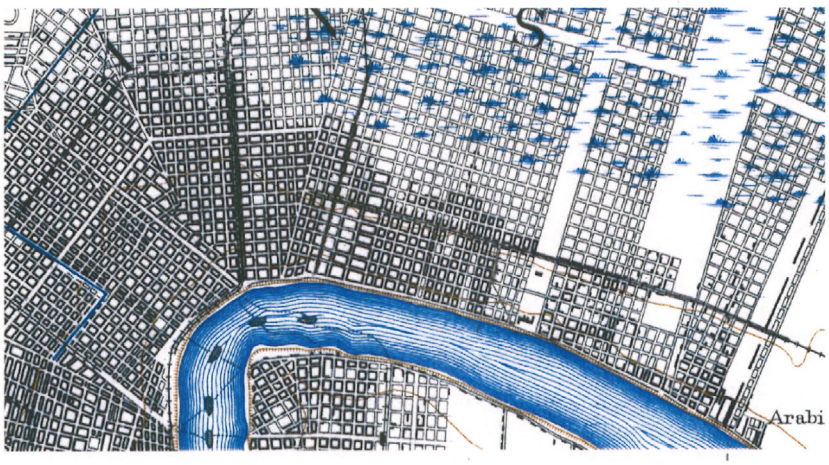
Fig. ___ A Portion of the Index of the Braun map of New Orleans, showing Holy Cross as of 1877. Courtesy SEAA.

In 1881 a map of the parks of New Orleans was published by the Moss Engineering Co. of New York. This map shows that Holy Cross has been partially, but not completely subdivided into squares and lots.



An 1881 map of New Orleans showing partial division of Holy Cross. Courtesy Historic New Orleans Collection. Brawn Engineering Co. N.Y.

By 1891 the first U.S.G.S. Topographic maps had become available for New Orleans. It shows that, except for one large block, Holy Cross has been pretty much filled in with squares.



The 1891 USGS Topo sheet for New Orleans, Courtesy HNOC.

By 1893 most of Holy Cross between the Ursuline Convent and the Jackson Barracks has been subdivided, as indicated by the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey of that year. An example of a surveyor's map of a portion of Holy Cross is seen below. Deslondes Street is just being laid out and small lots are being established along North Peters (Douglas) street. The lots measure just over twenty-three feet wide and one hundred and thirty-five feet deep, facing the Mississippi River.

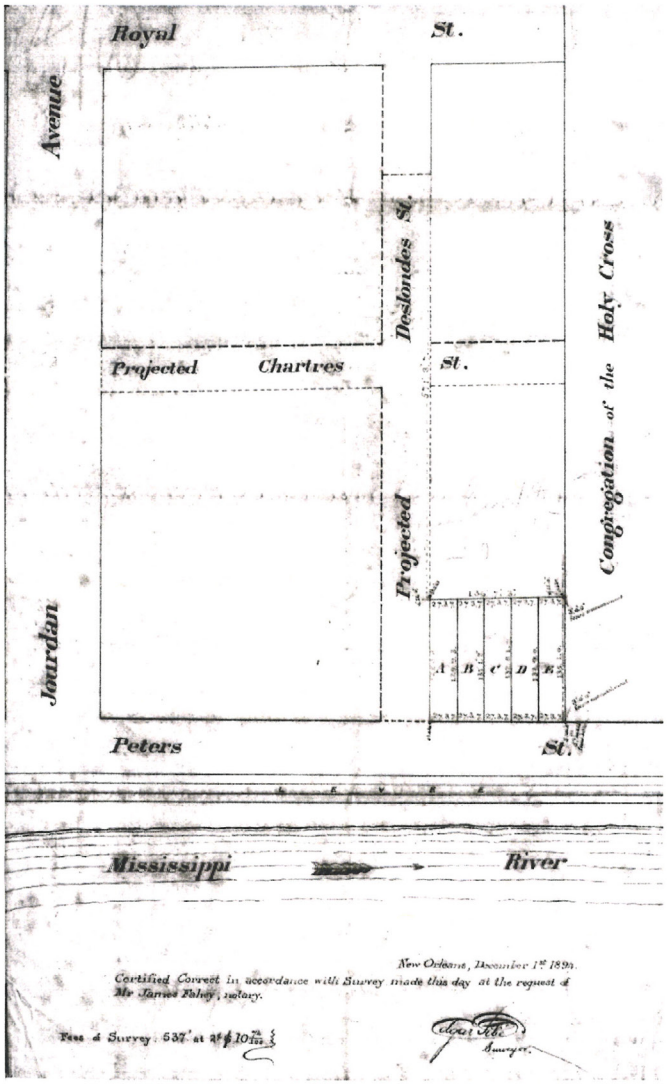


Fig. ___. A map of lot layout in Sq. 121 on Douglas Street, 1894.

A few years later, a map of the layout of nine squares into lots in the central portion of Holy Cross demonstrates that the vast majority of lots are being laid out for smaller houses. The lots are approximately thirty-two feet by one hundred and thirty or one hundred and forty feet in depth.

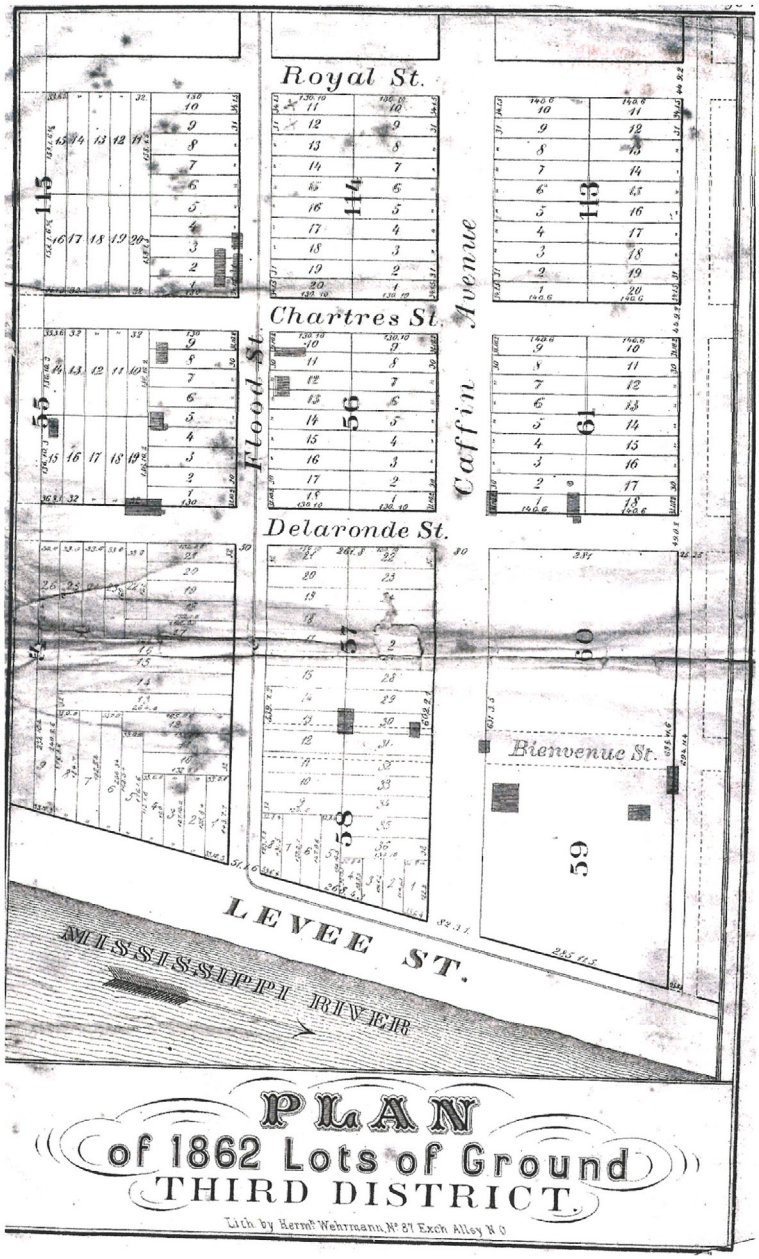


Fig. ___. "Plan of 1862 Lots of Ground, Third District," Undated (ca. 1900) map of six squares in central Holy Cross illustrating lot layout patterns. Courtesy HNOC. 1970.25.1.

From this period on, it is Sanborn maps which provide the best documentation of the changing cultural landscape of Holy Cross. The 1896 series of maps does not contain full coverage of Holy Cross – only nine sheets instead of the twenty it took to cover the entire neighborhood in 1909. In 1896 the intent seems to have been to record principal industrial sites.

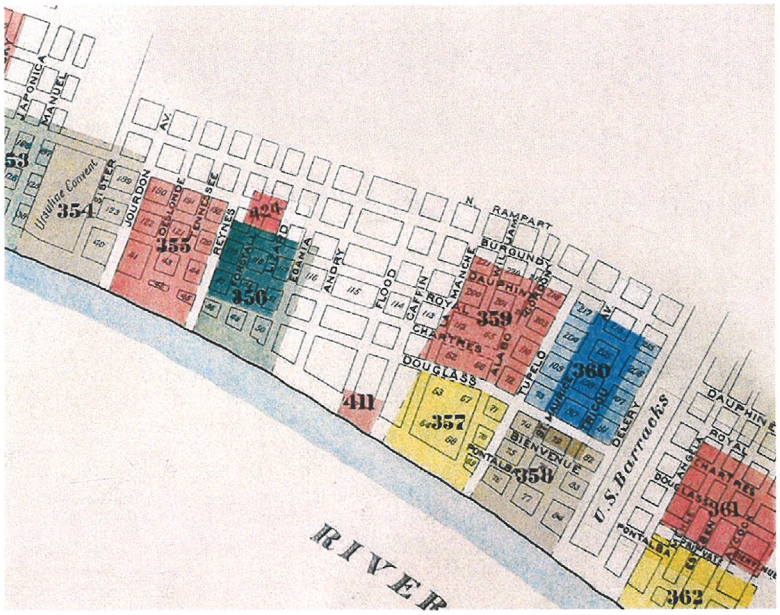


Fig. __. Key to the 1896 Sanborn map set, indicating the coverage for Holy Cross. Courtesy SEAA.

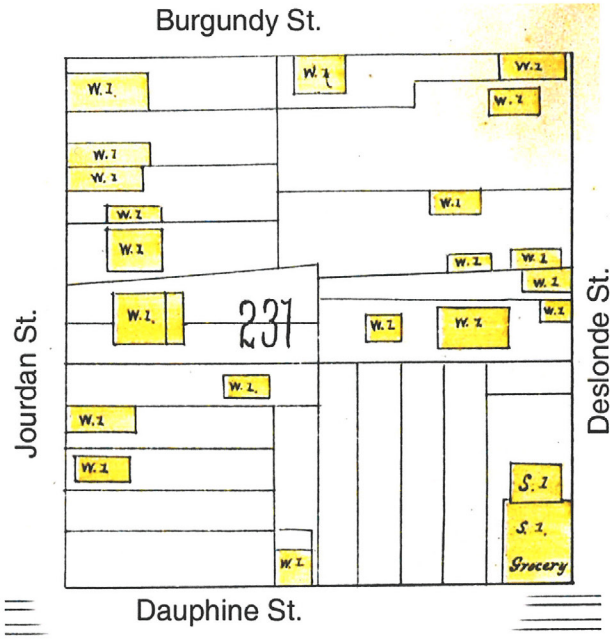
However, some of the sheets are filled with domestic architecture, and they provide an excellent look at the development of the shotgun house and other vernacular types in Holy Cross at that time before the construction of the Industrial Canal.

In 1914 the Board of Commissioners of the port of New Orleans was authorized to construct the Inner Harbor Navigation Canal, now universally referred to as the Industrial Canal has been subdivided.

III. THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SHOTGUN HOUSE IN HOLY CROSS

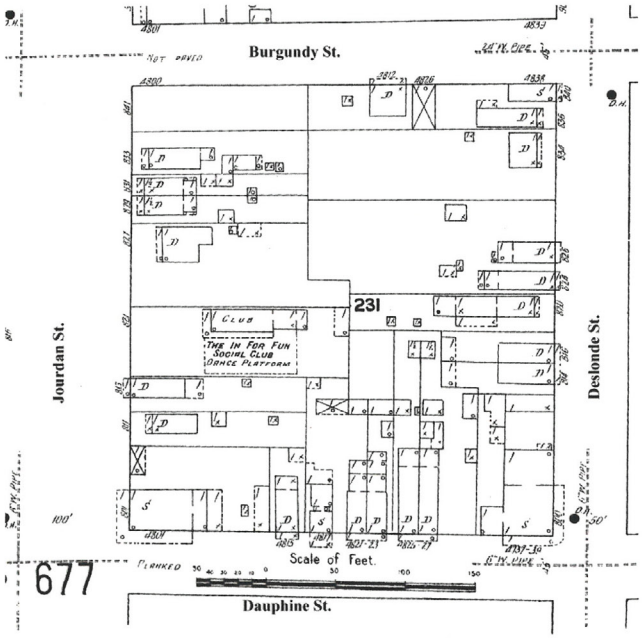
AN EXAMPLE:

Historic Survival in square 231:



Square 231 in Holy Cross from the 1877 Braun Map.

Square 231 in the uptown portion of the neighborhood (bounded by Jourdan, Deslonde, Burgundy and Dauphine), contains three of the original pre-1877 single shotguns still standing in 2009 (at 836 and 882 Jourdan, and 862 Deslonde). The single at 880 Deslonde is also probably original, though it would have been moved forward on its lot. All of these single shotguns are in damaged condition. In addition, there is at least one of the original Creole cottage at 862 Jourdan. The grocery store at 4884 Dauphine appears to be in its original configuration, though much of its original materials have been replaced.

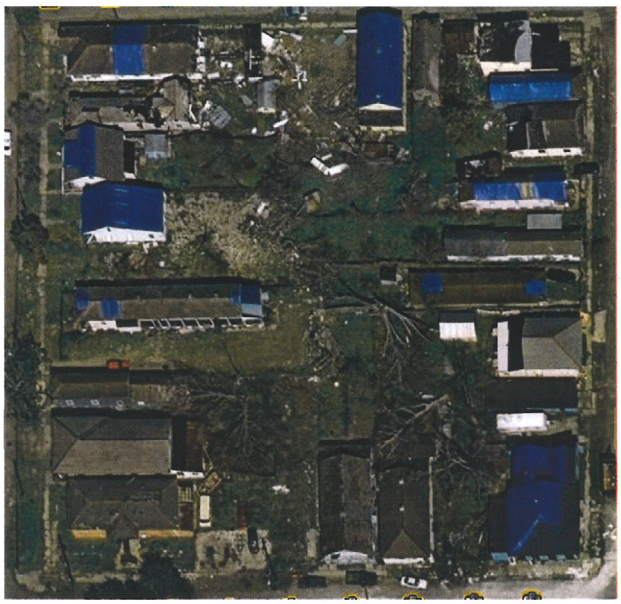


Square 231, Holy Cross, 1909 Sanborn Map.



Square 231, Holy Cross, 1933 Aerial Photography
Courtesy LSU Cartographic Information Center, LSU Libraries.

In 1933, one additional shotgun, a double, had survived on this square to be lost later. The point is that the survival rate of 1877 era buildings in Holy Cross is pretty high, and that a reasonable estimate of the 1877 architectural typology of the neighborhood is possible using the Braun maps, assuming they have been cross-checked with a number of more recent resources.



Google Earth Aerial image of Square 231, Holy Cross, c. 2007.

Summary, Square 231, Holy Cross:

1877 17 houses and a grocery store (Braun Survey). 12 shotguns (71% of total).

1909 (32 years later). 22 Structures including 13 or 14 shotguns, of which four are doubles. Other structures included the grocery store and a dance pavilion. Approximately 10 of the original 1877 structures are extant (a 59% survival rate).

1933 (66 years later). 22 houses and a grocery, of which 11 or 12 are shotguns and two are doubles. Five, including the grocery are original to 1877 (a 33% survival rate -- Aerial photography).

2007 (130 years later). 20 houses, one FEMA trailer, and the grocery. Four of the houses and the grocery were probably original to 1877 (survival rate about 28%). Nine of the houses had blue tarps on their roofs, and one additional (1877) shotgun had part of its roof destroyed and was abandoned. At the time of the Google Earth ground level photography (probably 2006), ten of the twenty structures on this square were uninhabited (Google Earth street-level photography and aerial photography).

Overview

A rough summary of our findings of the Brawn maps for all of Holy Cross are as follows. In the 121 squares there were roughly 58 single shotguns and 16 doubles. There were a total of 74 shotgun family vernacular houses out of a total of roughly 350 dwellings in all of Holy Cross. That would mean that 21.1% of the building stock in that year was of the shotgun family (approximately). We have no estimate of the total number of 1877 houses which survived Katrina, but the number is significant, making Holy Cross a true historic neighborhood.

By 1909, it is evident from Sanborn maps that many of the lots are being subdivided into neighborhood-specific lot layout patterns. Noteworthy subdivisions include the Jourdan Subdivision, the Urquhart and Reynes Subdivisions, Louisiana Sugar Refinery and Lizardi Subdivision, J. Treme and Blanchard Subdivisions, the Caffin and Slaughter House Tract Subdivision, and the Faubourg La Course. Streets running perpendicular to the Mississippi River were the main frontage streets, and streets running parallel to the river were cross streets.

IV. A HISTORY OF THE SHOTGUN HOUSE IN NEW ORLEANS

A. Prelude: The Old Shotgun House

Back behind the French Quarter in one of the most ancient sections of New Orleans, an old dilapidated and abandoned shotgun house stands on a little-known and half-deserted street. It is quietly being taken over by weeds. These little "back of town" streets once went by romantic names such as rue Mysterieuse, rue de l' Histoire, rue Chenes Vertes, Corondolet Walk, Abundance Street, and Virtue Street. On one of these, our shotgun house once served proudly as the homestead for a clan of Creoles of color – an extended family of people who participated fully in the venerable and celebratory culture of the Crescent City. Today, its halcyon days are over. Vines creep up its outer walls, and scattered shingles, until recently covered by blue tarps, expose an open hole in its roof -- an unmistakable sign of impending fatality (Fig. 1).

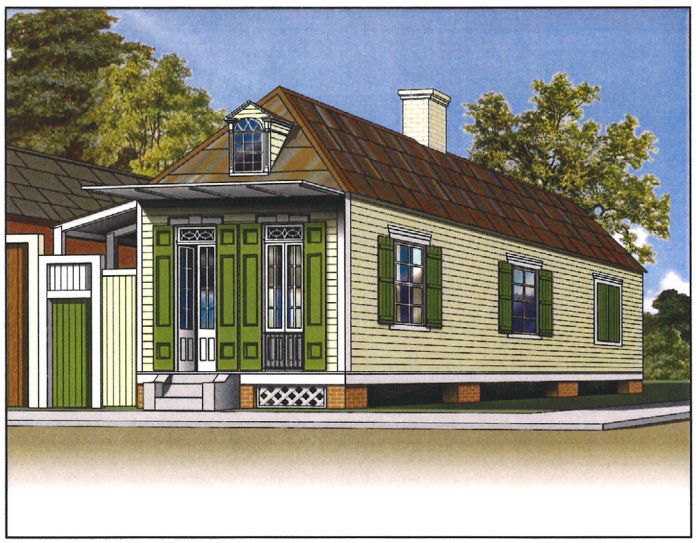


Fig. 1. The Old Shotgun – A Reconstruction.
Art by Mary Lee Eggart for the Kniffen Lab

Built decades before the Civil War, the original single-room wide "cottage" was only two and one-half rooms deep. Its original walls were built using the best methods of the day – hand-hewn timber posts and

braces with brick in-fill for insulation (Fig. 2). Additional structures stood in the back yard including a two-story tall brick kitchen with a shed roof. Later, perhaps in the 1870s, the house was expanded towards one side and the rear. Now at the rear of the house, clapboards have been stripped away, revealing a palisade of rough-hewn vertical boards standing directly on a heavy sill. The sill is raised about a foot and a half above the ground on brick piers, providing a low air space beneath the floor. This later addition was fabricated from "barge boards," floated down the Mississippi River as the hulls of freight barges from some unknown forest in Missouri or Illinois. Later yet, the old free-standing kitchen was torn down and a new kitchen shed was added at the rear. A more contemporary porch and facade replaced the earlier hipped roofline, then clearly showing its age and declassé styling in an era of the high Victorian.



Fig. 2. A *briquette-entre-poteaux* shotgun, in the 1600 block of Dumaine Street, later expanded. This house is now razed. Photo by Jay Edwards

Despite its humble size and degraded condition, this old house has seen it all. Elegant, multi-colored brackets support a roof extension which overhangs the sidewalk about four feet. For years the roof of the house cantilevered out over the sidewalk without any visible means of support. Finally, in the decade of the eighties, huge ornate wooden brackets became available, and they were added beneath the

eaves as apparent underpinnings for the ungainly and overreaching roof.

Above the front-sloping hip roof stood a yellow wooden gablet. Once, it had been dressed with a tasteful half-moon window, but that is now broken out. Its story is that of the old man who lived here and refused to evacuate during Hurricane Katrina. He escaped the surprise of flood waters rising rapidly inside his house by climbing into his attic. After what must have been an interminable wait, he smashed the window out and found himself on a small sloping roof fourteen feet in the air and with nothing to climb down on. This renter has not been heard of since, so how and whether he made it to safety remains a mystery.

Three doors, set in curious asymmetry, crowd the facade. Only the door on the left is capped with a graceful transom—the sole survivor of the original front doors, now moved. That door opened into a tiny "lobby," which in turn lead to an open gallery running down the side of the house. This curious arrangement harked back to the time when rental rooms were such a very important source of income for the free people of color in New Orleans. Rental apartments were necessarily disconnected from the rooms of the residence, and were always set at the back of the house. Access was via the lobby and side gallery. Later, the side gallery was boarded in to become a hallway, providing more privacy for those whose bedrooms were awkwardly situated between the front parlor and the rear kitchen where family and friends gathered.

This narrow house was once the home of a lively and energetic family of black Creoles. They spoke the local dialect of French until well into the twentieth century. The family was founded by a Creole matriarch, a *mulattresse* whose French-speaking paramour had provided this little house for her as part of the *plaçage* arrangement so popular between landed gentlemen and free women of color in the decades following the Louisiana Purchase. Six children followed, four of whom lived past their childhoods to become prominent in the black Creole society of the city. The boys were active in a Masonic lodge and church groups. At work they specialized as builders, plasterers and masons -- honored

professions in this community. The intricate ceiling rosettes and crown moldings of one skilled descendent still grace a number of the mansions and public buildings of the city. More modest versions of the same were applied to his own home, though little evidence now remains. The fetching light-skinned girls of the family married well for the most part, settling close to their mother. For a while the family prospered and enjoyed the section of the city which was culturally their own. They promenaded daily to the open market only a few blocks distant, where the latest news and gossip of the neighborhood was the principal attraction. On Sunday mornings they walked to Saint Augustine, a famous black Catholic church -- the very oldest such church in the nation.

But as the fortunes of the black Creole society diminished in the antebellum years, the descendants of the family eventually moved away to another Creole community near the edge of the expanding city. Even by the late 1850s the neighborhood of the old shotgun was experiencing a downward spiral of neglect and gradually sinking property values. One day, during the waning days of the antebellum period, an ad appeared in a local newspaper:

VENTS À L'ENCAN
PAR FERNANDEZ & WHITING

> Il sera vendu, samedi prochain le 31 courant à la Bourse à midi les propertiétés suivanies : 1. de terrain situé dans la rue Mystérieuse, entre les rues St. Claude et Amour, mesurant 27 pieds 9 pouces et demi de face sur le rue Mystérieuse, sur 90 pieds 2-3 pouces de profondeur d'un côté, et 83 pieds 10 pouces de profondeur sur l'autre côté, avec une maison à deux appartemens, galerie, cuisine, et d'autres ameliorations, le tout se loue aiaintenant à douze piastres par mois, la banquette en pierres de taille, et payée.

The house did not sell immediately, but it was eventually rented by a black man and a mulattress who had deserted their plantation after the hated Federals had taken the city The wife, and matriarch of the family, did domestic work. She was a strong woman who was ruler of her roost. She organized the children, social and church events, domestic affairs, and she augmented her income by renting out two

rooms behind the house to Yankees. Her common-law husband died of tuberculosis within a couple of years, and Sarah soon married a local Creole man who had a steady job in the nearby A. Boucher & Co. Steam (powered), Sash (sliding window) and Blind (inner folding louvered shutters) lumber company. William was a popular man who advanced to the level of a 32 degree in the Scottish Rite Masonic order. He was active in his church but maintained no other social obligations. Together they prospered for some years and were eventually able to purchase and even expand their shotgun home to accommodate six children (Fig. 3).

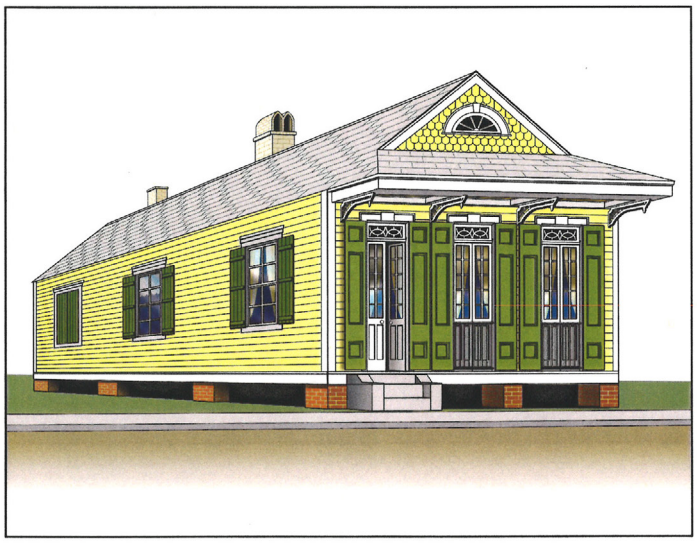


Fig. 3. The Old Shotgun as expanded in the late Nineteenth Century. Art by Mary Lee Eggart for the Kniffen Lab.

But there was an Achilles heel: Their prosperous life was indelibly transformed from the day the William's first cousin "Uncle Lewis" lost his house and moved in. Lewis was slick and talkative and always seemed to have money without much means of support. As young men and more than once in fights, he had saved William's life or limbs. He became the cousin William could never say "no" to. Gradually, he introduced an entirely different kind of ethic into the family. His behavior towards women, including even relatives, was exploitative. He was especially aggressive toward "bright" women, and that included two of Sarah's children. His psychology was complex, conflicted, and stained by racial

resentment. He demonstrated a marked antagonism towards whites and he was prone to violence at the least seeming insult. Soon, storm clouds hovered over the little house. Arguments over Lewis's behavior gradually fractured the family and eventually lead to divorce. One day William returned from work to discover that the house was deserted and that almost all of the furniture was gone! William, and then his children, kept the house, but as economic conditions worsened for the family, it was eventually returned to rental property.

As hurricane Katrina approached in 2005, the house was rented to a middle-aged couple and the woman's father. It was he who remained alone in the now deteriorating five room shotgun house, only to disappear thereafter. The owners, including one of Sarah and William's grandchildren, lived in New Orleans East. After the trauma of the storm and the displacement, they gradually began the process or renovation by gutting the interior of the shotgun. However, money was scarce and their own damaged home came first. They hired their renters to renovate the old house, but funding gradually ran out for the project, and neither insurance nor federal support was sufficient. For the first time in its venerable history, the old shotgun stood abandoned and neglected.

When I first saw the house it was decorated with a large red X and the following marks: On the top, the date of "9-11." On the left, side "CHP," the initials of the crew who had done the first inspection. On the bottom of the X: "No DB" (no dead bodies). And in the right side quadrant -- devoted to describing immediate hazards -- "F/W" (food and water left). Further over in blue paint, "Cat under house, 9/15," then below that in appropriate black spray paint, "DOA cat, front yard 10/06." In the tiny front yard of the next door neighbor stood a hand-painted sign: "House Gutting, 382-2705." A refrigerator closed with duct tape stood on street with a spray-painted sign on one side: "Free Food." A black car, its rear window broken out, lay angled across the sidewalk, its flanks and windows patterned up to the roof with horizontal streaks of gray from the grime of the flood waters.

Clearly, some attempt had been made to repair the old shotgun. Another sign, painted later on the plywood covering a door read: "Looting you will be shot, no 'Excuses' Man on Premis." The house had been gutted and plywood sheets removed from some of its windows. Through Halloween of 2005 the owners had clearly held out hope of saving the little house. Scattered around the front were little treasures, clearly those of the previous renters. They had returned to recover their possessions only to find to their shock just how few were salvageable. Perhaps they had even lived there for a while before the project was abandoned. In the front yard there stood a pathetic shrine to Katrina with a Jack-O-lantern, a doll of an angel on a cement block, Mardi Gras beads draped around the neck of a stuffed horse, and streamers hung from the branches of a dead tree -- its leaves that distinctive red-brown color so familiar to residents of post-Katrina New Orleans. On the front porch stood a damaged paper maché bust of a priest praying in a brown robe. He rested on a base which had red flames licking up from around it, and on the robe was painted, "MORIAL." A ruined wooden chair sat festooned with water-stained photographs of a young black girl, a light-skinned black-haired man in a tie and shirt. In a box on the ground lay a plastic album sheet containing what had been one of literally hundreds of thousands of album sheets of ruined 35mm color slides and prints throughout the city – a unfathomable collection of family memories now lost to entire generations of New Orleaneans. In the same box -- tourist memorabilia from an old trip to Disneyland, and an old plaque appropriately showing Neptune with his trident riding on the back of alligators "World's Exposition, New Orleans, LA".

The water lines and brown stains which once decorated the lower half of the facade are now almost completely gone, but if one is observant and carefully examines the window panes you can see where the standing flood waters – rich in chemicals -- etched the glass about four feet above the floor level, with lighter lines below documenting their slow intermittent recession. On my last visit there was something new -- a red tag, stating that the house will be demolished by the city if repairs are not undertaken by a certain date.

The Shotgun House And Its Value

This story you have just read is a composite based on both historical and personal observations from the neighborhood of the old shotgun. Actually, there are many such shotguns in the back of town portions of New Orleans, each with their own compelling story. So here is the essential quesion: What is their value in the larger story of the neighborhoods and cultural landscapes of New Orleans? Are they worth fighting for? These once viable houses are being rapidly lost, not due to neglect or termites or direct hurricane damage, but rather due to the fact that the levee system of the city failed to live up to its engineered requirements. True, insurance might have been purchased to cover some of the flood damage, but that was popularly considered unnecessary in a city protected by numerous levees. So what are we to make of the single most destructive urban event in the history of the United States? That event impacted the vernacular architecture and the historic wooden houses of New Orleans, far more seriously than it did the larger and better cared for houses situated in the more elevated sections of the city. More than thirty percent of the housing stock of Orleans Parish was seriously damaged or completely destroyed, and the destruction continues apace as I write in the summer of 2009. Not only are the vernacular houses of the back of town sections of the city disappearing due to city sponsored demolition, but they are also vanishing at a high rate due to midnight salvage operations and to arson.

In relation to the many other kinds of historic houses which dominate the cultural landscapes of New Orleans, the shotgun family of houses is relatively undervalued. Many shotguns are small, and many are only moderately decorated. Their historical, architectural and cultural value is downplayed in essentially every survey of New Orleans architecture. Sam Wilson, the most knowledgeable architectural historian of the city, held them in low regard. "Houses of this type were erected in all parts of New Orleans in the 1870's, 80's and 90's, wherever land could be bought at a low price and cheap houses could be built for rental purposes. Such houses replaced numerous earlier cottages, mostly in the fringe areas of

fringe areas of the Quarter, and were crowded onto narrow lots with narrow walkways on either side." (Wilson 1968:125). In both government and private sponsored architectural surveys of various kinds, the shotgun is vastly under-represented in comparison with its more prestigious neighbors -- the Creole cottage, the Creole town house, the American town house, the Greek Revival or Italianate mansion, the Victorian cottage, the California style bungalow, and others. When the Louisiana Historic American Building Survey undertook WPA sponsored surveys of Louisiana's historic architecture, and particularly the historic buildings of New Orleans, they surveyed almost no shotgun houses. As part of those surveys the watercolorist Boyd Cruise rendered over four hundred paintings of buildings in New Orleans and beyond. Most of these are housed in the Louisiana State Museum Archives, the Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, and in the Historic New Orleans Collection. Only a couple of shotguns – less than one percent – were of historic shotgun houses. Comparatively few shotguns are illustrated in the fine color print montages of the popular *New Orleans Architecture Series* of studies of books. Out of 147 Historic American Buildings Surveys which have been posted on line by the Library of Congress for New Orleans, only eight very incomplete surveys deal with the shotgun family of housetypes. There are shotgun support groups, such as the Shotgun House Month events sponsored by the Preservation Resource Center of New Orleans, but in general, no prominent architectural type is less covered in a mantle of prestige and architectural recognition than those of the shotgun family.

All of this is significant because the shotgun family of houses comprises almost one-half of the total housing stock of Orleans Parish. The city of New Orleans is recognized as having the largest number of historic structures of any city in the country, and it is largely due to its large number of nineteenth and early twentieth century shotgun houses that it enjoys this unique status. The city also boasts the largest number of wooden houses of any city for precisely the same reason. Yet, no scholarly book has been published on the shotgun house. More importantly, no one has attempted to investigate the reasons for the sudden explosion of popularity of the shotgun in the post-bellum era in New Orleans.

There is no typology of this rich historic architectural family of house, nor has there been a history which really attempts to sort out the roots of the tradition or explain the causes of its many variant forms. This book is a response to the sadly neglected state of shotgun house scholarship.

IV.b. What Is a Linear Cottage? -- Methodology

One trouble with writing about the shotgun house in New Orleans is that there is little agreement on what one is. Every New Orleans native believes that he or she can identify a shotgun and separate it from other common house types of the city, but when it comes down to actually defining the shotgun is, that gets a little more complex and difficult. The shotgun house is usually described as a frame dwelling, narrow on the street but deep on the lot. The first attempt to formally define the shotgun, in print, was that of LSU cultural geographer Fred B. Kniffen in 1936 ("Louisiana House Types," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 26:179-93). Kniffen stated: "The folk-term here employed is commonly used in Louisiana to designate a long, narrow house. It is but one room in width and from one to three or more rooms deep, with frontward-facing gable" This definition has been considerably expanded since Kniffen's time. As first studied historically by architectural historian, Sam Wilson, Jr., the shotgun house finds its genesis as a local invention of the 1830s, coincident with the rise of Greek Revival architecture in New Orleans. The housetype is said to originate because of the progressive narrowing of New Orleans city lots.

Numerous problems face the researcher who would enter into an interpretation of the Shotgun House tradition in New Orleans. The territory is *tierra incognita.* There has there been no geographical study, but there *is* a been a marked geographical bias in the ranking of architectural types, with the housetypes of "the island" (areas adjacent to the river) and the Garden District receiving by far the bulk of the interest and publication space. Less glamorous historic houses of equal age situated in the lower-lying areas of the "back of town" (Carrolton, Hollygrove, Girt Town, Mid City, Tremé, New Marigny, St Roch, St. Claude, Bywater and Holy Cross), receive cursory mention in most architectural histories of the city. There has been no census of shotgun houses, no typology, no history, nor is there even a definition which is agreed upon by geographers, folklorists, anthropologists and architectural historians.

What do you suppose is the most common historic house type in New Orleans? Based on a close reading of the *New Orleans Architecture* series of books, one would be forgiven for assuming that Creole Cottages, townhouses and Victorian cottages were by far the most common. In the three most popular *N.O. Architecture* series books, shotguns amount to a 6% sample of the houses illustrated in the discussion portion of the books -- other forms 94%. Yet shotguns are by far the most dominant family of house types in the city.[3] As measured by rough estimate using aerial photography of Orleans Parish from 1933, the number of shotgun-family houses present at the height of the shotgun building boom was on the order of magnitude of 50,000 units. New Orleans is surely the shotgun capital of the world. Isn't this a really significant fact about New Orleans which demands the attention of the community of architectural historians?

Because New Orleans architectural historians hold that the shotgun house found its origins in the 1830s and 1840s because of the progressive narrowing of lot widths in the city, they do not consider any shotgun-like buildings which predate the approximately 1835 to be shotgun houses at all, no matter how much they look like them. In governmental data bases in which historic vernacular houses must be classified, for example the New Orleans Notarial Archive plan book database, early shotgun-like houses receive a variety of names, such as "cottage," "*maisonette*," "*maison longue*," or "proto-shotgun." Only very rarely are they referred to as "shotguns," and that category includes some buildings historically unrelated to the shotgun house. Because of the difficulty of dealing with the concept of shotgun house in New Orleans, in this study we will define a *new category* of buildings which includes shotguns, and also, perhaps, others not now considered to be related by many architectural historians. Our name for this category of vernacular housetypes will be the *Linear Cottage tradition.*

In order to define any vernacular housetype in a meaningful and systematic way, its multiple members must have at least two things in common. One is geometrical similarity. It does not matter how a house is decorated, so long as its basic form or geometry fits a within a folk category shared implicitly by

those members of the community responsible for the design and construction of such houses. Not uncommonly, such a category of buildings does not even carry a single local name, but local observers with architectural competence can generally distinguish between its proper members and those which do not belong. This is normally done by matching a shared geometric aesthetic (mental formula) to the observed building to see whether it fits or not.

Architectural folk geometry rests on two basic planes: One is the floorplan. There may be variations within the plans of any sample of related buildings, but there also must be certain constants – things which every member of the tradition shares. I might mention that there are ways of establishing this mathematically and scientifically. They go under such names as "shape calculus' and "generative-transformational grammars," but for our purposes it is only necessary to know that we are able to identify the common features. The second geometrical perspective is that of three-dimensional shapes, something akin to what architects refer to as "massing." Cultural historians have long noted that when people migrate from one region or even one continent to another, they carry with them their architectural aesthetics and prejudices. These are deeply seated and of considerable importance within the culture, particularly when it must defend itself against competing traditions in a new land. Settlement architecture may be in some cases at least, more conservative than that of the homeland. Buildings with certain traditional overall shapes and layouts are considered natural and fitting, while those with different geometries appear alien and discomforting. So certain shapes -- what I will refer to in this book as "form classes" -- must also be shared in order that a building be classified as a member of a familiar type.

Geometry alone, however, is insufficient to fully define members of a tradition of vernacular architecture such as the shotgun family. No vernacular tradition remains static through many decades. So, in addition to geometric similarity, there must be reasonable historical evidence that the transformations and changes which occurred were logical outgrowths of a previous stage of the tradition, and that those outgrowths occurred for important and identifiable reasons. If we cannot explain in social, economic or

technical terms why a single shotgun evolved into numerous other forms such as the Camelback house, we can make no authoritative claim to grouping the two forms together into a single tradition. Now all of this makes the concept of "housetype" somewhat problematic. Housetypes only make sense when they are considered together with "families of houses." Families are groups of housetypes which are linked to one-another through historical transformations. The different members of the family are housetypes, just as the proper members of a housetype are individual buildings. Each housetype bears a sufficient number of geometrical principles in common with others that upon careful comparison, it is obvious that no single member is explicable without reference to the common principles which it shares with all of the other members. That is, perhaps, an awkward way of saying that it is unreasonable to assume that any member of the type could have been invented independently, by chance alone, or by historical accident, rather than by direct reference to pre-existing members of the type.

Families, however, are a bit more difficult. There may well be sufficient geometrical differences between the various types of a family that it is not immediately obvious that they are geometrically, or even historically related to one another. Some elaborated types may even appear to be more akin to the houses of quite separate historical traditions than to the humble cottages which are their parents and grandparents. If those grandparents do not survive any longer, then working out the genealogy of a family of houses becomes even more complex. Our first reaction on being told that X housetype is actually a transformation of Z, may be to scoff and to ask, what they have in common with one another. This is where architectural history becomes interesting, and indeed, essential to a well-rounded understanding of the makeup of our cultural landscapes. More than anything else, architectural history is about processes and transformations.

This is not the place to delve into the methods required for demonstrating that members of an architectural family are historically related to one another. Sufficient to say that what is required is a database with specific and detailed geometric, social, and historical information on a sufficient number of

houses that they can be compared on many different points. This permits us to construct a longitudinal portrait of the development and transformations which occurred within the tradition. It also permits us to link the major transformations to important local, national and international trends which were occurring on much broader architectural stages – stages the size of nations or even continents. The changes we witness within our architectural family become fully understandable and logical when seen in light of other parallel changes which were occurring in other traditions across the country and beyond.

For this study of the shotgun house in New Orleans, I collected specific information on over one hundred and sixty shotgun related buildings. The time span was roughly 1800 through 1950, with most dated prior to 1860. Many of the buildings are still extant, but many others have disappeared. In addition to the buildings of the formal database, I also collected information and photography on many hundreds of additional shotguns. I collected historical information on shotgun-like houses going back through the eighteenth century of both sides of the Atlantic in those lands where the largest groups of immigrants to Louisiana came from. With LSU students working through the Fred B. Kniffen Cultural Resources Lab, largely sponsored by the Louisiana Division of Historic preservation, I was able to assemble detailed information of certain buildings. Old shotguns were inspected throughout the city, and architectural surveys such as those of the Historic District Landmarks Commission were collected and studied. Old maps and aerial photos were collected in order to help establish a historical geography for the shotgun in New Orleans. The result was one of the largest databases for any architectural type in New Orleans.

Typology

Let's begin by trying to set up some minimal requirements for the New Orleans Linear Cottage. We will first define what will be called a "base module." A base module is the minimal expression of an architectural tradition. It is the simplest example of the tradition which can stand by itself and be recognized as a proper house by those with competence in the local architectural traditions. In this case,

our first hypothesis for the definition of the base module is as follows: *a Linear Cottage base module is a single story vernacular house two or more rooms deep and (historically at least) one room wide. The roof ridge runs perpendicular to the front façade of the building, and that façade comprises its narrow end. The front façade of the house opens onto the street (waterway, path, major local communication artery).*

Of course, no sooner do you establish a set of formal criteria such as these, than some pundit tries to point out the errors in your ways of thinking. "Could there be a one-room linear cottage?" By our definition, such a structure might be called a "proto-linear cottage" or, on the other hand, it might be a kind of degradation of a real lineal cottage beyond the limits of what is normally socially acceptable in our community. Thus, it would not rise to the level of a full participant in the tradition. "Well then, how about a Greek Revival house in the shape of a Greek temple? Wouldn't that fit your criteria?" Ah, here you may have got me! Yes it might, if it were a vernacular form. What is this vernacular criterion? Those who study architecture from the vernacular perspective agree, pretty much, that vernacular buildings are those whose forms arise from the traditions of a a specific community, and not from the heads of architects, engineers, planners, other trained specialists, or foreigners. If our Greek revival house was designed by a trained specialist, or if it was commissioned in the community in imitation of a house from a distant community, such as New York, then it would not fit into the local vernacular tradition of New Orleans, and it would not be considered a participant in the local Linear Cottage tradition no matter how much like a shotgun house it appeared. It would be a borrowed element. There are many of these in and around New Orleans including houses which appear very much like those of the Linear Cottage tradition. But they aren't linear cottages because they are not historically or culturally connected with the local, gradually evolving tradition of linear cottages in Louisiana. They are cultural interlopers built to symbolize the worldly sophistication of some traveled or well-read person.

"Well, how about the roof pitch and the wall heights? Could the roof be flat, or steeply pitched or could it be a shed roof with only a single slope?" "Could the roof be hipped or gabled?" "Could walls a

story and a half tall be included in the Linear Cottage tradition?" Ah, now your questions are getting more difficult (and interesting). We specified that the Linear Cottage must have a roof ridge perpendicular to the front of the building and the major axis of communication. Since a flat roof does not have a ridge, we would discount such buildings in the absence of other compelling evidence for membership. A shed roof house still has its roof ridge, so it would fit under our geometrical blanket, and so would houses with either hipped or gabled roof ends because nothing was stated that would exclude them. Relative wall height would have to be limited to some standard, but we have not specified what that might be so, perhaps a shotgun with an elevated loft would fit within the Linear Cottage tradition. We would have to consider walls which are more than one story in height, but less than two, such as those with "parapets: built to elevate the height of the attic roof by a foot or more to make the loft into livable space. For now, let's hold this question in abeyance until we see what happens to the historical tradition and its transformations.

These issues aside, our conceptualization of the Louisiana Linear Cottage family of houses must now get a bit more complex. Our next consideration is that any house which can be shown to be derived from the original base modular house through some kind of logical transformation performed upon multiple houses of the local tradition may also be included within the Family tradition. In other words, if we set two single linear cottage plans down side by side and cover them with a single roof, or if we pile one linear cottage atop another one, and cover the both with a single roof, then those are logical transformations of the original cottage. They would become new types within an expanding repertoire of the Linear Cottage family of housetypes. A little later we will try to describe the major transformations and the social and other reasons why those transformations occurred.

Our typology is basically a vocabulary for talking about the most prominent forms of linear cottages. There are, perhaps, twelve basic kinds of common linear cottage in New Orleans, depending on how fine you wish to cut the cake. The dozen types I have selected rise to the level of recognition because

each of the types is itself represented by dozens or hundreds of individual houses, in some cases such as the Double, by thousands. Oh, and that reminds me that in order to keep our levels of analysis clear and distinct, in this book the names of Linear Cottage housetypes such as the Single, will be capitalized for ease of recognition.

One of the most common of housetypes in New Orleans is the Single. The Single spans the entire history of Linear Cottages in Louisiana. It appears about the year 1800 and continues through the present. Singles come in a wide variety of shapes and sizes, but in every case they are only a single room wide and a single story tall. They may be two rooms deep on the lot, or seven. Some have additions attached to their rears, but any substantial additions to their sides would transform them into another type. At first, many singles were constructed as impermanent refugee housing, but well-built permanent forms were also constructed, almost from the beginning. Because they have enjoyed such longevity, Singles have been decorated in every one of the popular architectural styles common to vernacular houses in New Orleans, since the end of the colonial period. Many were left completely undecorated as well. They all will be described later in the section on the history of the linear cottage.





Figs. 4, 5. Tiny Rural Shotgun Houses in Sunshine, Iberville Parish, East Bank. They measure about ten feet in width. Photo by author about 1967. None survive today.

One additional bit of information is relevant to understanding the history of the Single. There are actually two basic sizes of Single in the early years of Linear Cottage construction in New Orleans. One sub-type had rooms fourteen to eighteen feet in width. The other had tiny rooms, only nine to thirteen feet wide. This latter type seems to violate a basic rule of Euro-American house layout. Such tiny, usually near-square rooms are restrictive and produce a psychological feeling of claustrophobia. Most Euro-Americans are almost immediately uncomfortable on entering such as house, and the thought of living in one would be equivalent to the possibility of trying to live in a closet. Even the houses of poor peasants in France and England in the settlement period had rooms fifteen or more feet in width. Thus, it appears that it is something other than simple poverty which accounts for the tiny Linear Cottages of New Orleans in the first several decades of the nineteenth century. And, these tiny houses were still being built through the middle of the twentieth century in certain rural communities of Louisiana. They comprise our first clue to the origins of the Linear Cottage.

A LINEAR COTTAGE / SHOTGUN TYPOLOGY FOR NEW ORLEANS

1. Shotgun singles.





Bracketed Singles w. Italianate style doors (c. 1880-1940)

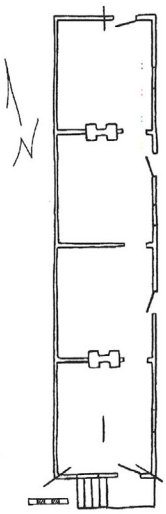


Figure 65a. Plan of a shotgun house, frame construction, New Orleans.

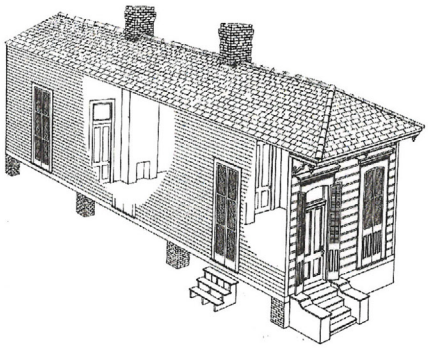
Figure 65b. Cross section of shotgun house. (From John Michael Vlach, "Shotgun Houses," *Natural History*, LXXXVI [1977].)



Greek Revival Style



Bungalow Style (c.1920-40s)



Greek Revival Style singles (c. 1835-1860).



Clouet St., Marigny



Poland St., Bywater



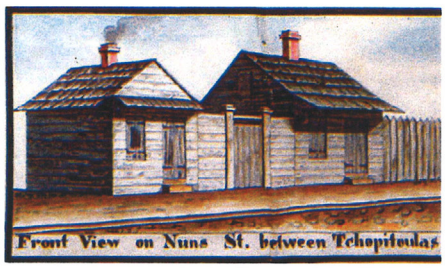
601 Lesseps, Bywater.



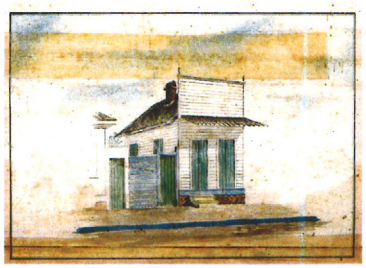
Mid 20th century 9th Ward style shotgun Single



Eastlake Style Gable on Hip with Porch (c. 1880-1940).



NONA 053.013. A 1820s tiny shotgun Lower Garden District.



2 bay store on Treme St. NONA 045.008.



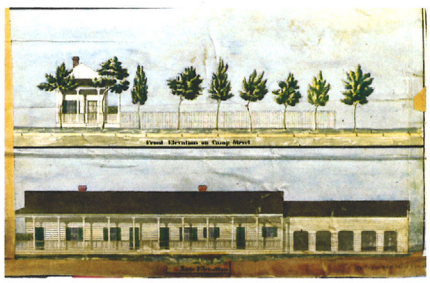
Wetzel's Gas Station, Early 20th Cent. Photo by Mugnier (LSMA)



1830 1 bay gable with Add-on galleries NONA 065.085.



1830s single on Craps NONA 094.023 .

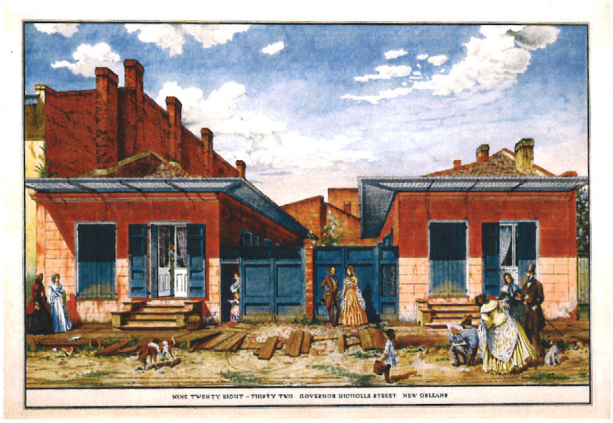


2709 Camp St. late 1840s side-gallery shotgun. NONA 028.022.



Plan.

2. Appentis (shed roof) Cottage (c.1790-1840):



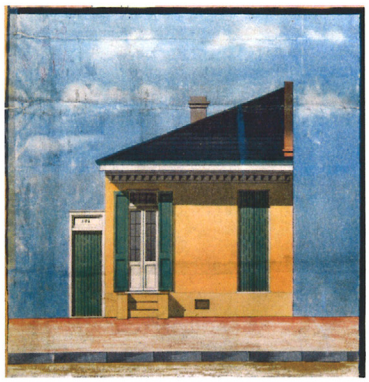
Mirror-image Appentis cottages at 928 and Gov. Nichols. Hermann cottages const. 1832. Watercolor by Boyd Cruise, 1937.



The "Cajun Swamp Shop," 631 Bourbon 932 Built 1801.



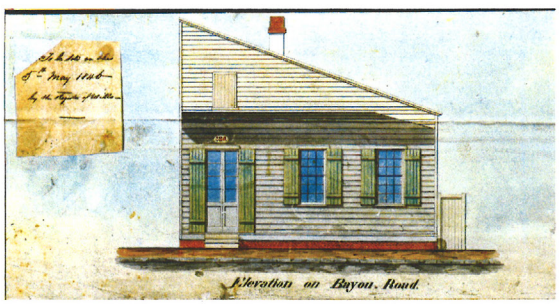
2 bay c. 1830 appentis cottage in Treme. NONA 100.016



2 bay c. 1930 appentis single in Treme. NONA 090.014



2 bay c. 1830 appentis w.side gallery on Spain. NONA 038.065.

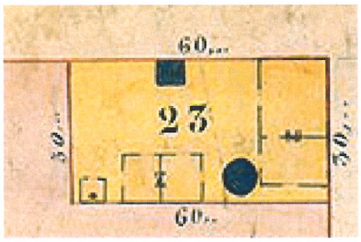


Ca. 1846 3-bay appentis on Bayou Road NONA 006.039.



915 St. Phillips. 3-bay appentis cottage Ca. 1820.





Ca. 1840 Appentis cottage corner Tonti and Barracks. NONA 004.016

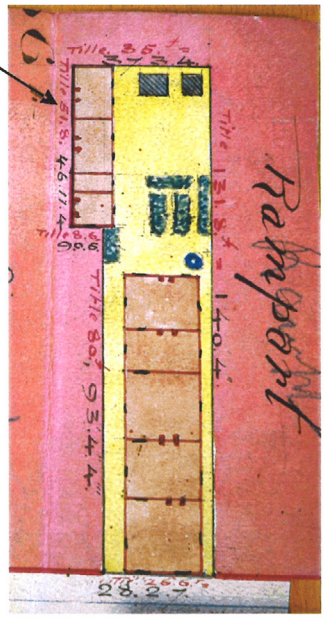
3. Creole Maisonette Single (Ca. 1805 - 1840). Brick or *briquette-entre-poteaux*, architrave, hip roof, *abat vent*, double doors on street.



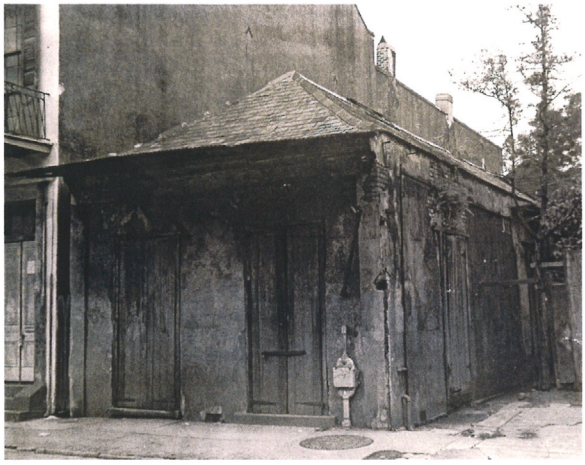
Helen Lepage House. Built by Haitian Refugee,

Pierre Roup in 1823.

Rental rooms



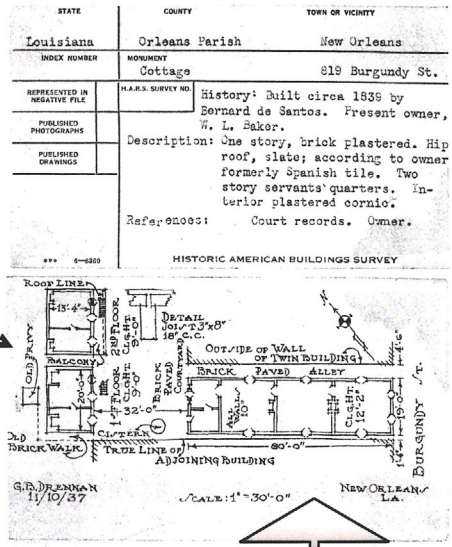
Plan of Lepage House



Baker Cottage, (c. 1827) Plan reconstructed.

HABS plan of Baker Cottage, 1827.

Two story Kitchen:



STATE	COUNTY	TOWN OR VICINITY
Louisiana	Orleans Parish	New Orleans
INDEX NUMBER	MONUMENT	
	Cottage	819 Burgundy St.
REPRESENTED IN NEGATIVE FILE	H.A.B.S. SURVEY NO.	History: Built circa 1839 by Bernard de Santos. Present owner, W. L. Baker.
PUBLISHED PHOTOGRAPHS		Description: One story, brick plastered. Hip roof, slate; according to owner formerly Spanish tile. Two story servants' quarters. Interior plastered cornic.
PUBLISHED DRAWINGS		References: Court records. Owner.

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

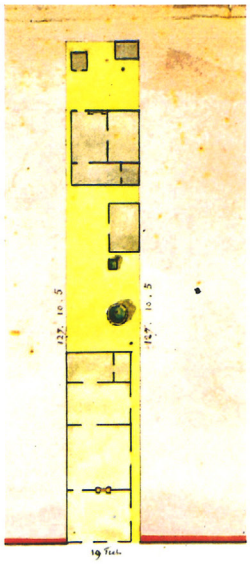
Single story house:

BAKER COTTAGE. BUILT BY J.B. BREAS FOR MICHEL FORTIER. C. 1827.

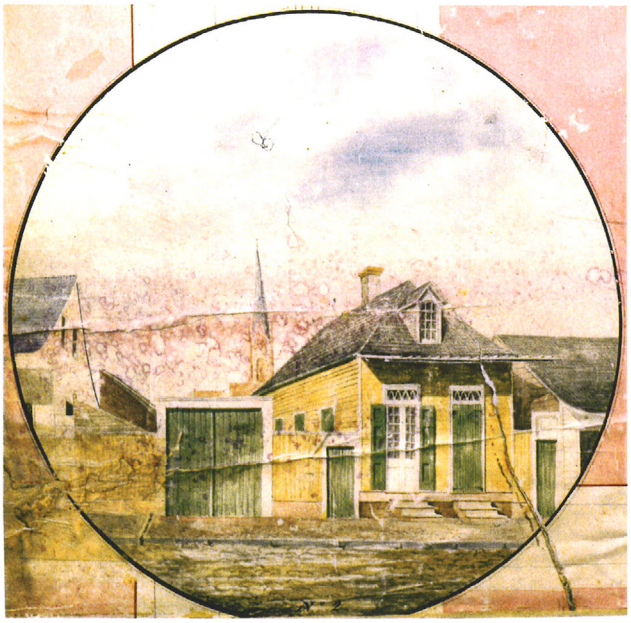
Maisonettes of the 1820s and 30s decades: They were built in both brick and frame:



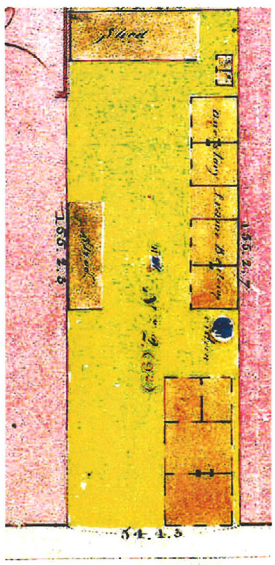
c. 1820s maisonette on St. Claude in Tremé.



Plan of the maisonette
NONA 032.036.



Clapboard Maisonette with dormer in Marigny
Ca. 1830. This illustrates how The Creole maisonette is evolving smoothly into the shotgun house in the Creole faubourgs.



Plan of maisonette on Marigny St.
NONA 065.003.

4. Duplex Houses (2 story shotguns).



Rampart Street, duplex shotgun with Creole Cottage and appentis single, ca. 1830s. NONA 045.069.



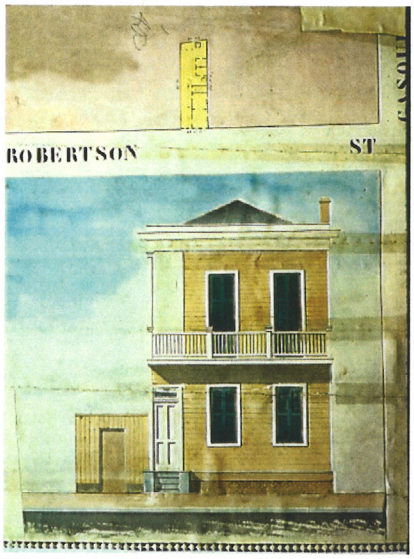
Side gallery duplex ca. 1850, on Pacaniers Street. NONA 063.009



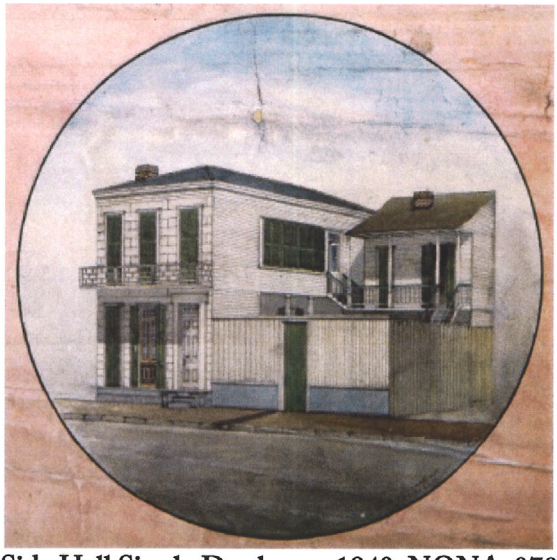
Northshore duplex house on Moss St. 2005.



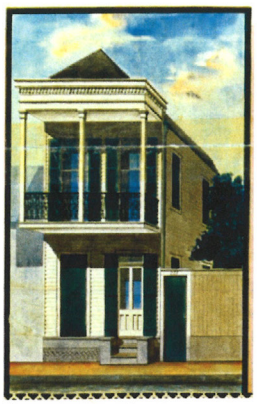
Negro tenements,in Greek Revival style. Walker Evans Photo, 1936.

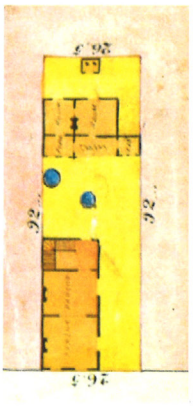


Duplex on Robinson St. NONA.



Side Hall Single Duplex ca. 1840. NONA 070.019. 1400 blk. Villere.





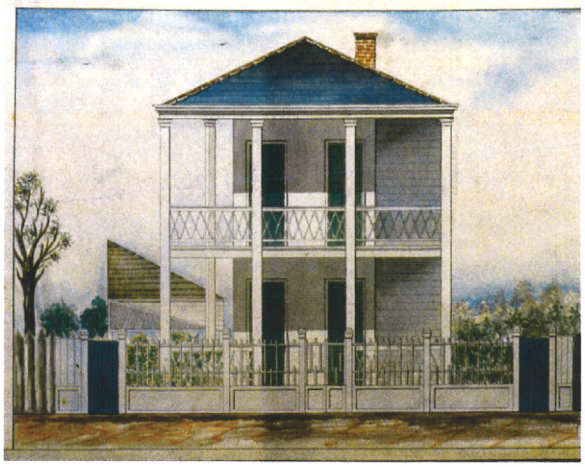
Greek Revival Duplex, 1500 block of Ursulines
Ca. 1850. NONA 002.014.



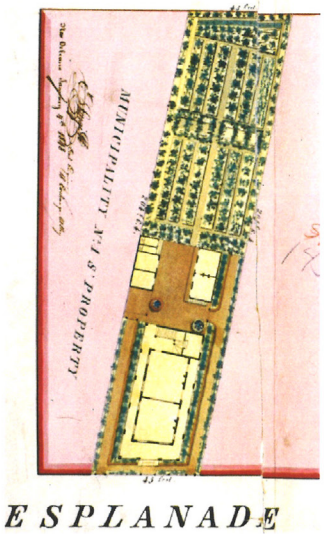
Post Katrina Duplex in bungaloid style,
3300 block Bienville.



Duplex in the Irish Channel



North Shore Duplex Single, 1300 block, Esplanade.



Plan.



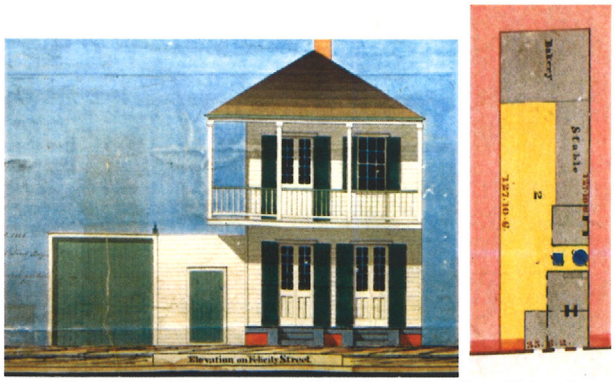
Bracketed Duplex, 901 Aline in the Irish Channel.



A modern Duplex.



Ca. 1830s Duplex with balcony in the Irish Channel. NONA 021.065.



Ca 1830s Duplex on Felicity, Garden District. NONA 049.035.



923/29 Dauphine St. Appentis Duplex Single. 19th Cent. Harpers Magazine.



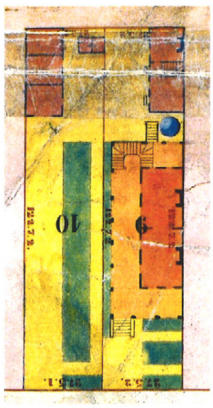
A duplex single on Burgundy.

5. 3-bay Side Hall and Side Gallery Linear Cottages, 1810s to present.

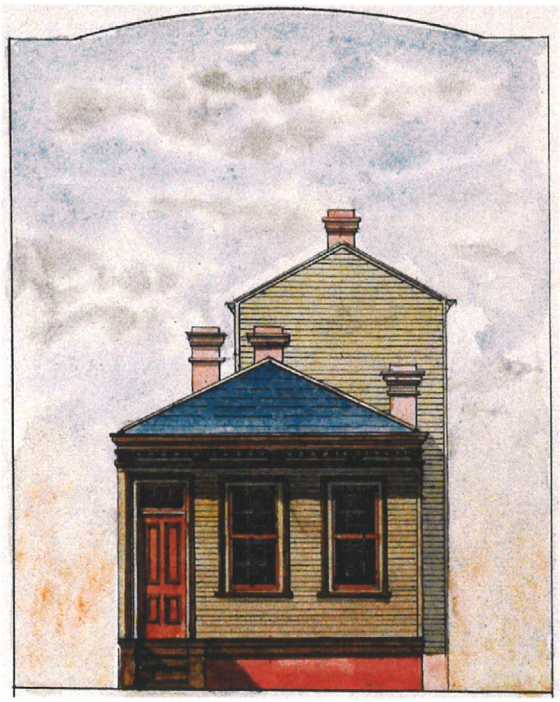


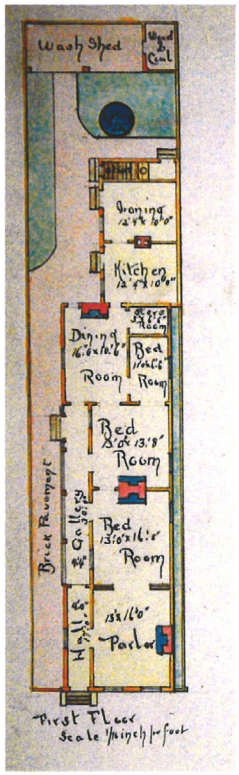
c.1890 side hall bracketed Victorian cottage sketched by Lloyd Vogt.



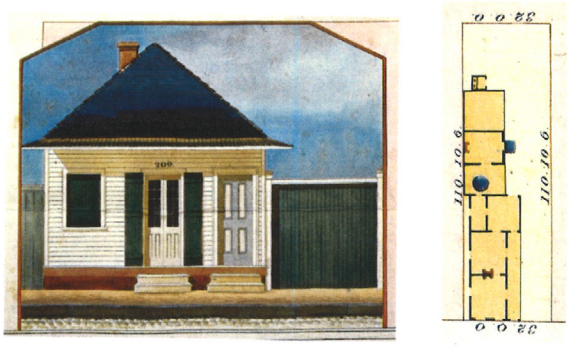


c. 1840 Side Gallery Greek Revival shotgun with plan. NONA 088.016.

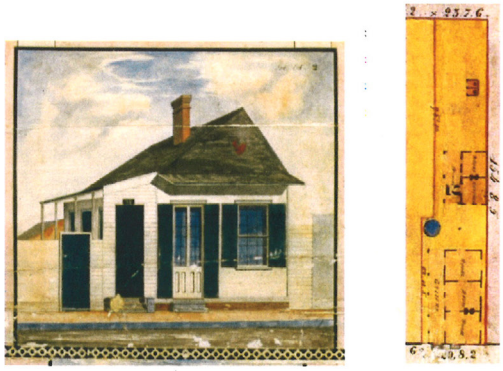




James Feret Side Hall Single on St. Claude with 2-story Kitchen. 1890. SEAA.

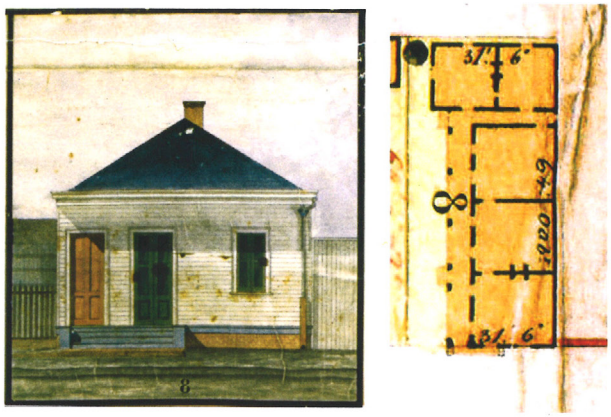


C.1845 Side Hall on Elisian Fields. NONA 038.063.

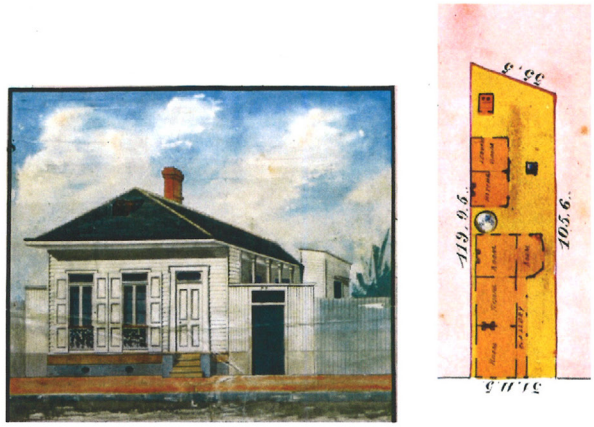


Side gallery Appenti on Spain. NONA 038.065

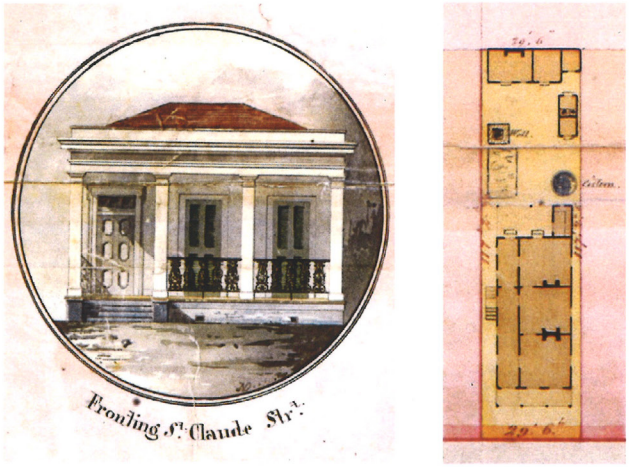
C. 1840.



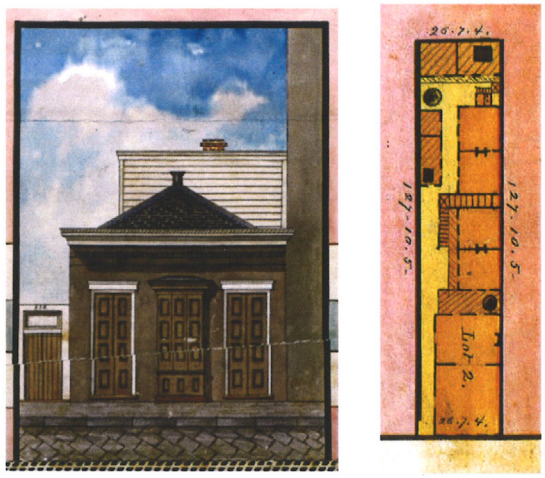
C. 1860 Side Gal. on 8th St. NONA 049.063.



C. 1845 Side Gal. on Columbus. NONA 078.047.



Greek Revival Side Hall on St. Claude c. 1850.
NONA 048.067.



C. 1850 single on Canal Street with rental units.
NONA 079.001.

6. North Shore Open Gallery Cottages:



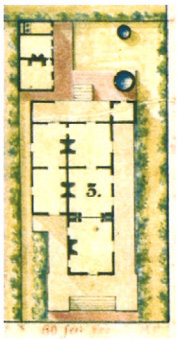
Eastlake style N.S. shotgun, PRC photo.



North Shore Duplex on Moss Street.



1836 cottage on Euterpe designed by James Wilson.
NONA 023.060. & 042.015.

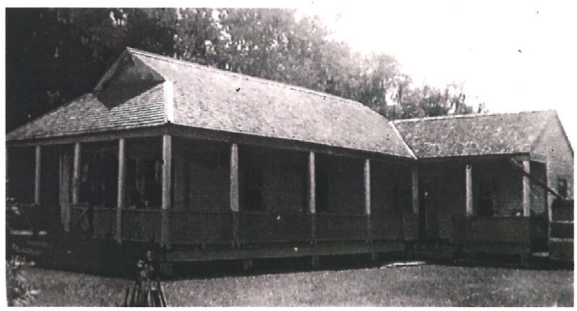




Northshore cottage, Mandeville, 1980.



Northshore house in Abida Springs. John Vlach.



Northshore cottage, Knipmeyer, 1975.



North Shore type Single, 650 Angela St. Arabi.

7. Linear Cottages Doubles.

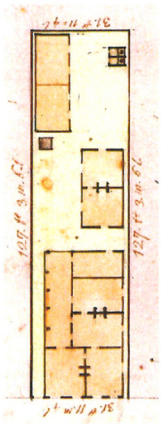


Fazende Cottage, 831 St. Phillip St. Very Early 19th Century. Note 1810-1820 architrave surround.

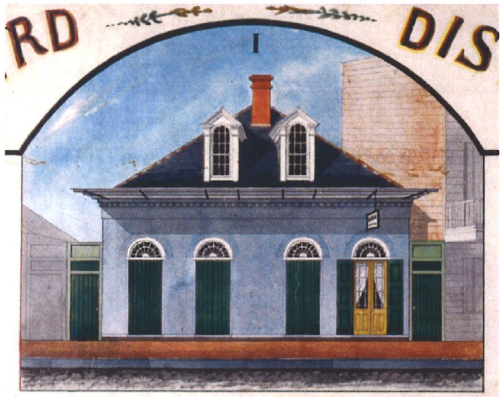


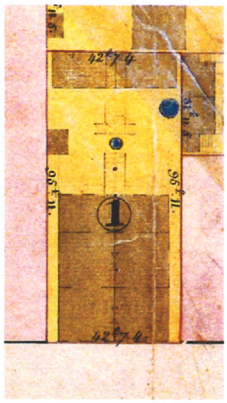
Double Linear cottage with extended roof at 1041/43 Dauphine in the French Quarter.





C. 1810 Phillipon Cottage, 1016 Dauphine St. NONA 044.035. Note pre-double plan for rental.





An 1830 period double maisonette, Frenchman St. NONA 048.002.



Old briquette-entre-poteaux double rebuilt as a larger structure after 1880. 1600 block, Dumaine -- razed.



Typical shotgun of the 1870 era -- early Italianate styling. 930/932 Ursulines.



A high Italianate Double on 4th St. 1870s or 1880s.



A late "Italianate" bracketed double, 3635 Constance in the Irish Channel – 1880s or 1890s.



Eastlake double with spindle band, quoins and turned colonnettes.



Neoclassical Revival, craftsman type double ca. 1900-1910. Bywater.



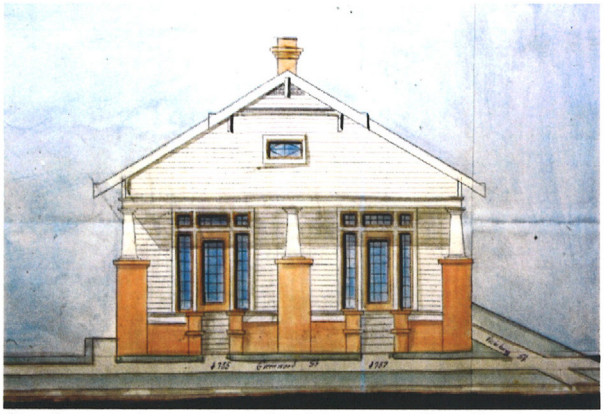
Bracketed double ca. 1900. Holy Cross.



Raised Craftsman Double. Carrollton.



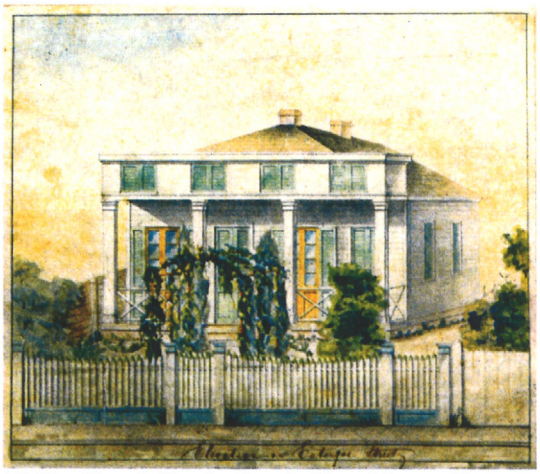
Bungalow style double, ca. 1930, 1401 St. Mary St.



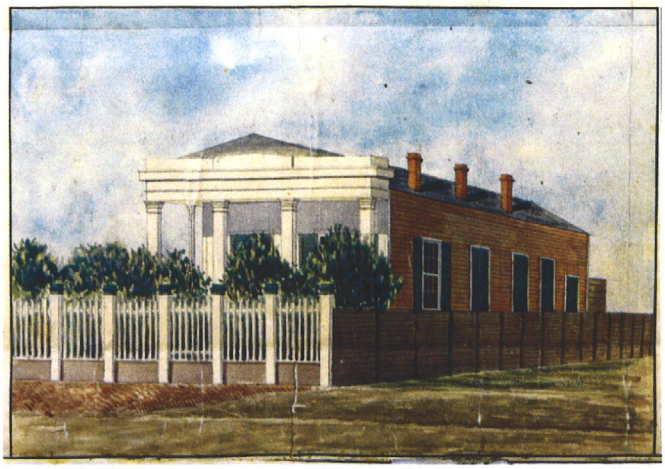
Craftsman bungalow double, near City Park on Greenwood, ca. 1910. NONA 111.001.



Greek Revival style double. Ca. 1860. Dorgenois. NONA 005.023.



1840s Greek Revival style Double on Euturpe. NONA 043.005.



1860s high Italianate style, 2100 block, Gov. Nichols. NONA 044.083.



Bracket style Italianate double, corner Clouet and Dauphine, Bywater, 2004 photo. Ca. 1885.

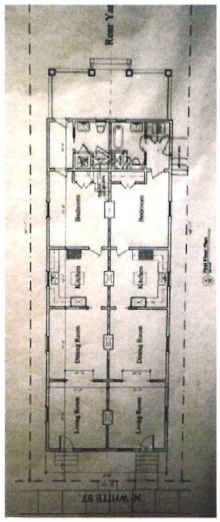


Abandoned Ca. 1900 bracket style double 808/810 Delery in Holy Cross.

8. Camelback: Singles, Side Halls, and Doubles (1865 - present).



Camelback Double with sidesaddle hump, 921 White Street in Tremé.



Plan after renovation.



Single Camelback 927 Fourth St. High Bracket Style, ca. 1880-1900.



Side Hall Camelback in High Bracket Style, 1123 Louisiana Ave.



1022 Dauphine single.



1500 block, St. Philip with *appentis* hump.



2325 Royal St. double in Marigny. Sidesaddle hump.



3-Bay with Katrina wind damage, St. Claude Ave.



Restored Eastlake double in aqua on Gayoso.



Bracket style Single Camelback in Irish Channel.



Classic Revival Style single, 3222 Baudin near Jeff Davis. Abandoned.



Bargeboard Single with frame hump. Lower 9th Ward, St. Claude Ave. Classical Revival style.



730 Delery St. in Holy Cross. They are still Building new Camelbacks.



Double at 810/812 Ida at Orleans Ave. Sign reads, "Lake Scott, No Fishing!" Flooding was higher that porch level.



Pseudo-Camelback, in Bracket and Craftsman style, at 2517 St. Ann. Requesting food drop after Katrina.



Patriotic side gallery Camelback in Arabi, 231 Arabi.

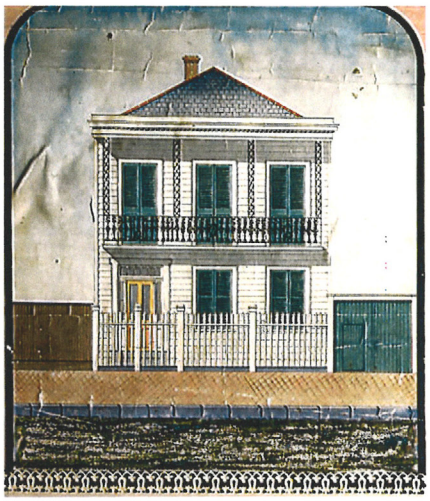


Proto-Camelback with offset rear kitchen, Arabi.

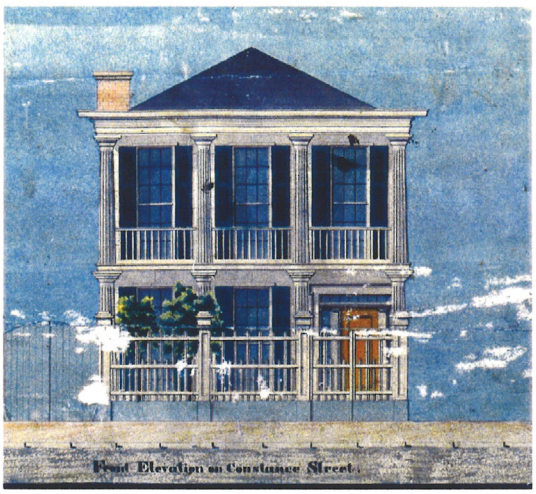
9. Fourplexes and Creole Townhouses:



Negro Tenement, 1936. Walker Evans Photo.



Three bay Duplex on Chippewa.



Side Hall Creole Townhouse in Greek Revival Décor, ca. 1835. NONA 043.023.



Ca. 1840 Side Hall Creole Townhouse on Esplanade. NONA 002.004.

10. Raised Bungalows and Singles:



Raised Double Bungalow on Angela St., Arabi.



Raised Central Hall Bungalow, Arabi



746 Louisiana Avenue. Raised Bungalow converted to Fourplex.



3800 block, Franklin. Raised Craftsman Double.



1063 Moss Street, Eastlake Double.



1151 Moss St. Raised Craftsman Single.



3600 block of Gentilly Blvd. Raised Craftsman Bungalow, a single family residence. Though not Part of the Linear Cottage Vernacular tradition, This common early 20th century housetype was more popular in New Orleans because of its localizing linear cottage form.



Raised Single Shotgun. N. Claiborne at Painters.

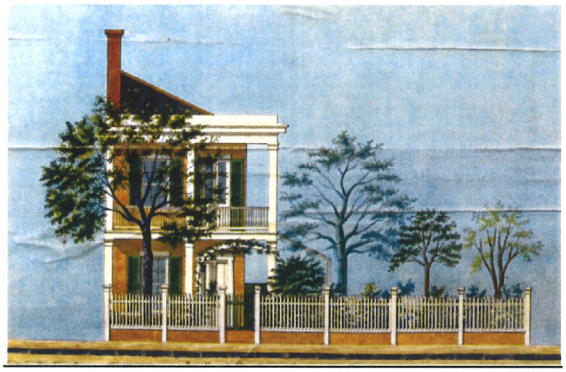


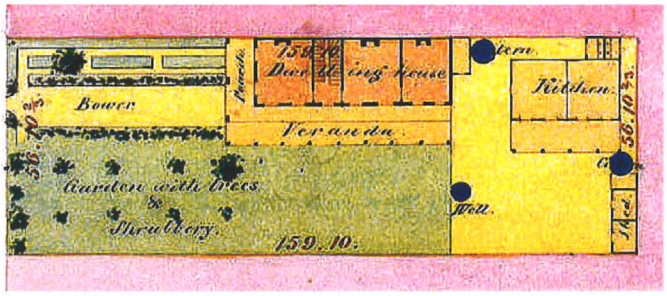
Raised Craftsman Double off Carrolton near City Park.



Early 20th Cent. Bracketed Craftsman style Corner Storehouse.

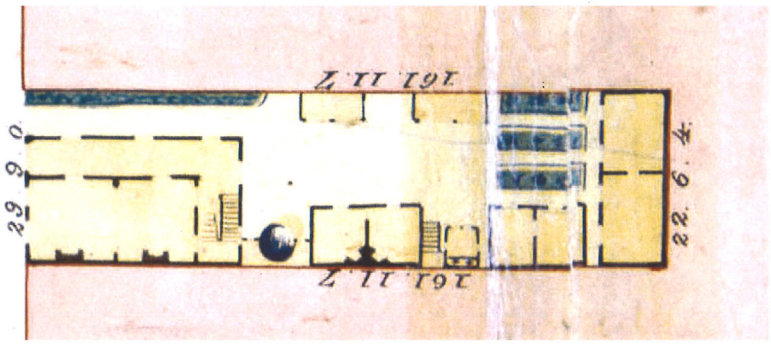
11. Creolized Townhouses and Storehouses in the Linear Cottage Tradition:





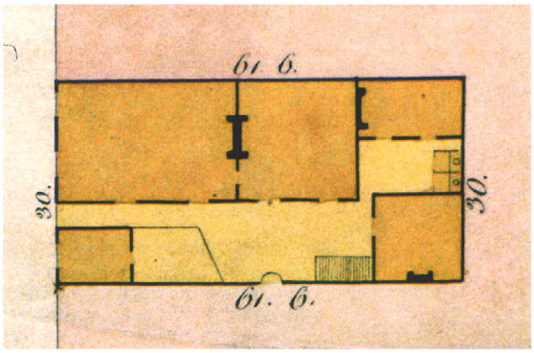
Proto-Creole Townhouse --a Side-Gallery Duplex with Appentis roof in Greek Revival dress, Ca. 1840. NONA 006.035.





Ca. 1840 Creole style Townhouse on Esplanade. NONA 002.004.





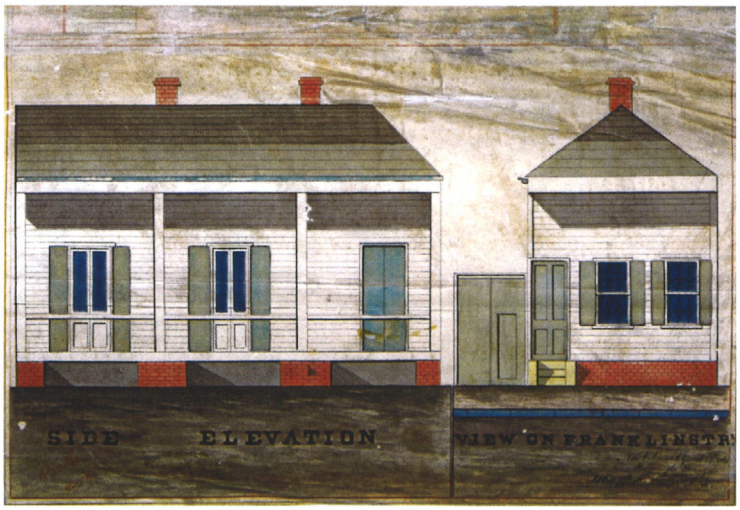
Colonial style ca. 1800 Appentis Storehouse, 800 block of St. Louis. NONA 095.023.

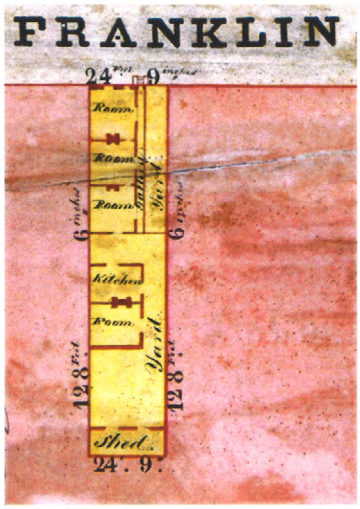


Creole Townhouse in Greek Revival Style on Basin Street. Photo. By Ricuitti, 1938.

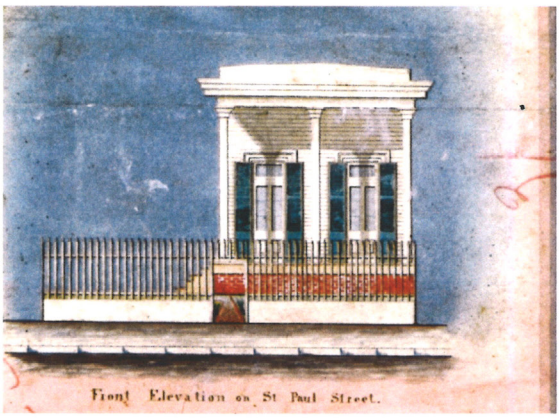
12. Unusual and Eclectic Linear Cottages:

A. Unusually Tall Shotgun Houses.





Ca. 1850 tall Shotgun on Loyolla Ave. NONA 052.054.





Ca. 1840 sTall Single in Greek Revival, on St. Paul Street. NONA 031.031.





Side Gallery Shotgun with loft on Brainard. Ca. 1840s. NONA 088.016.





One bay clapboard shotgun on Music St. in New Marigny. NONA 047.047.

V. ARCHITECTURE WITHOUT WALLS:

Until now our discussion has proceeded on the basis of the common assumptions about architecture which most architectural historians make. We configure our thoughts through peculiar and familiar learned patterns and it is hard to step outside of these conceptual traditions when we undertake a new study. If anything, architecture is about the physicality of the structures we erect. It is all about the manipulation of walls, roofs, and floors, and the decoration of entrances, staircases, and other parts of the building. It is the venue in which architects gather to work, the media that they are paid to work in, and the lens through which they view their subjects. Architectural vocabulary identifies popular types and styles, so to speak about American buildings without this vocabulary is almost inconceivable. Though it may sound presumptuous, I would like to suggest the possibility that we will never fully understand complex architectural traditions -- their origins and transformations -- if we remain fixed within the mold of the vocabulary of the architect. We need to step outside of this conceptual cage to view architecture from a new and different perspective. Let's take an example.

The Standard History of the Shotgun House

There is an accepted history of the shotgun house which has been popularized by almost every New Orleans architectural historian. As an academic exercise it begins with the work of Sam Wilson, Jr. FAIA. -- the dean of local architectural historians. He was trained as an architect and he taught at Tulane University in the School of Architecture in the 1920s. Wilson's approach to architectural history has been followed by most of the prominent architectural historians of the Crescent City: Sally Kittridge Reeves, Roulhac Toledano, Mary Louise Christovich, Malcolm Heard, Ellen Weiss, Karen Kingsley, and others. All basically agree on several crucial points:

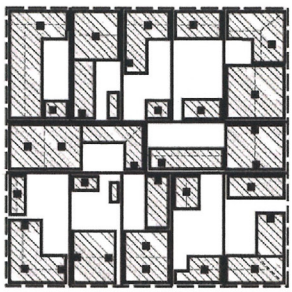
The shotgun house is said to find its origins in the late 1830s and the 1840s as a result of the progressive narrowing of city lots (Wilson, Sam Jr. 1968. *The Vieux Carré New Orleans, Its Plan, Its*

Growth, Its Architecture. New Orleans: City of New Orleans: 125). While the standard French colonial lot had been about sixty-four feet wide, by the early nineteenth century these lots had been progressive subdivided because of French inheritance laws which required that every child receive an equal portion of the family inheritance. By the 1830s, lots had been divided into 32 foot wide, 21 foot wide or even 16 foot wide strips, still often 120 or 150 French feet deep.



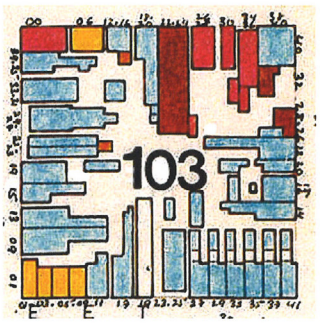
French-colonial Block

Ca. 1760



Spanish-colonial Block

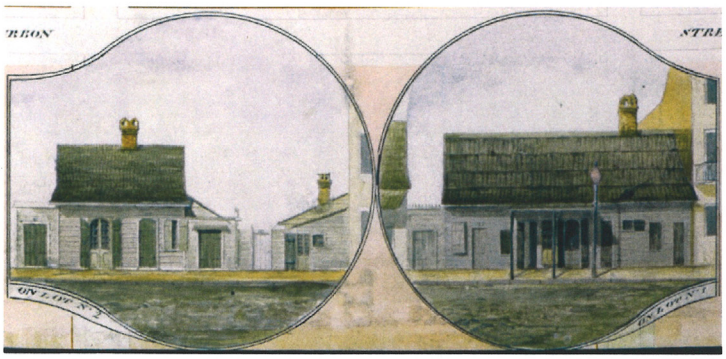
Ca. 1800



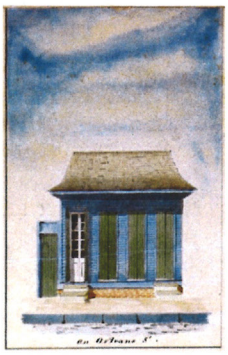
French Quarter Square 103 Ca. 1955

In 1955

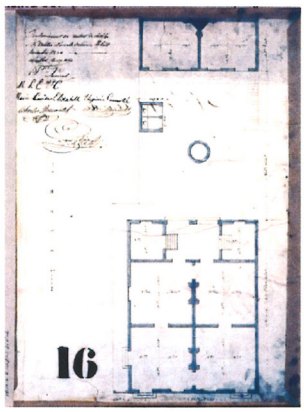
Throughout the Spanish colonial period the standard small house of New Orleans had been the Creole cottage. There were two basic types. One was a gable sided cottage with two near-square rooms opening onto the street. Behind these were two more rooms, also square, and behind that a cabinet-loggia range of rooms.



Colonial style Creole Cottages on Conti.
NONA 035.057.

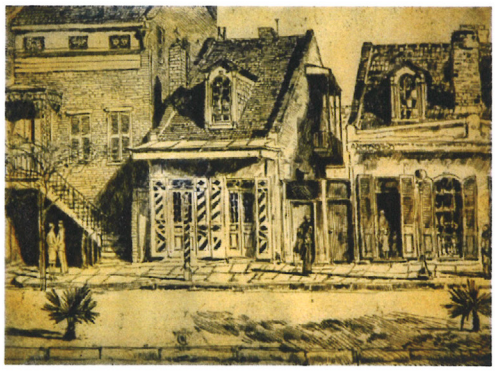


Standard Creole Cottage in Treme.
NONA 006.005.

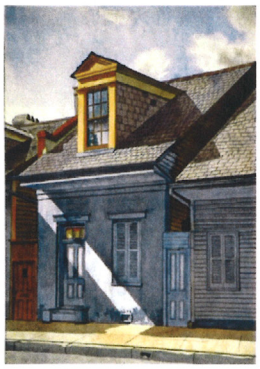


Plan of an 1830 Creole Cottage.
NONA 015.010

A kitchen and service buildings were placed as detached structures behind the main building. These houses were generally about thirty-two to thirty-six feet wide on the street. There were also half versions of the Creole cottage, only a single room deep or a single room wide. The roof ridges of all gabled Creole cottages were parallel to the front of the house and the street.



830 N. Rampart by Childe Hassam, 1927. An 1830s era half Creole Cottage. These buildings are extant.



1032 St. Louis Single by Boyd Cruise, 1937.



Bozant-Hart House, 615 Erato St. ca. 1836. Photo by author, 1981. Razed

The second form of Creole cottage was a hip-roofed "*maisonette,*" with the much the same floorplan as its enormously popular the gabled roofed cousin.



Maisonette, 1457 Pauger in Marigny. Photo by Author, 2008.



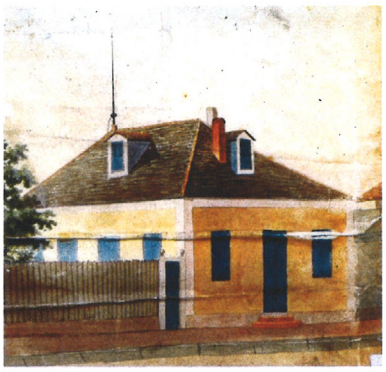
Colonial Maisonette, 1028 Ursulines. Razed in 1949. Courtesy VCC.

According to the Standard History, during the 1830s and 1840s residents began to experiment with new forms of houses. Because archival records do not document shotgun houses much before about

1840, they "probably did not exist." As the population of New Orleans began to search for ways of expanding their modest sized Creole cottages, some turned their narrow cottages sideways on the lot, and expanded them towards the rear. Thus, single Creole cottage maisonettes became the prototypes for a new kind of linear cottage.



A four-bay maisonette on Moreau (Chartres St. in Marigny), ca 1820. NONA 091.026.



A 1820s era maisonette on Esplanade at Rampart streets in Tremé. NONA 028.044.

Longer and longer cottages, with their narrow ends facing the front, were the result. Most of these were one story high with the roof ridges now perpendicular to the street.



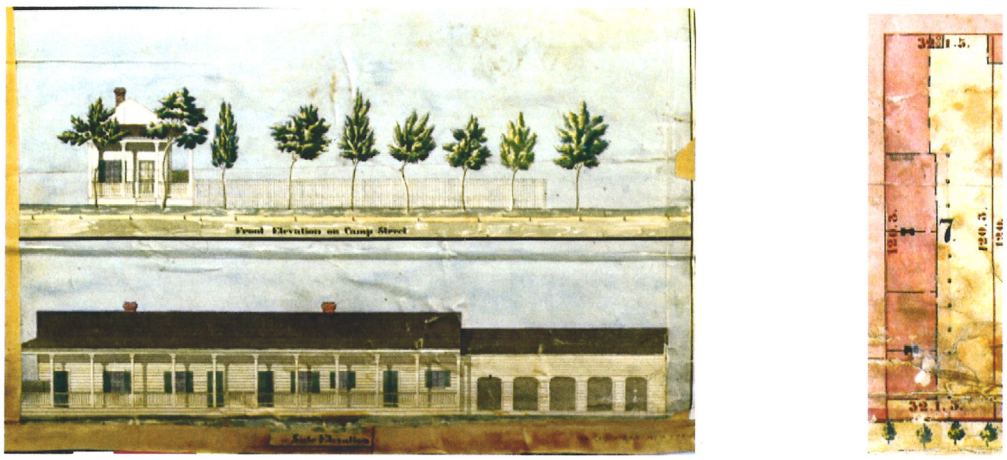
Baker Cottage painted by Boyd Cruise, 1937. Courtesy La. State Museum Archives.



Fazende Cottage 831 St. Philip, ca. 1808. Old photo courtesy Vieux Carré Commission.

According to historian Sally Reeves, after the Civil War, the growth of the savings and loan industry stimulated demand for relatively inexpensive single-family houses. At first these new cottages were relatively small – two or three rooms deep. Soon, however, artisan and working class families could afford

to purchase linear wooden houses seventy to ninety feet long (four to six rooms). The [Creole Cottage] type proliferated throughout the city for a half century until it began to evolve into the shotgun about 1845. Land developers began to build rows and entire blocks of nearly identical shotgun houses.



Elevations and Plan of late 1840s Single Shotgun house with a side gallery and rear stable, 2709 Camp St. NONA 028.022.

Reconsidering Architectural History

The Standard History sounds fine as far as it goes, but upon close consideration several problems arise. It fails to explain some of the most intriguing questions raised by the remarkable history of the Linear Cottage. Most importantly, how exactly was this lowly cottage which began life as a temporary fringe architecture around the margins of the city able to leap across social, class, and ethnic lines and become adopted by people of all walks of life beginning in the 1840s and 1850s? This is one of the most amazing instances of architectural expansion of any American vernacular building type and it has never been explained or even examined in detail. The only instance of an architectural florescence of comparable proportions to my knowledge is the adoption of the Green and Green style Craftsman Cottage beginning in Los Angeles in the first decades of the twentieth century, and that is an example of imitation of the "polite" or high style designs of successful architects rather than the adoption of a tiny folk form by

architects and architectural pattern book publishers. The event renders New Orleans's architectural history unique in the United States.

The Standard History also fails to explore the origins of the shotgun house prior to 1840, as if the linear cottage suddenly and magically appeared full-blown from the mind of James Gallier or James Dakin about 1835. A more damaging limitation is that the theory ignores, and therefore devalues, the role played by African-Americans and Free People of Color in the development of the nineteenth century shotgun in New Orleans.

I do not wish to undervalue the work of the architectural historians of New Orleans. They have accomplished amazing things, gathered prodigious amounts of information, and they have explained many of the remarkable features of the architecture of New Orleans. For example, Sam Wilson Jr. was able to demonstrate that many of the early buildings of New Orleans were the work of French architects conforming to a generalized French colonial style of the Louis XV period, and later. To accomplish these feats, the local architects and historians have had to train themselves to read eighteenth and nineteenth century hand-written French and Spanish documents. They have gathered important documents from European archives. They have gone to great lengths to preserve and to organize the enormous treasure trove of deteriorating historic documents and illustrations, providing New Orleans with the very best record of its early architecture of any city in the United States, and perhaps, any city in the hemisphere. No student of New Orleans history and culture can avoid a profound dependence on the record which they have established. It is a pleasure to follow in their footsteps and to attempt to build modestly upon what they began.

But this is not to claim that as a group, they have not had certain limitations. Like most trained architectural historians they have generally emphasized high style architecture over the vernacular and ornate architecture over the less well decorated. Though they use the term "Creole architecture," they have generally avoided activating the important theoretical concept of creolization as an analytical tool which might have better accounted for distinctive aspects of New Orleans's unique historic built

environments. As a group, they have been geographically conservative and not particularly interested in setting the development of the architecture of New Orleans into the broader arena of circum-Atlantic colonial architectural history. Their focus has remained rather close to home. Despite the fact that in New Orleans, the cultural currents which flowed back and forth between different levels of design practice were substantial and continuous, the historians preferred to focus upon the work of highly visible architects rather than the accomplishments of anonymous designer-builders. Finally, perhaps because they have been such a close-knit group of scholars, they have remained reticent to strike out in new directions and to critically reinterpret the work of those who have come before them. This being a personal perspective, it is now time for this author to take up the gauntlet and to explore what a different kind of Crescent City architectural history might have to offer us. No better test case might be raised than that of the linear cottage and its principal participant, the shotgun house.

An Anthropological Architecture

There may be completely novel way of considering traditions of New Orleans architecture. I believe that we are in error when we attempt to bring the perspective of academic architectural history to bear on vernacular architecture. They function differently, so if we set aside the fundamental operating principles of vernacular architecture in the name of architectural history, we weaken the toolkit of analytical conceptions and explanations. Because New Orleans is probably the best single case of the historic mutual interaction between these levels of architectural practice, we cannot account for the architecture of this special place without a consideration of the functioning of, and interactions between, *all* of the various levels of building. Vernacular architecture arises from a different set of conventions and motivations than the architecture of trained designers and architects does.

An anthropological architecture assumes from the beginning that since the formulas for the design of the well-formed house are shared in the minds of many members of the community, then that is

where we must begin our story of the dynamics of tradition. These traditions do not change randomly or accidentally. Rather, they are experimented with and modified for very practical reasons which are well understood by members of the folk community. Configurations of architecture are based in, and arise out of, the needs and perceptions and values of common people -- real people making quite logical decisions, given their historical and cultural frames of reference.

Houses are really social engines. They are designed first to meet the special needs of people who reside in specific social circumstances. If we neglect their social worlds in our architectural histories, then we lose half of the reasons for the existence of, and the changes in, these traditions. In a word, what is required is the "emic" perspective --that is, the insider's perspective. [The emic is opposed to an "etic" view which is imposed by the outsider from another culture.]

As an experiment, let's consider a vision of architecture which makes little or no reference to walls, roofs, floors, and decoration. It places these in the position of being effects rather than principal causal factors in the makeup of architectural traditions. Our vision begins with an examination of the social ground rules and values which govern the daily patterns of family and community interrelationships. It asks about the typical expected patterns of relationships between husbands and wives, parents and children, guests and hosts, and members of extended families. It asks about variations in family forms, and in village or neighborhood politics, and interethnic relationships, and religious groups, and all of the other social differences which might potentially be architecturally relevant. Equally as important, it asks about family and neighborhood economies. Who produces what? What kinds of exchanges occur? What are the economic roles of men and women and children, and how are those roles carried out?

A socio-architectural methodology relies upon our abilities to construct a model of the meanings of each popular form of house in relation to others. Is there a kind of relevant architectural aesthetic which we can decode and which is based in the social dynamics of the local community? What are the scales of value that people use to rank the typical houses of their neighborhoods? What do houses tell us

about their owners and renters, and how do people of the community read their architecture as social information?

All of this may sound like a pretty tall order for an architectural historian, but as we will see, many architectural themes are poorly explained in the absence of such knowledge. People use their houses as symbols of obvious and appropriate social information and social identity. Each building may be seen as a kind of locus which fixes its owners and residents within the complex web of social, cultural, and economic differentiation. Henry Glassie and others have written perceptively about some of the forces which arise in communities to shape architectural forms, and particularly changes in vernacular architecture resulting from social change. Because important social changes were occurring almost continuously in New Orleans during the dynamic nineteenth century, the perspective he helped to pioneer should be of benefit in helping us to interpret the complex rise of the linear cottage during that century.

In historical perspective, people seldom if ever create their own architectural forms from scratch. Rather they inherit traditional forms and the values which accompany spatially-organized lifeways. The social traditions which support vernacular houses are *natal* in the sense that we are born into them. As we are socialized, they become part of us at a very intimate level. Once internalized, they are held tenaciously. It turns out that natal mental models are particularly important for long-distant migrants who find themselves living in entirely new settings and new climates. The importance of traditional community architecture is often magnified in a strange land. Colonial histories are rife with accounts of how people from places far removed and climatically very different from those in which they settled, continued to construct houses which appeared just like those of their homelands. Foreign traditions persist in the new lands often for many decades or even centuries. People do not give up their natal architectures lightly. Perhaps they hold on to these important cultural patterns even more strongly when experiencing a new and somewhat hostile environment, such as a colonial place. This is something we need to consider as we interpret the "Creole" architectures of Louisiana and the Gulf Coast.

One of the first well researched and well theorized expressions of the anthropological approach to domestic architecture is found in the study of the Kabyle (North African) house by the French anthropologist, Pierre Bourdieu (1971). To Bourdieu, the house is all about the channeling of space into activity zones which are also symbolic zones for appropriate behaviors and which are defined by oppositional boundaries: male vs. female, sacred vs. profane, natural vs. cultural, etc. "Through the intermediary of the divisions and hierarchies it sets up between things, persons, and practices, this tangible classifying system [the house] continuously inculcates and reinforces the taxonomic principles underlying all the arbitrary provisions of the culture" (Bourdieu 1977:89). Analysis of the house/yard/neighborhood at this level forces us ask intimate questions about the daily lives of residents: What are the spaces designed for? What are the various appropriate activities of man, woman and child? Where and how are guests entertained? --is there a place of honor? Where do natural process such as bathing and sex and elimination occur and how are such places symbolized? What are the symbolic differences between higher and lower, more open and more enclosed, more male oriented and more female oriented, more mentally and aesthetically oriented (reading, working, worshiping), vs. more entertainment oriented (gossip, recounting the news, telling myths), more work oriented (food preparation, weaving), etc.? From an historical perspective it is not easy to work out all of these spatially oriented activities and to reconstruct the meanings of the symbolic components of the house, but unless we try to understand the house from the cultural perspective, we will in the end fail to understand it from the perspective of its historical dynamics.

An African Hypothesis

In order to explore the possible benefit this kind of perspective let's turn to a specific example. As we do so, we plunge into the unfamiliar. We may begin with the rather preposterous preliminary hypothesis that Africans might have had substantial influence of the introduction of the Linear Cottage into Louisiana. Essentially no New Orleans architectural historian believes this. One implication flowing from such a

contention would be that the resulting New Orleans shotgun house is a highly creolized form, derived from a synthesis of African, Caribbean and French colonial architectural traditions. Following its firm establishment in New Orleans from the 1820s, other cultures, particularly that of the increasingly dominant Anglo-Americans, contributed strongly to it through new kinds of modifications and reinterpretations. These eventually so masked the origins of the tradition that those origins became unrecognizable and forgotten.

The anthropological historian, Michel-Rolph Trouillot (1995 *Silencing the Past.* Boston: Beacon Press) has written powerfully about why we might not recognize any African contribution in contemporary cultural institutions such as architecture. His explanation goes far beyond the common cliché that it is the winners who write the histories. He argues that all histories are political documents and that even the most honest and unbiased historian cannot escape the almost overwhelming and universal processes which arise to silence the past. Given any colonial population which is divided between a literate and dominate group in whose political interests the subordination of the Other lies, and a second population which is both illiterate and comparatively powerless, though culturally creative and contributory, the mechanisms of colonial history everywhere will inevitably magnify the perspective of the former and erase the perspective of the latter. The biases of the literati will powerfully shape the creation and perpetuation of the stories of the past. They will distort the creation of individual historical sources, the selection and grouping of sources into historical records, the retrieval of such records for the purposes of writing histories, and the entire process of writing narratives about the past. What is important – no, essential – about histories is the silences which characterize them. If it is the job of history as traditionally practiced to silence those accounts which might prove uncomfortable for the power elite if they were revealed, it is the job of the anthropological historian to excavate and illuminate them. "Power is constitutive in the story" (p. 28). Witness, for example, the storm of protest which literally drove Lafcadio Hearn from New Orleans after his writings about the Creoles of Color of the city became popular throughout America.

Perhaps the most useful aspect of studying vernacular architecture is that it encourages a democratic and balanced approach to history. If we do our job correctly, many (though certainly not all) of the biases inherent to traditional history are questioned and perhaps mitigated. After all, everyone, even the poorest of families, has a house. Any systematic architectural survey will reveal every kind and size of structure. All must be accounted for and understood on their own terms. The anthropological approach demands that we devote equal time and effort to understanding both the exalted and the debased.

Architecture, Long Distance

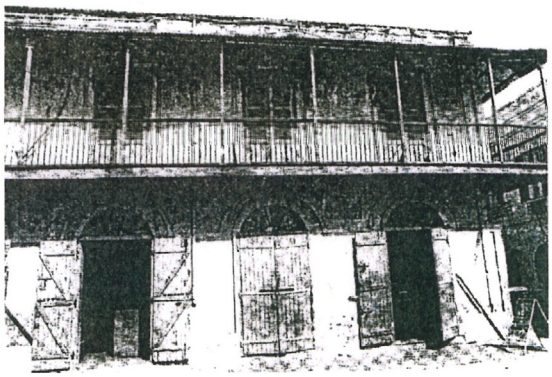
My basic working argument is that the Linear Cottage is a tropical vernacular housetype moved by several stages and transformations to New Orleans, where it underwent a complex process of localization and adaptation to the cultures of the nineteenth century. Given this unproven proposition, just how should we go about demonstrating its veracity or falseness? On first hearing such a proposal you might reasonably ask why would such a foreign house form should be adopted in Louisiana and not in other areas of North America. How did it get to Louisiana -- how was it carried here, and why was it introduced?

Louisiana is unique in that it had the highest level of Africans and African-Americans of any North American colony. It also had the highest level of free persons of color of anywhere in the United States. Two-thirds of the slaves imported into Louisiana under the French came from Senegambia, the western-most section of the African continent. According to Gwendolyn Midlo Hall, the majority of these were of the Bambara ethnic group ("The Formation of Afro-Creole Culture," 1992, pp. 68-69). There, since the first third of the seventeenth century, the French maintained important slaving posts at Gorée Island (Dakar, Senegal), at Saint-Louis, an island in the lower Senegal River, and in the Gambia River. Even today, the French Colonial houses of St. Louis and Gorée Island appear so remarkably like those of New Orleans or Cap Haïtien, that walking their streets one gets the vague feeling of having been magically transported back to French Creole America. The architectural similarities are way beyond anything which might be called "random" or accidental. There are obvious and powerful architectural

connections between these places.



St. Louis, Senegal, street scene. Photo by author, February, 2008.



Old photo of a house in rue Blaise Diagne in St. Louis, Senegal, reproduced in Hinchman (2000).

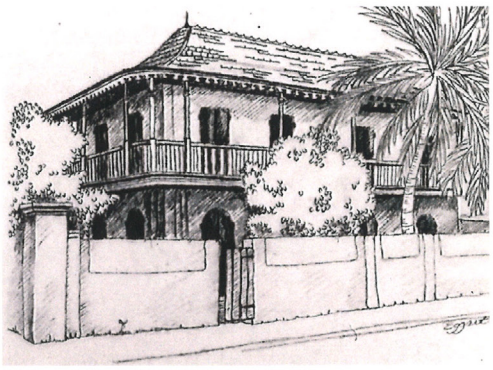


An entresol house, 500 block of Royal Street. Photo by author, 2007.



The extant Absinthe House c. 1806, Bourbon Street. Photo by Ricuitti, 1938.





Traditional Town Houses in Cap Haitien on the north coast of Haiti. This city functioned as the principal entrepot for New Orleans in the eighteenth century. Photo by author, 1996, sketch by Mary Lee Eggart after a photo by the author.

As remarkably similar as these widely separated colonial architectures are, it is not so much the architecture of colonial cities which is of central importance to the history of the lineal cottage. Certain colonial post buildings represent an early stage in the creolization process, but the foundation of any African influence on American vernacular lies in the indigenous architecture itself. We must begin by asking if commonalities may be found in the houses of the different ethnic groups of the area of potential influence -- the villages and rural areas of Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea Bissau, Guinea, the Gambia (river colony) and Senegal. These are the places of origin of a high proportion of the enslaved persons brought to Louisiana. The English and Americans who brought slaves to Anglo North America depended more heavily on slaving posts located in other areas of the Guinea Coast, though Gambia was also important to them. Thus, it is worth considering what kind of domestic architectural principles Africans from the French slaving posts in Upper Guinea carried with them into the French Caribbean and eventually into Louisiana.

In addition to Louisiana Creoles of color (those born here) and Louisiana *bossales* (those transported here as enslaved laborers), there was another class, perhaps even more important to our architectural story. By 1789 the population of the French sugar colony of Saint-Domingue had grown to 523,800. At the time Saint-Domingue was the wealthiest sugar colony in the world, and one which produced enormous wealth for France. Of its population, 30,851 were whites, 24,848 free persons of color, and there were 434,429 enslaved Africans. Ninety percent of the population was enslaved (the highest ratio in the hemisphere) and of that group, about 60 percent had been *born* in Africa. This compares with the population of New Orleans in which about 40 percent of the population, including Indians, was enslaved (Nathalie Dessens, 2007. *From Saint-Domingue to New Orleans: Migration and Influences.* Gainesville: University Press of Florida. pp. 8-10; John Thornton, 1998, *Africa and Africans in the making of the Atlantic World, 1400 – 1800* (2nd ed.) New York: Cambridge Univ. press, p. 319; John E. Land. 1882. Pen Illustrations of New Orleans 1881-1882. New Orleans: Privately published. p. 12). The

afranchis class of free people of color was far more powerful and advanced in Saint-Domingue than was the similar class in Louisiana. They possessed about one third of the cultivated land in the colony and provided most of the services of trade and manufacturing. Many were literate and some were highly educated. As they became refugees to Louisiana, this class was to have a major impact on the development on the French Creole culture of New Orleans, including its housing. This contribution would not have occurred, however, but for the extremely large numbers of African *bossales* who previously had influenced the folk architecture of the colony of Saint-Domingue. The enslaved had been transported largely from French comptoires in western Africa, and it is to the indigenous vernacular traditions of that section of the Guinea Coast that we must briefly go in order begin to develop a portrait of the Linear Cottage culture of both Saint-Domingue and Louisiana.

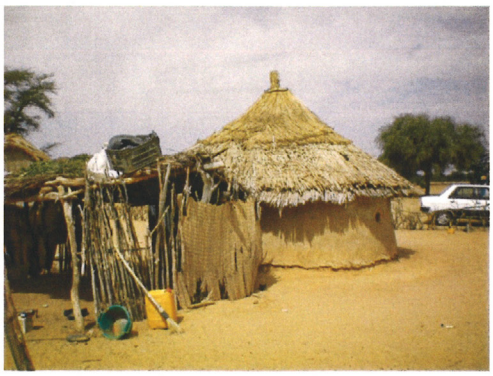


View of the interior of a French slave trade post on the Grain Coast, 18th century.

As the Portuguese (fifteenth century), and later the Dutch, French, and English (seventeenth century), moved southward along the coasts of West Africa, they encountered cultures with entirely different ground rules from the Arab-influenced cultures of North Africa with whom they had long traded. Black African cultures such as the Wolof, Bambara, Mandinka, Temne, and Kwa-Group speakers were distributed along the coasts from Senegal to Nigeria and beyond. Coastal West Africans, for the

most part, resided in palisaded compounds. Members of one family or kinship group were co-resident, though in some cases, entire villages were surrounded with a protective *tapanca*. In Upper Guinea (Senegal- Ivory Coast), each adult member of the family possessed his or her own freestanding bedroom unit (*kombet*) within a compound. Kombets were either round or rectangular. Further east, in Lower Guinea (Ghana-Nigeria), rooms were more often grouped into unified court-forms -- sets of contiguous rectangular units surrounding a common quadrilateral open-air living space.

The earliest reliable descriptions of coastal West African cultures by Europeans describe sleeping rooms being separated from food preparation, storage, and the entertainment portions of these compounds. Cooking was done in the kitchen hut of a wife, in a separate freestanding fireside shed, or in the open. Because polygynous marriages were so common in West Africa, the typical house compound had from one to three free-standing kitchens. They were all commonly situated in the central courtyard of the court-form house and close to the individual wife's kombet, or living and sleeping room, in the more open compounds of Upper Guinea. Daily life centered upon the open central courtyard and on the surrounding verandas and open-air pavilions.



***Sudu tiba*, or "round house," near Fanyae village, northern Senegal. Note *sudu chaali* or "open house" used for cooking and visiting, left side.**



Interior of same, Peul (Fula) house. Feb., 2008.

The French traveler Le Maire provided early descriptions of the houses of the common people between Senegal and the Ivory Coast:

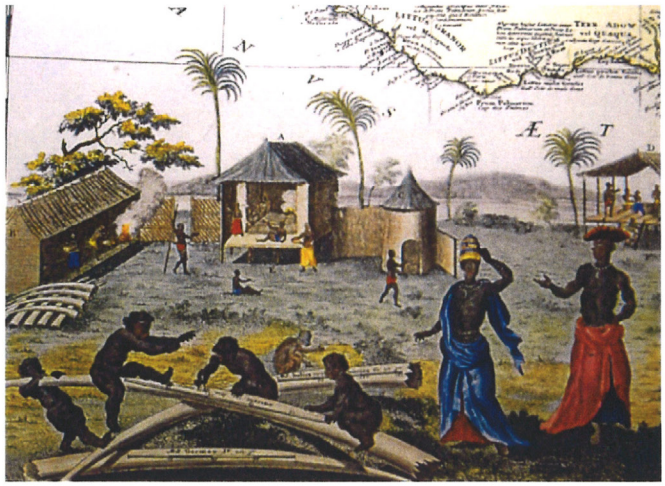
> The Mandingos have a way of building their houses close together, which is the occasion of many conflagrations [. . .]. These huts are called kombets, and each house consists of more or fewer of them, according to quality or ability of the person. Generally to each house belong five or six such kombets, which may be considered as so many rooms or pavilions, standing in the same tapade or enclosure; and each kombet has its particular use, as a storehouse, kitchen, bed chamber and dining-room, joining to each other with proper passages for communication.



A village in the highlands of Southeastern Senegal.

In 1725, the French traveler Jean Baptist Labat (writing under the pseudonym Chavelier de Marchais) penned one of the most complete descriptions of a typical small West African domestic compound. He was describing a rural village at Cape Merserado, near the location of modern day Monrovia, Liberia, on the Grain Coast:

> Their houses [. . .] are very neat, and their kitchens set directly upon the ground; open on the side freest from the wind and walled on the other three sides with stakes covered with red clay; which binds well, though not mixed with lime, and lasts long ....



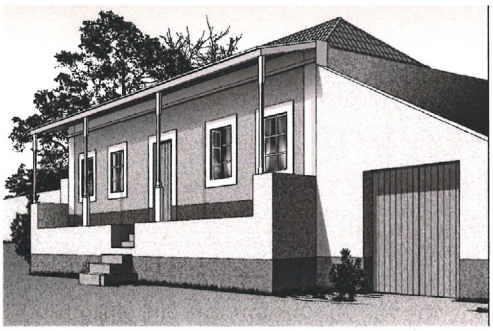
Portion of a family compound at Cap Merserado, in Liberia, ca. 1725, as sketched and described by Labat. Image courtesy Library of Congress.

> Their [sleeping] chambers are raised three foot above the ground to avoid the inconvenience of the dews. These houses resemble, pretty much, our mountebanks stages in Europe. The front is open, and the floor has a jutting-out of five or six foot broad, where the Negroes, laid on mats, pass the day with their wives and family [. . .]. The walls of these chambers are of a red clay, near a foot thick [. . .]. In the middle they raise a square elevation about six inches high and two-foot on each side on which they keep a constant fire night and day, in the day to smoke, and in the night to drive away the flies [mosquitos] and defend themselves from the cold and moistness of the air. There are as many of these chambers as a person has wives, with whom he lies in turn, and they are proportioned in bigness to the number of each family. The wife in whose chamber the husband is to pass the night, has her lord's supper ready.48

Living Galleries

Two brief examples of the mental models shared by Africans throughout this region will illustrate our point about mental architecture preceding and shaping material architecture. Our first example is taken from the man's world, and the essential role of hospitality in social life. Africans are great traders, and the

European trading nations has stimulated an entire culture of trade and commerce along the western coasts of Africa. By the Seventeenth century, hardly any established person was untouched by the desire for foreign goods. Along the coasts, the trade, largely taken over by local populations of Creole mulattos, who called themselves "Portuguese," but were largely indigenous coastal middle-men speaking both European and local African languages. Based largely on Mandingo (Islamic) building guilds, their architecture was designed for the accommodation of traders of all kinds. Local indigenous Africans, too, incorporated many of the same architectural principles into their own folk houses (Brooks, George E., 1993. *Landlords & Strangers: Ecology, Society, and Trade in Western Africa, 1000-1630.* Boulder: Westview Press; Thornton, John. *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400-1800.* 1998 New York: Cambridge Univ. Press; Wright, Donald. 2004. *The World and a Very Small Place in Africa.* 2nd ed. New York: M.E. Sharpe).



Portuguese *platibanda* style colonial trading House, 16th – 18th cents. Sketch, MLE.



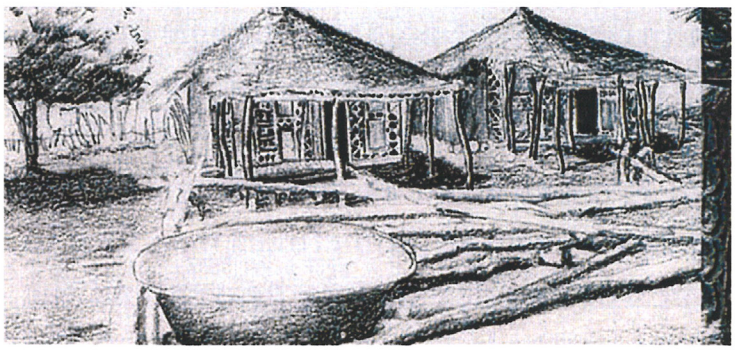
Late 17th century French "Portuguese style" trading house in Zinguinchor, Casamance, Senegal. Photo by Peter Mark.

The essential feature of African hospitality architecture was that the man's *kombet* was divided into two components. There is not a universal term for this division, but we could refer to it as a division between an "inside house" and an "outside house," or to a "daytime house," vs. a "nighttime house." In northern Senegal, the Tukulor people distinguish between an "enclosed house" (*suudu)* and an "open house" (*chaali*). Men spent much time away from their own houses on business or socializing, but when at home, hospitality was exceptionally important in the African scheme of things. George Brooks wrote a

fascinating history of this coastal area, entitled *Landlords and Strangers: Ecology, Society, and Trade in Western Africa, 1000 – 1630.* (1993. Boulder: Westview Press). In this work he describes the fact that here, hospitality and trading were raised to the level of a major culture theme. The outside house is where men spent much of the day, socializing, trading and talking politics. In order to maximize comfort for one's guests, the daytime house required certain features. It had to be shaded. It had to be open sided and elevated above the level of the ground in order to maximize cross-ventilation. The bifurcated inside/outside house is commonplace even today on those forms of indigenous African architecture which are common to permanent village settings (rather than to the houses of migratory societies such as herders and pastoralists). I have been entertained on exactly this kind of hospitality stage.



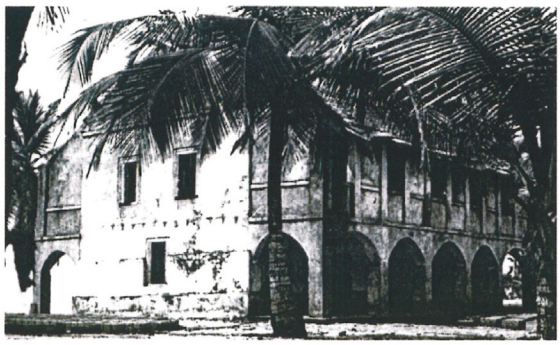
Baydi Dia compound at Njom, Dindeere near the Senegal River. Photo by Author, 2008.



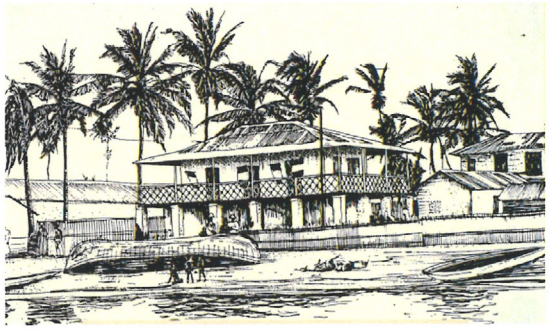
Kombets in Senegal with front galleries as reception zones. Illustration by Jean-Paul Bourdier, 1996.

Indigenous house forms are very variable across this broad multi-ethnic area, but the principle of inside (domestic sleeping and storing) space vs. outside (hospitality and socializing) space is very widespread throughout West Africa. Even among those groups such as the Wolof and Peul/Fulani who reside in round kombets, residents often set aside a separate bower or free-standing pavilion for daytime hospitality and entertainment (the *chaali*). Travelers and traders sleeping overnight used the hospitality zone as a temporary bedroom. All of this was discovered quite early by European factors (trading house managers) who commissioned the construction of trade houses on the many rivers of West Africa.

Fortuitously, the construction of a factory building in the Gambia for the English Royal African Company was described in some detail by its Factor, Mr. Moore, in 1733. A plan of the building and its circular compound was also supplied. The local Mandinka workmen completed the main rectangular structure with swish walls and a frame of "forkillas" or crutches to support the roof: "Their next work was to make a porch called an *Alpainter* by the natives, who pretend a right to have one at every factory, that they may have access and shelter. They build this open porch of the same materials....



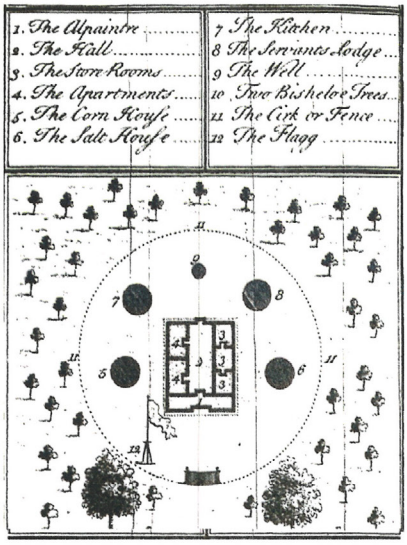
1840 Portuguese style traders house, Jacqueville



A gallery surrounds this late 19th century French style *comptoir* in the Ivory Coast.

Moore's account makes it clear that it was the Africans who were responsible for adding the gallery to the European-commissioned building. This alien innovation required some explanation by the factor:

> "The author dwelt the longer in describing the piece of building, to show how easily the people called barbarous by *Europeans*, can procure the conveniences of life. Here is a house built with a hall [gallery] of forty foot by thirteen, two lodging-rooms twenty foot by thirteen, and three strong storehouses, without any iron-work, trowels, squares, or carpenters rules, and with the smallest expense to the Company, for it was done by their servants only, except the man who laid and smoothed the clay. Besides the inside was not only convenient and free from vermin, but very clean, and had a cool look, the clay taking a good whitewash" (Astley 1968:II 226-27).



A Plan of Yamyamacunda Factory by Francis Moore, 1733, near Juffure, north shore of the Gambia River (Moore 1738:178)

These observations clarify the power relations between European factors and African designer-builders. Clearly, the Africans were in control of the architectural form of the buildings being constructed for the Europeans—they designed them and they built them to suit their own social conveniences and architectural preconceptions. These buildings represented the earliest examples of Creole colonial architecture. They are the prototype from which colonial forms the world over would develop in the following centuries (Edwards 2001).

We may conclude from this review that there is both comparative and historical evidence to support the contention that there were at least two separate but interrelated levels of West African architectural influence on the houses of the French Caribbean colonies and, eventually and less directly on Louisiana. Humble indigenous houses of the enslaved workers in Saint Domingue may not have resembled any indigenous African house precisely, but they embodied the same unstated principles of division, as clearly indicated by the ubiquitous nature of the front reception and living gallery on colonial and all forms of present day peasant houses of Haiti.



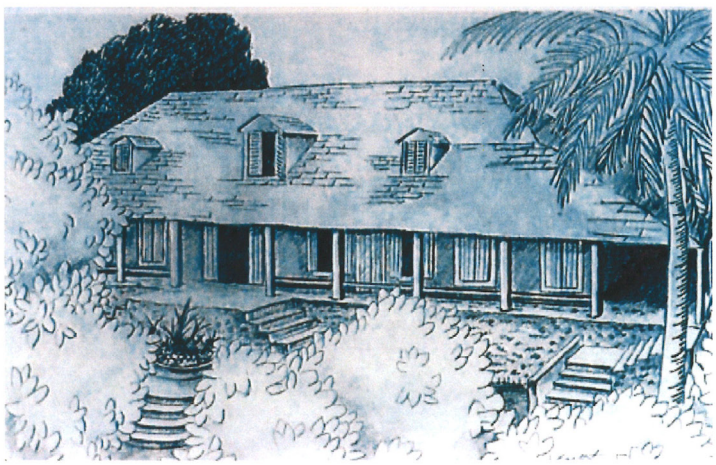
House of Hungan, Mr. Seneque, Lotue Jacmel, south coast of Haiti



House on Highway 1, north of Porte-de-Prince.

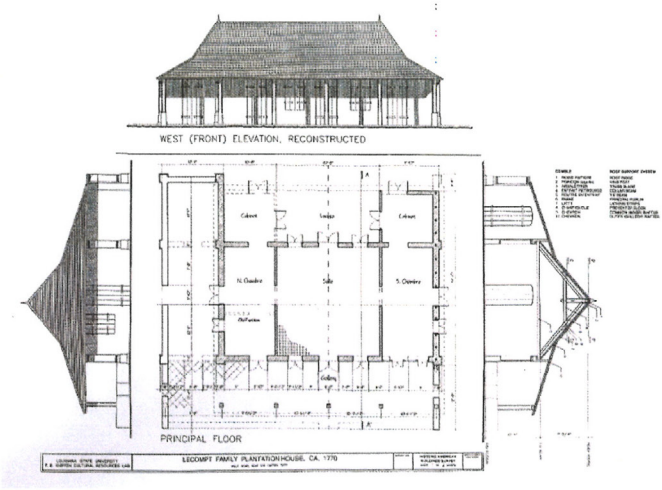
In addition, colonial houses adopted by early French settlers in the Caribbean closely resembled the early "Portuguese style" trading houses of the Coastal Creole builder/traders in Senegambia and elsewhere (see: Peter Mark. 2002. *"Portuguese" Style and Luso-African Identity: Precolonial Senegambia, 16th – 19th Centuries.* Bloomington: University of Indiana Press.).





Images of pre-revolutionary buildings from the Colony of Saint-Domingue (nowHaiti). The 18th century plantation house below, specifically, is built in a Tuscan-modified *platibanda* (vernacular classical) style common to 17th century Portuguese trading posts along the West African coasts.





The ca. 1760 Lecompt plantation house on the *plaine du norde,* in northern Haiti. This house is built in much the same form as 17th century Portuguese post buildings in West Africa. It even retains elements of the same generalized Tuscan *platibanda* styling. The roof construction is entirely French, the walls built with flat Roman style bricks. This rare pre-revolutionary building survived the near universal destruction of plantation houses probably because it was used as a post building by the rebel commander, Christophe. It may be the location where another famous rebel, Sans Souci, was ambushed and murdered by Christophe. It is only a few miles from Christophe's famous palace of the same name.

It was their full-length galleries which distinguished these trading buildings and factor's houses from anything European. In struggling to describe these indigenous architectural features, early African travelers often adopted the imagery of the European stage – an indication of their unfamiliar appearance. To Bowdich, living galleries were a *proscenium* (1966:305), while to Labat they resembled "our mountebanks stages in Europe" (Astley 1968:II:527-28). Open-air rooms comprised the social center of the fully developed indigenous West African house. They symbolized hospitality. It is in the social use of the "living verandah," combined with the tiny dimensions of enclosed rooms, the elevation of clay floors a foot or more above the level of the ground, and a tendency to group house units together into compound groupings, that we find the most un-European features of African architecture and house life. The almost ubiquitous presence of galleries upon linear cottages stands an indication of their tropical origins.

Detached Kitchens

Before the Civil War, kitchens throughout the South stood as separate dependencies. The reason for the almost universal construction of separated kitchen buildings is of interest from the perspective of an anthropologically oriented architectural history of New Orleans. It appears that for West Africans, separated kitchens were occasioned neither by the fear of fire nor by the problem of heat. Africans kept fires going within their sleeping rooms, in some cases both day and night. The fire reduced the "cold" of the night air, and the smoke kept the mosquitos at bay. A thatched roof, if burned, was easily knocked off and replaced. The African freestanding kitchen building has less to do with the problem of excess heat than it does with social organization, and particularly the spatial calculus of African polygyny. There is a general agreement among both West Africans and their ethnographers that despite the considerable economic advantages of polygyny, the higher the number of wives in a family, the higher the potential for intra-familial conflict. Anticipating the problem, West African societies developed a considerable number of structural mechanisms to mitigate sources of aggravation and conflict between co-wives and between wives and their husband. The domestic economy of each co-wife was, and remains, separate, and that includes her kitchen with its equipment. (Ames, Plural Marriage, pp. 27, 108-9, 115-6). Anticipatory conflict-reducing mechanisms include mutually supporting social, religious, magical, moral, economic, and spatial mores and practices. In order to reduce conflicts based on differences in socialization, closely related women such as cross cousins and sisters are often favored as co-wives. Nevertheless, there remains a substantial potential for conflict. Since each co-wife is the founder of a separate lineage and family, so to speak, sources of potential conflict between them are always present. These include the manner in which their individual children are treated (favored or disciplined) by their shared husband or by the other co-wives. Obvious differences in the levels of economic and material success of the several wives also exacerbate tensions. Full siblings develop strong bonds of affection, while competition develops between "children of the father" (p. 119).

Many "first" wives do not look forward to sharing their husbands with other women. Anthropologists have recorded first wives leaving a husband who announced his intention to marry again. Thus, husbands arrange compounds in order to minimize the potential for jealousy and conflict between co-wives, (p. 111). Although some co-wives become close friends and loan one another kitchen utensils and other goods, the ownership of personal properties and other resources such as animals and fields is kept separate and independent. A wife may well deny a co-wife or even a husband access to her personal property (p.125), including her kitchen and its equipment.

Since Europeans, including peasants, no longer cooked in separated free-standing kitchen buildings at the time of American colonization, one must ask why the tradition of the detached kitchen was so universally reconstituted during the colonial period between Virginia and Texas, and particularly in Louisiana. This old/new custom cannot help but have been related to the fact that in those slave-holding states it was Africans who filled the roles of cook. African women had been accustomed to their own patterns of control and organization of the kitchen in their natal compounds, and it is clear that these customs were transported outward, first into the Creolized domestic architecture of the coastal trading posts, second, across the Atlantic into the sugar colonies of Pernambuco and Bahia in Brazil, and shortly thereafter into the Iberian colonies in the Caribbean. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, enslaved Africans and maroons constructed folk versions of detached kitchens wherever they lived. Detached kitchens became nearly universal in Hispañola. They are still being used in Haiti today.

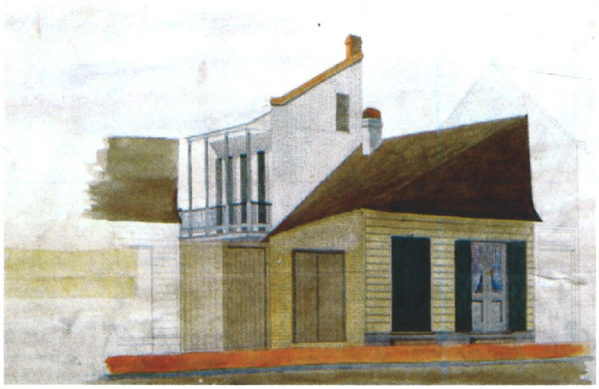


Detached kitchen building in rural Haiti. Photo by author, 1995.

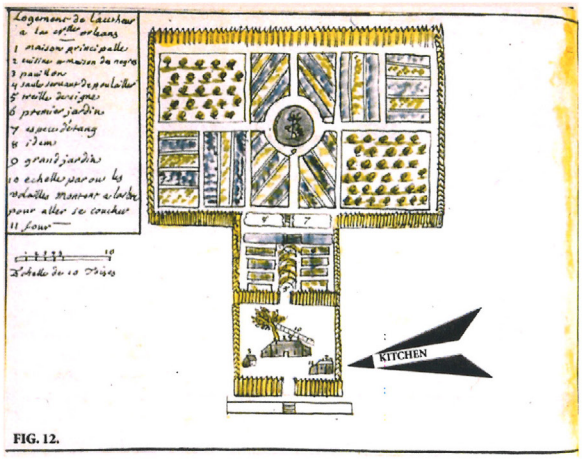


Detached kitchen and oven behind a plantation Worker's wattled house in Barbados. Photo courtesy Prints and Photographs Div. Library of Congress.

The detached kitchen was carried into Louisiana in the very early years of French settlement. It is documented from the 1720s on in the sketches of Dumont dit Montigny, for example. Traveler's tales from the early nineteenth century describe detached kitchens with African-American cooks, even in relatively impoverished farmsteads and villages throughout the state. Virtually every single plantation had at least one detached kitchen. In the city of New Orleans, detached kitchens were set towards the rear of the lot of almost every substantial dwelling. During the Greek Revival period, ca. 1835-1860, both smaller and larger townhouses often had elegant two and three story detached kitchens set on a rear patio. Naturally, that included the linear cottages of the period. Eventually, the detached kitchen was almost as common in the houses of Anglo-Americans as it was in those of the French Creoles. Detached kitchens remained ubiquitous until after the Civil War. As we shall see below, this tradition was to have a profound effect upon the humble Linear Cottages of the post Civil War period in New Orleans.



Small appentis cottage onToulouse with two-story kitchen building behind, ca. 1820. NONA 045.051.



House of Dumont dit Montigny in New Orleans, early 18th century. Courtesy Newberry Library, Chicago.

From the perspective of European Creoles the detached kitchen was eminently logical. It offered safety and comfort and protected the main house from fires started by careless or vindictive servants; from the perspective of enslaved Africans, who were also peasants, it provided a liminal zone of partial control which permitted the cook to work relatively unhampered by the demands of others. It separated spheres of authority, as it had formerly with the African co-wife. Did it work well? The world- renowned Creole cuisine of Louisiana – itself a blending of African, European and indigenous American foodways – emerged from precisely those kitchens. In the reformulated domestic cultural landscapes of Haitian peasants, Louisiana planters, and New Orleans townhouse holders, the detached kitchen introduced a novel material element – an excellent example of what is called synthesizing creolization.

Haitian Influences on New Orleans Architecture

Exactly what was the effect of these two African based traditions of domestic spatial order in New Orleans? John Vlach has helped to fill in the story of the translation of African architectural conceptions into American vernacular architectural organization. In a classic study of the diffusion of architectural traditions, Vlach wrote a dissertation describing how traditions of African vernacular were transformed

under the impact of slavery and maroonage in colonial Santo Domingo, and later in Louisiana. Perhaps his most important discovery was that house-related behaviors diffuse under conditions of migration (American slavery). Those behaviors may also be applied to different forms of houses in new environmental settings, so long as a sufficient collection of previously familiar material-specific patterns of vernacular architecture are present. Although the plan of the "*ti-kay*" or shotgun type folk house of rural Saint Domingue (later Haiti) was not precisely like the houses of Yoruba and other West Africans, the spatial grammar for the massing of many styles of African vernacular dwellings was similar to that seen in the Haitian compound. The African social dynamic reflected in the balance and tension between personal intimacy and participation of the larger extended family and the local community , survived the translation into the new environment. In the countryside, the small *ti*- kay (wattled and thatched folk houses) of Saint Domingue functioned much the same way as did the individual free standing *kombet* of West Africa. Both groups of vernacular houses shared small interior rooms with abundant open-air living and reception spaces. Interior rooms averaged roughly 100 square feet. This is a small space, not useful for socializing. The almost ubiquitous porch on the front of the *ti-kay* functioned much like the *jimbwaw* (Mandinka: pavilion, gallery, or daytime house) of the West African compound, and the *lacou* or yard in Saint-Domingue functioned socially much like the African *tapanca* or enclosed family compound. *Ti-kay* were often built together in groups, recalling the close association between the multiple *kombets* of close relatives within a West African compound.



Grouping of *ti kay* or small wattled houses in Haiti. Photo by author, 1995-96.

Applying Vlach's logic to cases of creolization, we may discover that though the appearance of Creole architectural forms no longer represents African (or European) tradition in Louisiana, the new forms such as *cabanes* and shanties function under much the same covert social ground rules as they did previously.

Exactly what would a tropical vernacular house carried to New Orleans during or after the Haitian Revolution look like? What would be its functions? We have, I believe, three separate examples of this kind of persistence of tradition:



Typical rural *ti kay* Mirabalais, Haiti.



18th c. watercolor. F. Fumagalli (Italian). A sugar plantation in Saint-Domingue. Note shotgun-like slave quarters and detached kitchen behind the big house.

First, the tiny *ti-kay* was the dominant housetype for rural peasants in the central and southern sections of Saint-Domingue/Haiti at the time of the revolution. They are still being constructed by the thousands, today. Second, the towns and cities of Haiti were filled with more substantial and larger forms of the same linear cottages much like the *maisonettes* of New Orleans. Third, plantations had many forms of slave quarters, but as seen in several contemporary paints, such as that by Fumagalli (above), quarters often took the form of tiny linear cottages.



Two sections of a painting of the town of Les Cayes, in southern Saint Domingue, ca. 1729, showing shotgun Like houses, both on a plantation and in the newly established town. Painted by a French sailor, Pierre Caillot. Courtesy HNOC (2005:11).



Google Earth image of a central block in the colonial city of Gonaïves, in north western Haiti. Note predominance of linear type buildings.



A *maison longue* in downtown Port-au-prince, Haiti. Photo by author, 1995.

In several waves, substantially more than twelve thousand refugees from the Haitian Revolution arrived in Louisiana between 1791 and 1809. They included roughly equal proportions of colonial French, African slaves, and *affranchis* (free people of color--called *gens de couleur libres* in New Orleans). This latter, largely mulatto, population had become a *petit bourgeoisie* class in Saint-Domingue. Men worked as planters, as small businessmen and as artisans--carpenters, house builders, cabinet makers, carriage makers, masons, barbers, upholsterers, and real estate brokers. They were renowned tailors and

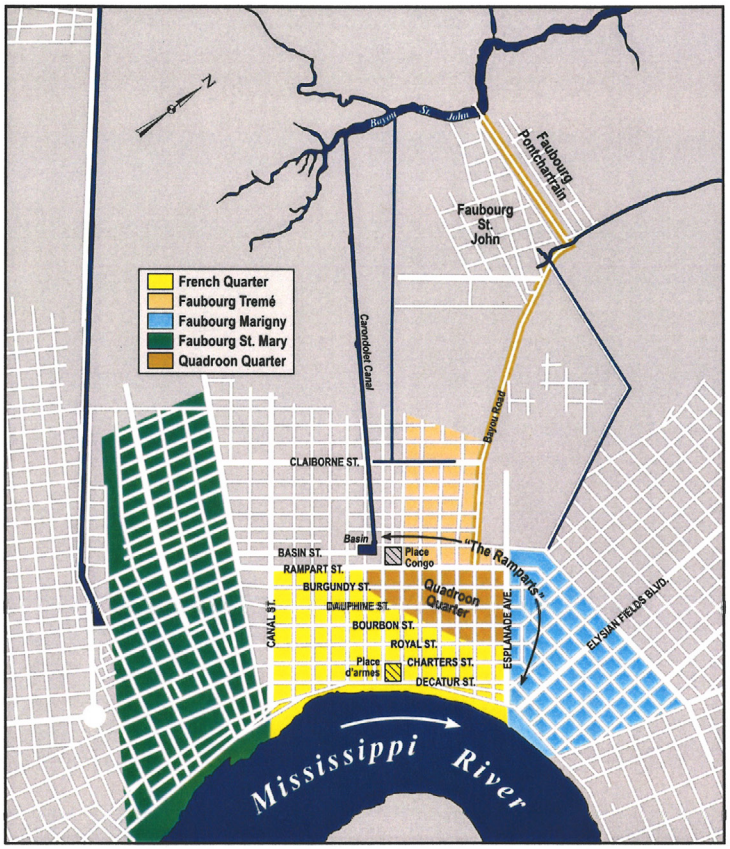
shoe-makers. At the end of colonial rule (1803) the city of New Orleans had 1,335 free people of color out of a total population of 8,050 (the colony of Saint-Domingue had well over 28,000). But in the year 1809, after Spain expelled Haitian refugees from Cuba, at least 9,059 French-speaking refugees arrived in New Orleans. Of these, 3,102 were free people of color, more than doubling the total free colored population of the city (to 4,950). The total city population is now 17,242. These refugees were to have a substantial impact on the culture and vernacular architecture of the city.

Had Haitian and other refugees simply moved into New Orleans in large numbers, following their flight from Saint-Domingue, and then in 1809 after their expulsion from Cuba, they might well have simply copied the styles of houses which were already extant in their new urban home. Of course some did precisely this. Others, however, seem to have introduced an alien element into New Orleans. Like most migrants, they carried the folk houses of their homeland into the Louisiana.

The free-colored Creole population of New Orleans settled in certain peripheral areas. Creole neighborhoods included the northern corner of the French Quarter (not completely settled before ca. 1820), Faubourg Tremé and the Bayou Road (the Esplanade Ridge-Tremé-Lafitte neighborhood), and Faubourg Marigny (being laid out for residential settlement beginning ca. 1805). These became the natural settlement zones for French and French Creole-speaking Haitian refugees between ca. 1800 and 1812.

Suddenly, pressure on the housing stock of New Orleans was enormous. In 1809-1810 the city had doubled its population in a single year; there was no place to put all of the new refugees. They were crowded into attics and outbuildings. They settled in the same areas of the city inhabited by their cousins of language and blood, the French Creole *gens de coulour libres*. After all of the available spaces were taken, the refugees took to building temporary fringe housing in and around the edges of settlement in the "Quadroon Quarter," and in the Creole faubourgs of the city. They settled in what in the earliest years of the American period was still being called "the Ramparts." This included not just the avenues of Rampart

and Esplanade Avenue, but more importantly, those smaller streets behind the grand avenues of the city. Lots on the avenues commanded the highest prices, so most of the small and temporary houses that the Haitian refugees could afford were set on streets behind the avenues. This established a kind of geographical pattern in which Linear Cottages were distributed unevenly in zones that the New Orleans historical geographer Peirce Lewis referred to as "superblocks."Superblocks were divided by the great avenues.



Settlement areas of Free People of Color in the first and second decades of the 19th century, New Orleans, Map by Mary Lee Eggart for the Kniffen Lab, LSU.

It is precisely at this time that the Linear Cottage appears in those sections of the city most heavily settled by Haitian refugees. In the next chapter we follow the development of this new set of vernacular types in the Creole faubourgs of New Orleans.

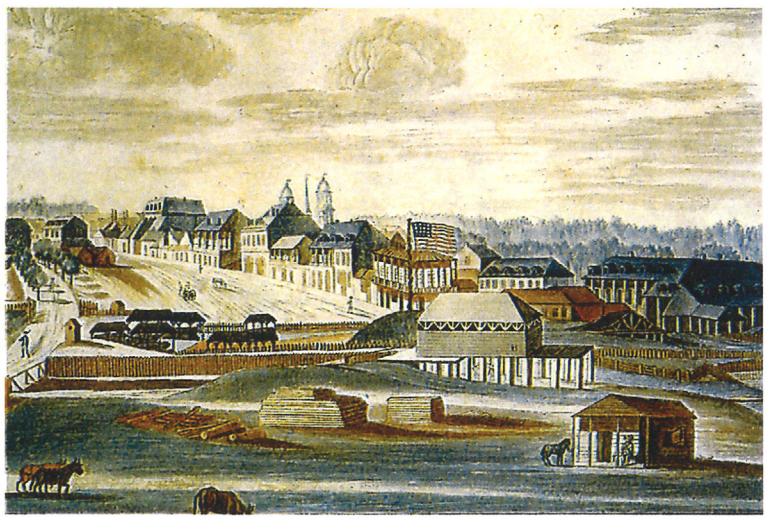
V.c. A HISTORY OF THE LINEAR COTTAGE IN NEW ORLEANS

To get a start on a history of the linear cottage in New Orleans, we need to answer two fundamental questions. The first: What would New Orleans architecture look like about the year 1820 *if* Haitian refugees were exercising a significant influence based on their natal traditions? Given the stupendous expansion of the population of the city by Haitians, particularly in the years 1804, and 1809, by 1820 there should have been sufficient time for architectural influences to have occurred. In general, would we not expect to find those influences located in areas where Haitians could afford to purchase or rent land. Remember that about one-third of the refugees were enslaved Africans and Creoles, and another third were from the *affranchis* class. The bulk of the population was probably settled in those areas where French speaking people of color could find lodging, in the Quadroon Quarter, in the Creole Faubourgs, along the Bayou Road and at the fringes of settlement in the city. So what evidence exists to support the idea that people were building *ti-kay* and larger *maison longue* in these sections of the city?

Cabannes and Shanties

During the period of the Haitian Revolution, and particularly in the period between 1803 and 1815, temporary housing was thrown up for the thousands of refugees pouring into the city of New Orleans. Linear free-standing settlers' shacks were referred to as "*cabannes*" in New Orleans–something less substantial than a frame house or one with *murs en dur* (masonry walls). In the local English, the term "shanties" was used. That word appears to have entered the English language in New Orleans, based on the French term, *chantier.* A chantier is always a residence, not a storage shed (*magazin*). In French it referred originally to the kind of temporary shelter made by wood cutters in the forests as they were felling trees and turning them into beams and scantling. Somewhat generalized, the term would fit very well with the idea of impermanent fringe housing for refugees.

The problem is that temporary vernacular architecture was ignored as huts and hovels by most record makers. Because these were not considered permanent buildings there was little official government interest, except when houses were constructed on "borrowed" property. No building contracts were drawn up and notarized, nor did surveyors often bother to record these structures. No fancy sales posters by professional artists were hung in the coffee houses, advertising property sales at public auction. Many, being cheaply and quickly constructed, did not survive a sufficient number of decades to be recorded. In short, this was an historically invisible fringe architecture. The first accurate depiction of such a shotgun building in the U.S. known to me was drawn in 1803 on what was at that time the edge of urban New Orleans. It bears a striking resemblance in size and form to the *ti kay* linear cottages which survive in abundance in Haiti, today.

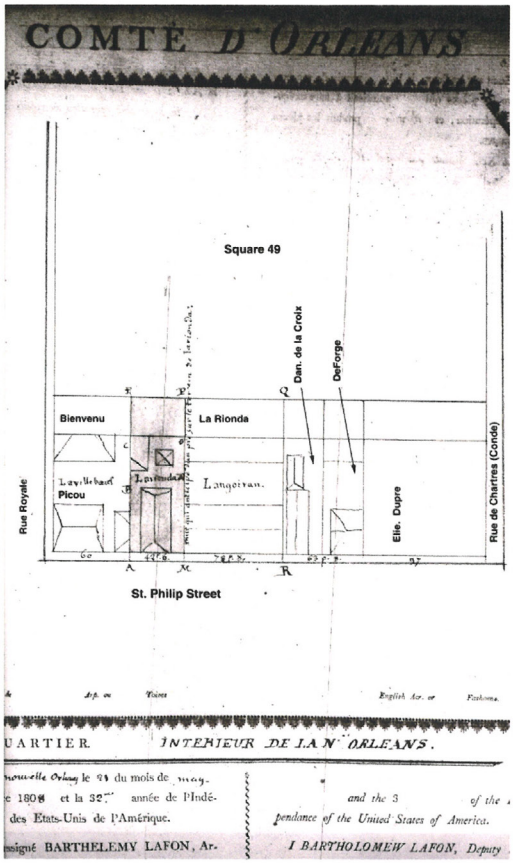


"Under My Wings, Every Thing Prospers." A commemorative painting for the Louisiana Purchase by Boqueta de Woriseri in 1803. Note tiny Haitian style shotgun house in foreground. It is probably being used as a guard house for the lumber mill, behind. Courtesy, HNOC.

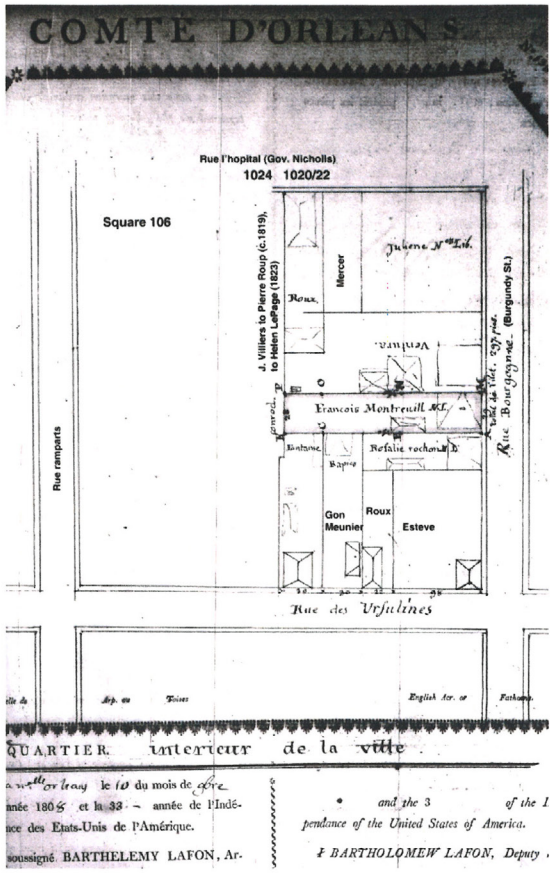
But if official record-keepers were disinterested, who would bother to record such refugee architecture, roughly equivalent to the FEMA trailers of their day? Because New Orleans was expanding out of its earlier boundaries so rapidly in these years, recordation would be left to land speculators and

private surveyors. It would not be unreasonable to assume that these may have been poorly educated opportunists of low record-keeping ability. No doubt some were but, luckily, others proved to be among the most well-trained and important visionaries in the history of the city. They included cartographers and land developers, some of whom would become wealthy entrepreneurs in the new American territory.

Men such as Barthélémy Lafon took on both government-sponsored and private commissions. Lafon's public and private records exemplify the kinds of contemporary architectural records which were being produced. Luckily, some of Lafon's personal survey books have survived. If a land surveyor happened to also be an architect particularly interested in local architecture, the building indications in his field surveys might include details such as roof ridge-lines. These permit us to differentiate between Creole cottages and linear cottages (though not in every case). The quality of the architectural indications is apparent in these sketches from the period 1806 - 1810. It is clear from these and his other surveys in and beyond the French Quarter that many smaller shotgun-like houses existed even before 1810.



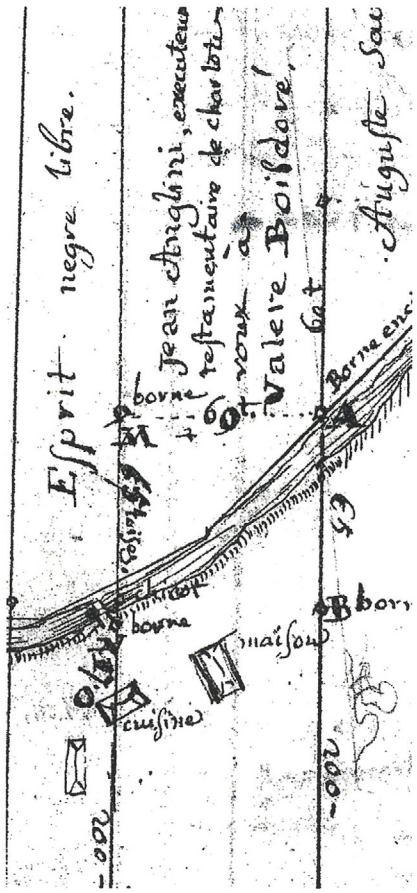
Survey of a portion of Square 49 in the Vieux Carré by Bethelemy Lafon, showing several *appentis* cottages and a linear cottage on St. Philip Street owned by Dan de la Croix. Courtesy HNOC.



Plan of a portion of Square 106 in the Vieux Carré, by Carré by Bethelemy Lafon, illustrating several. linear cottages, particularly one owned by the Haitian builder, Pierre Roup (spelled Roux). 1808. Courtesy HNOC.

One of the more interesting examples drawn from the Lafon survey books is the case of a new landowner named Valerie Boisdoré vs. a free black named Esprit. In 1808, these neighbors lived in small shotgun-style houses on the edge of the city along Bayou Metairie in what is now City Park. Lafon conducted two surveys, twelve days apart. In the first he demonstrates that Boisdoré's property extends into that of Espirit. In the second survey he ignores the boundary markers and "adjusts" Boisdoré's property lines so that they encompass those of Espirit, presumably rendering the boundary dispute between them in favor of the Boisdoré (old New Orleans hands might be forgiven for assuming that some exchange of

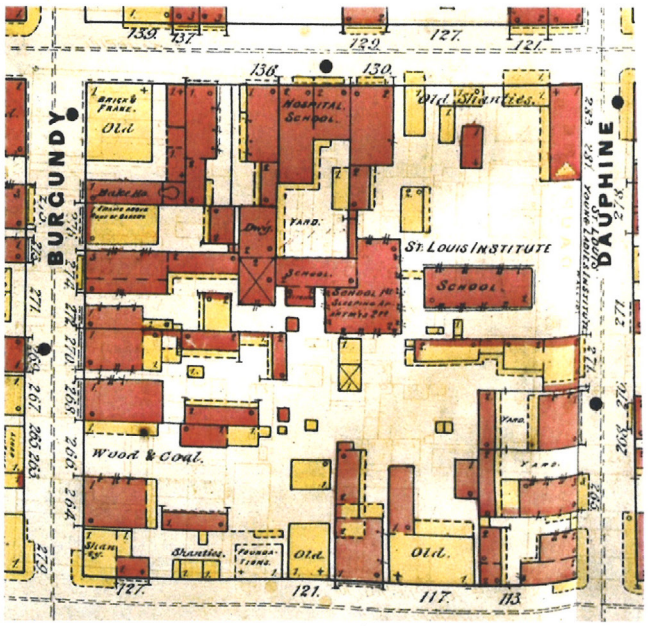
wealth may have occurred in the interim).[26] The houses of both are clearly smaller shotgun type houses set on open long lots. That of Espirit is labeled a "*cabane neuve*" -- the somewhat larger house of Boisdoré, a "*maison.*"



A portion of the first of two property surveys along Metairie Bayou (today, City Park) on the fringe of New Orleans settlement. The smaller shotgun style House of the "*negre libre* Espirit" is called a "*cabane*," The larger house of Boisdoré is called a "*maison*," Though both are Linear Cottages. Apr. 15, 2008. Survey by Bethelemy Lafon HNOC.

Against all probability, a few surviving refugee houses in the form of small two- or three-room-deep linear cottages survived to be depicted on the 1876 Sanborn maps. They are almost always labeled "Old Shanties," and are shown to be frame buildings rather than brick-walled. They are found both in the

Creole faubourgs and in the Vieux Carre itself.



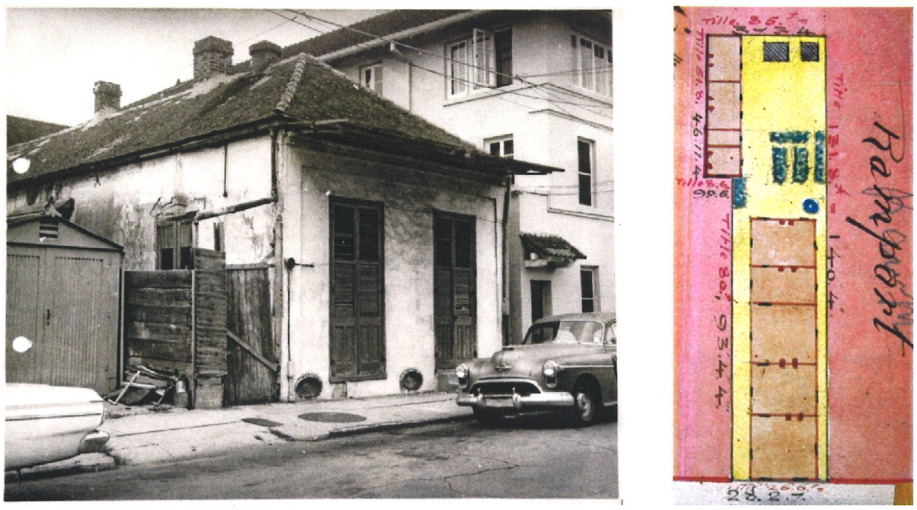
1876 Sanborn map of Square 83 in the Vieux Carré Showing "Old Shanties". Courtesy Library of Congress.



1876 Sanborn map of a square in Faubourg Marigny Showing "Old Shanties" in the Linear Cottage form.

Creole Maisonettes:

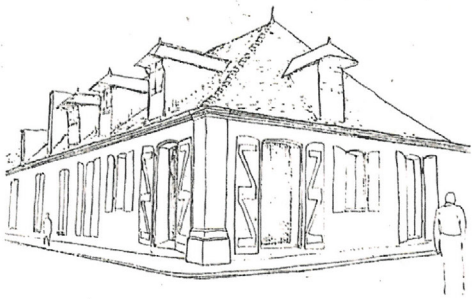
Another kind of West Indian style linear cottage also survives from the first decade of the nineteenth century. Called the *maisonette* or small house by New Orleans architectural historians, it closely resembles a hip roof shotgun house. Maisonettes were no settler's shacks. They were built with the very best French construction technology of the day. Our knowledge is enhanced by the fact that a few of the more solidly constructed examples survive. Sadly, Katrina dealt a last serious blow to others. The walls of early maisonettes were *briquette-entre-poteaux* or solid brick. Their pantile and slate-covered roofs were supported by heavy hewn roof beams, mortised and pegged together in the "Norman" style. Most interesting, perhaps, is the stylistic features which characterized them in the 1820s.



The Helen Lepage house, 1823, built by Haitian immigrant Pierre Roup beside his own maisonette style abode in Square 106 of the Quadroon Quarter. Courtesy Hilary Irvin, VCC and the SEAA. This is perhaps the oldest surviving full shotgun style house in the country. Note the"architrave" or flat band which surrounds the façade.

Maisonettes were built in what local historians call a generalized Federal style. Many of the earlier maisonettes share a decorative motive, an "*architrave.*" It is a mark of the 1790 – 1820 decades. In French New Orleans this term also referred to a wide, flat band representing pilasters and a frieze framing the facade of the building. Above the flat frieze was a decorative cornice composed of multiple cyma elements, and above that, what the local French refer to as an *abat vent* -- a roof extension which projects about four feet over the *banquette* or sidewalk. These were required by late Spanish period zoning laws which continued in force well into the American period. To this author, there is almost no relationship to the local forms of Federal architecture, but houses with the architrave closely resemble the styles of seventeenth century Portuguese style trading posts along the coasts of West Africa and also early colonial houses of the Spanish in Hispañola. The architrave is only a modest transformation of the early Tuscan *platibanda* style of the colonial Portuguese. The tem *platibanda* refered to specifically a frieze which could either be flat and plain, or decorated with bas relief motifs. During the age of African trading, colonial *platibanda* houses were generally undecorated and had a full-length front gallery.

New Orleans *maisons longues*, or linear cottages almost always had paired double doors opening onto the street. The roofs of "maisonettes" are inevitably hipped. In this they also bear a marked similarity to the single story townhouses (*maisons basses*) of Cap Haïtian, Haiti, in the same period.



Maison basse de type XVIII^{e} siècle

Cap Haïtien style colonial house. Note Tuscan pilasters at the corners and hip roof of this 18th century *maison basse*, or low house.



Sketch of Bayou St. John, May, 1830 by the French naturalist, Alesandre Leuseur. Note typical maisonettes on right. Courtesy HNOC.

Other examples, and other kinds of evidence for the popularity of this style of linear cottage, survive in the French Quarter and the Creole *faubourgs*. The traveling French naturalist, Alexandre Lesueur, made rough sketches of what is clearly a hip-roofed shotgun maisonette on the bank of Bayou St. John in May of 1830.

Four-bay double wide linear cottages appear in the decade beginning in 1810. In the French Quarter today, the majority of surviving early linear cottages are "doubles" -- double-wide linear cottages-- set on lots sufficiently wide to accommodate a two-room-wide Creole house if the owner had so desired. Though shotgun-like houses are not yet dominant in the Creole faubourgs in the first decades of the nineteenth century, they are sufficiently commonplace to be recognized as a recurring type.



Maisonette, 831 St. Philip. 1820s.
Fazende Cottage, SEAA.



c.1810.Phillipon. 1016 Dauphine St.
Sq.77. NONA 044.035.

It is worth asking why dwellings such as the 1820s LePage and Baker maisonettes have not been clearly identified as shotgun prototypes by New Orleans architectural historians. They appear to have been thought of as a kind of half-width Creole Cottage, and are consistently identified as such in the *New Orleans Architecture* series of publications. Local architectural historians believe that early nineteenth century houses with shotgun floorplans and hipped roofs are to be classified as two-bay Creole Maisonettes (single room wide, hip-roofed Creole cottages turned endwise), rather than as shotguns. The same assessment applies to the more popular "Doubles." Historians seem to have resisted application of the term "shotgun" to what they believe to be historically inappropriate forms, believing that in roof form and in construction technology the shotgun *Maisonette* of the 1820s participated more profoundly within the Creole Cottage tradition than in the shotgun tradition. This was a time when the orientation of the roof ridge was less a diagnostic mark of ethnic or class-association than it became in later decades. But, by employing a designation which, if considered loosely, may have been culturally appropriate to the linear maisonette of 1825, the question of its possible parental role for the increasingly numerous framed shotguns of the 1830s and thereafter has been largely set aside. *Ti-kay* "shotguns" with hip roofs are, of course, commonplace in Haiti, today, and have been since as early as 1730s. How common were they in New Orleans? No reasonably complete historical survey has yet been undertaken, but the ease with which it was possible to identify fifteen houses appearing to be shotguns from the Lafon survey books within the architecturally conservative French Quarter prior to 1810, and indications of others in the Marigny, Tremé and Bayou

Road areas, suggests that they were not uncommon between 1805 and 1830.

Appentis Cottages:

There is another curiousity which does not fit into our theory of West Indian influence on the Linear Cottage tradition of New Orleans. Even before the establishment of imported Linear Cottages there existed a completely different style of Linear Cottage in New Orleans. They appear to post-date the second great fire of 1894. Spanish zoning laws designed to inhibit the spread of fire from one building to another were put in place under the Spanish. They mandated the use of fireproof materials such as brick and plaster. Houses in the Quarter were built right on the banquette, as sidewalks were called there. Behind the main houses were service buildings. One of the earliest recorded types is the *appentis* or shed roof buildings. They can be documented prior to the Louisiana Purchase in 1803.



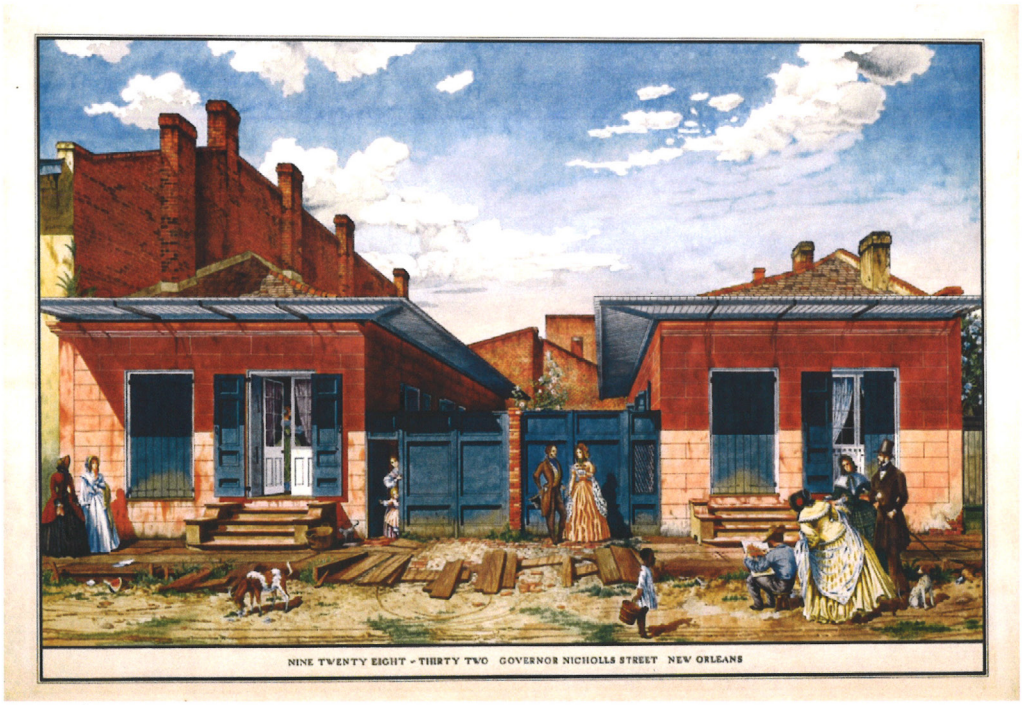
***Cuisine en hauteur* behind a townhouse.**
Mugnier photo, courtesy LSMA.



Kitchen building behind 915 St. Ann
Boyd Cruise painting, ca 1937. LSMA.

The term *appentis* refers to a shed roof in French. In colonial times, shed-roofed buildings were often used as service structures set in courtyards behind the main house. They served as storage "*magazins*," as stables, as detached kitchens, as quarters for enslaved servants, and as bedroom *garçonnières* for the

teenage men of the family. As in eighteenth century Paris, such buildings were built as if they were one-half of a complete building, each half being set against one side of the party wall which stood along the property line separating urban lots. Their roofs consisted of a single shed with its high side abutted against the brick party wall, and the lower side covering the wall facing the courtyard. The doors of *appentis* buildings opened from the long side directly onto the courtyard. Their roofs were generally hipped, with their (half) hip sheds facing the front and the rear. Curiously, in New Orleans, such "half" buildings were often built as free-standing houses, without the mirror image structure or any other structure being present or even anticipated on the opposite side of the party wall. Many survive.



The pared Hermann *appentis* cottages, 928 and 932 Gov. Nicholls street as painted By Boyd Cruise for the HABS ca. 1937. Courtesy LSMA. They are extant.

Here is one of the unanswered mysteries of New Orleans architecture. For some unknown reason in the 1794-1810 period, New Orleans residents began moving their *appentis* service structures up to the front of the lots, and treating them as if they were shotgun houses. The paired front doors opened directly onto the banquette or sidewalk. Often, they were the only structures on the lot with the exception of a detached

kitchen and a privy in the rear. This building type remained popular and continued to be built in frame through the 1840s.

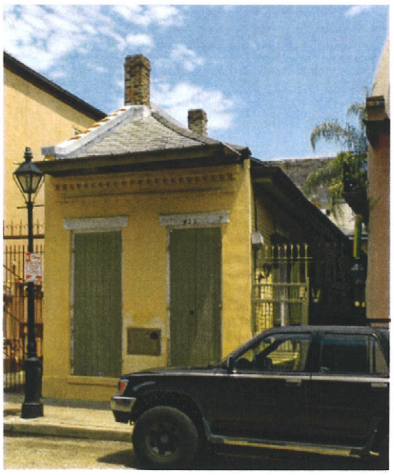
The "Cajun Swamp" shop, an excellent surviving example dating from 1801 stands at 631 Bourbon Street, its *briquette entre poteaux* walls and "Norman" roof truss exposed to view from the interior.



Two dependency buildings back to back. Herman-Grima house, French Quarter



The "Cajun Swamp Shop", 631 Bourbon St. Built, 1801.



Free-standing *appentis* single, 422 Burgundy. Ca. 1830.

Single Shotguns and North Shore Cottages

If we consider shotgun houses to be linear cottages with gabled or pedimented fronts, there is evidence that they begin to be built in relatively small numbers in the first decade of the nineteenth century. The Lafon

surveys have indications of what appear to be several gable-fronted linear cottages in 1808. By the 1820s, frame, gable-fronted shotgun houses begin appearing in Faubourg Marigny.

Another phase in the growing popularity of the shotgun occurs prior to the antebellum period. New Anglo residents of the Garden District begin to construct shotguns with double side galleries and with an "Ell" or "Tee" at the rear. None remains in its original appearance. The 1840s and 1850s witnessed severe Yellow Fever epidemics in New Orleans. Residents, who could afford to do so, deserted the city in summer and early fall for more rural places. Communities on the north shore of Lake Pontchartrain became popular. Mandeville, in St. Tammany parish, developed by Bernard de Marigny in 1834, became the site of a new variant of the shotgun--the North Shore house in the last decades of the 19th century. Builders duplicated a style of *ti-kay* (shotgun) found in Haiti, though it was probably modeled most directly on the Side-Galleried Shotguns of New Orleans. Like the Haitian houses, it often had a series of doors along its flanks. It is not known whether this represented stimulus diffusion, independent invention, or convergent evolution. Double Side Gallery Shotguns continued to be constructed in several parts of New Orleans, though in limited numbers.



A North Shore type *ti-kay* north of Haiti.



Side gallery cottage, one of four, designed by Mondelli and Port-au-Prince, Reynolds, architects, 1836. Euturbe St., Lower Garden District. NONA 042.015.

A Synthetic Perspective on Shotgun Origins

The "narrow lot theory" of Wilson and those who follow him is insufficient to account for the origins of the shotgun house in New Orleans. This is not to claim that it is wrong. It probably accounts for a proportion of the motivation for selection of linear style houses, but it remains woefully incomplete. If we are to provide a satisfactory and balanced account of the rise of the shotgun in New Orleans, we must add other perspectives: social, economic, technological and architectural. This brings us to our second unanswered question about early Linear Cottage architecture in New Orleans. If we are willing to adopt our anthropological perspective on vernacular architecture, we have the problem of explaining how the people of the city were willing to accept such an unusual and alien floorplan as that of the Linear Cottage Single. Most of the people who commissioned houses in this period were whites, French and increasingly Anglo-Americans. Both groups were used to the same kind of cottages and houses. They were rectangular with their front doors in the long side and with two or more rooms side by side. On entering the house, one might choose to go into the more formal parlor, the informal all-purpose kitchen or into a private section of the house. You did this by turning left or right from the front door. Linear cottages offered no such possibilities. Here, you entered into a single front room, which gave access to another and another. In traversing the house you passed through all of the kinds of zones, private, public, intimate, etc. that it had to offer.

Houses like the shotgun are really quite inconvenient as seen from the perspective of Euro-American ground rules for house layout. They afford no privacy at all for the residents, and the division between communal and private spaces is exactly what the European house is all about. Henry Glassie has written perceptively about the division of European and American houses into public, communal and private spaces (*Vernacular Architecture*, 2000. Bloomington: Indiana University press.). The lineal cottage violates all of these European-based principles, so why would anyone begin trading in their Creole Cottages for shotgun type floorplans? Our question is answered if we believe that the enormous numbers of Haitian

refugees who came to New Orleans in the first decade of the nineteenth century were pre-programmed, so to speak, to reside comfortably in Single width Linear Cottage – for many, it was their natal house form. In a sense, they demanded to have it replicated in their new homeland whenever they had any choice over the design and construction of their own residences.

This fails to explain, however, why native born Louisiana Creoles began to build houses with the same floorplan, some of them even before the large influxes of Haitians to New Orleans. What was their model and what were they attempting to accomplish? I cannot explain this. It will have to remain one of the open questions to be investigated more fully by the next generation of students of New Orleans vernacular. What I can do, however, is to account for some of the other phenomena connected with the growth of the shotgun from a small minority of the houses of the city to one which was dominant throughout much of it by the 1870s and 1880s.

The Landlady Effect: A Social Perspective:

The rise of the linear cottage in the period following 1810 becomes more fully understandable when set against the background of racial demography and the sociology of the Early Republican period in New Orleans. Under the more liberal manumission laws and protections for the rights of enslaved workers of the previous Spanish administration (1759-1803), Louisiana had developed a society with three legally defined castes or strata: free citizens (white Creoles and Europeans), free people of color (manumitted Creoles or those born of free *mulattas*), and the enslaved (a few *mulattos* but mostly Creole *negres,* and *bozales*—"salt water" slaves).

The demographic patterns of free people of color in New Orleans in the first decades of the American period are worthy of note: Among the *gens de colour libres* caste in 1820, the sex ratio was only 63.88. The sex ratios were reversed on rural plantations, but in the city there were only sixty-four males for every one hundred females of marriageable age (14 - 45 years). This remarkable imbalance meant that many

free females of color would not find a mate within their class, even if they had wanted one, which many did not. Within French Creole society the institution of *plaçage*—extra-legal formalized hypergamy--arose to fill the gap. Young *quadroon* ("quarter-blooded") women were described as "highly educated externally [outside of Louisiana], and probably as beautiful and accomplished a set of women as can be found." In their late teens, light-skinned free women of color were introduced and, after considerable background research on the part of their mothers or family members, eventually contracted to well-to-do free white males. The institution was neither equivalent to marriage nor to concubinage. The men entailed considerable financial and other formal obligation to their *placées*. Men typically provided their mates with a small house on or near *rue de Rampart* and a stipend, and they publically acknowledged the parentage of the children who bore the name of the father and received the sacraments of the Catholic Church. Many *placées* claimed family inheritance on the death of their "husband/lovers." For the white male there were several kinds of benefits. Contemporary observer Frederick Law Olmsted is quoted as saying that for many young men, the life of *plaçage* was simply "much cheaper than living at hotels and boarding houses," but he clearly underestimated the power of the attractiveness of the quadroon lady.

The upside of the arrangement was that it left many young free women of color in a better financial position than they might otherwise have been. The downside was that, for most, the arrangement was impermanent. After several years many of the white men married women of their own class and either then or later, terminated the arrangement. The result was a large number of abandoned *plaçage* divorcees who were financially comfortable and property owners. Land values were increasing almost exponentially in

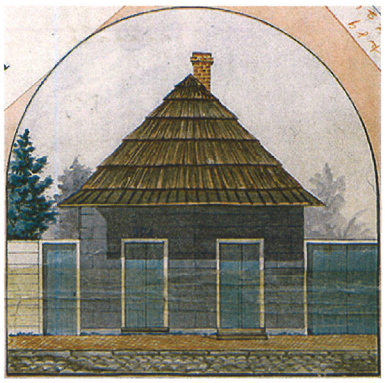
these decades in New Orleans. The streets of the quarter were being paved in the 1820s. Many free women of color became successful business women, specializing in rental property and rooming houses in the rapidly expanding city. "Later in life these women were renowned for their successful businesses: rooming houses accommodating white gentlemen." As historian, Gayarré described them, "those furnished rooms were models of Dutch cleanliness." They served hot coffee in the mornings and had a tub of hot water drawn on the tenant's return in the evening. "They were intent on guessing at your wants, on anticipating your wishes...." "The female quadroons may be said to have monopolized the renting, at high prices, of furnished rooms to the whites of the male sex. This they easily did, for it was difficult to equal them in attention to their tenants, and those tenants would indeed have been very hard to please if they had not been satisfied."

In the Spanish slang of New Orleans, the *plaçée* herself was known as the *casa chica* or "little house" (presumably, the white wife lived in the *casa grande* or big house). One of the most interesting of the un-researched questions about this period concerns the relationship between the free women of color and their little houses. Many lived in the "Quadroon Quarter"--the northernmost sector of the Quarter, bounded roughly by Rampart Street, Esplanade Ave., St. Peter, and Bourbon streets. They commissioned both their own houses and rental properties on narrow lots in this area, and created an atmosphere in which narrow houses, including particularly the linear cottage, came to be associated with a certain excellence of lifestyle. "There are, in some streets, long blocks of one-story houses, with one or two rooms built purposely to be let out to bachelors. Indeed, there are neither hotels nor boarding-houses enough to accommodate one-tenth

part of this class of male"

Was it, perhaps, this association with pampered living which was remembered by their increasingly wealthy and influential tenants in future years when shotgun houses began to be built as the primary residences of successful businessmen all over the growing city? Perhaps, a shared architectonic *jouissance* helped to turn the lowly shotgun into a favored form of New Orleans residence. It was certainly the most Historically obvious mechanism by which Anglo men were introduced to the unique linear cottage of New Orleans. But who originally designed and built these houses for the quadroon landladies?

Refugee free men of color who had been carpenters, masons, plasterers and cabinet makers in Saint-Domingue, picked up their professions once again in New Orleans. Among free men of color the profession of carpenter is listed as the most common by far. Take the example of Pierre Roup, *h.c.l.* (free man of color). Roup was a builder and contractor who arrived in New Orleans in 1805. By 1808 he is listed as a property owner in the Quadroon Quarter, owning four lots. He appears to have been comfortable building a localized form of the *maison longue* with which he was previously familiar in Saint Domingue, and his native Gonaïves. Over the next two decades, he and his wife, Coralie Faffite (*f.c.l.* and niece of Jean Laffite), bought and sold properties in the Quarter, Marigny, and along the Bayou Road. Roup died in 1836 in a house almost certainly of his design--a four-room deep Single Shotgun style house at 374 Rue d'amour (1744 N. Rampart Street in Marigny). He and several of his free colored contemporaries, such as Bartholemew Bacas and Jacques Tinchant, specialized in building both Creole cottages and shotgun houses.



Ca. 1829 Single on Rue d'amour (Rampart in Marigny), where Pierre Roup died in 1836. He is almost certainly the builder of this Haitian style Linear Cottage.

Contemporary observers make special mention of the houses of the "quadroon" women: "Those pretty and peculiar houses, whole rows of which may be seen in the Ramparts," and "Those peculiar little dwellings near the Ramparts." Creole cottages had been commonplace in the French Quarter since early colonial times. They were found throughout the Quarter, not confined to "the Ramparts," so observations of the 1830s about the peculiarity of the local houses almost certainly refer to the more recently popular linear cottages. Conceivably, they may also have referred to the unusual single room wide, two and three bay Creole cottages which were also fairly popular in the Ramparts area, except that other commentators refer to the new houses as "low" (see above). Creole cottages in this era are one and one-half stories tall.

By the 1830s and 1840s, the shotgun form was becoming accepted as a basic housetype throughout the Creole faubourgs and beyond, not only among free people of color and their renters but, increasingly, among both white and black businesspeople. Many of these new linear cottages were built only two rooms

deep. Each residence was served with a detached kitchen, servants' quarters and privies in the rear yard. Also during this period, the clapboard or board-and-batten cladded shotgun became increasingly popular. An example of an 1830s shotgun presumed to be prototypical is the Greek Revival style frame house at 1031 Clouet (in Bywater).

An important innovation resulting from the sizable number of rental linear cottages being built was the Side-Hall and Side-Gallery Shotgun. The evolution is clearly seen in the floorplans of linear cottages, so carefully documented by the artists of the sales affiches archived in the NONA. Whether single or double wide, they share two distinctive features. Rental rooms were always set at the rear of the main house; they are distinguished by not having direct access into the front portion of the residence where the landladies lived. Rather, the renter had to pass outside to get to and from the street. In order to further the passage of renters to their rooms, side-hall and side-gallery linear cottages provided access under a roof to the rear rental rooms. The same passageways permitted landladies to service the rooms in all kinds of weather when the renters were absent. An early approximation of the side hall and side gallery accommodation may be seen in certain early linear cottages which have extended roofs running down one side of the building only.

The Economic Impact: Creole Cottage vs. Shotgun

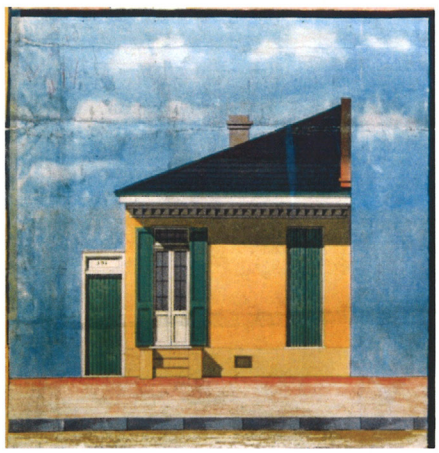
Assuming that you are faced with the decision of building a single family Creole cottage or a linear cottage type house of similar square living footage, which kind of house would you wish to build? The costs of

construction are clearly an important factor in selection of a building type. Inexpensive, machine cut framing material in standard sizes was becoming available in these decades. Most shotgun type houses could be built without the use of heavy framing and specially fitted roof trusses. Ceiling joists did not have to support a second story as they did on the post 1820 Creole cottages.

During the 1820s and 1830s, a good shotgun house could be built for about $500.00. However, such humble buildings are not recorded in builders' contracts of the period. As a first and very rough approximation, I collected data on sixteen probable Creole cottages and fifteen probable linear cottages (sometimes described as "low houses") built between 1814 and 1839. The information was gleaned from the building contract data base housed in the HNOC. The average construction cost of the Creole cottage group was $3,058.50, while the mean cost of the linear cottage house type was $1,258.00. The mean date of construction of the Creole cottage group was March, 1832, and that of the linear group was April, 1833. My tentative conclusion is that in these decades it was approximately twice as expensive to build a Creole cottage as it was to build a linear cottage of approximately the same floorspace; clearly, for many, a motivation for the selection of shotgun type houses.

The Greek Revival Revolution: An Architectural Theory:

By 1834 a truly remarkable transformation was underway in New Orleans vernacular architecture. The hugely popular pattern books of Asher Benjamin (1838, 1843) and Minard Lafever (1833) were being used as guides by builders across the country. Architects formally trained in classical "Greek Revival" forms such as those depicted in these pattern books had begun to arrive in New Orleans. Two were particularly significant: James Gallier Sr. (1798-1866) arrived in New Orleans in 1834, and James Dakin (1806-1852) followed in 1835. Almost immediately they began to have an impact on local architectural styles. Soon, Greek Revival fever was sweeping the increasingly prosperous city. Builders and contractors who labored to construct the mansions and public buildings designed by these architects were soon applying similar decorative treatments to their own more modest commissions. Those who built even humble traditional dwellings began to add elegant new forms of decoration to the facades of their otherwise commonplace cottages. Dental frieze moldings outcropped immediately below the eaves of the roof. Doorways sometimes receded behind open vestibules in imitation of the Greek *prothyron,* or domestic entrance hall.



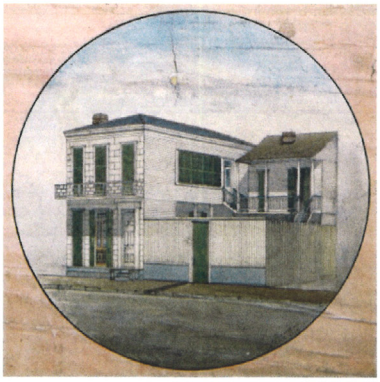
Ca. 1830 *appentis* Cottage on Treme. NONA 090.014.



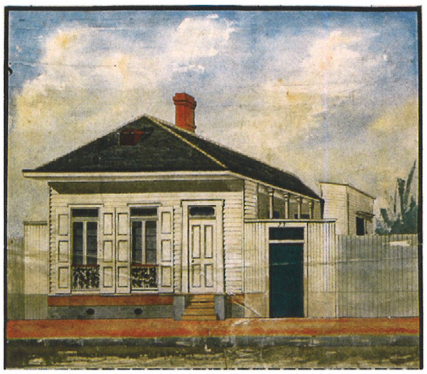
Ca. 1850 3-Bay Side Hall with full entablature. NONA 001.010.

Decorative treatments of doors came to include any combination of transom lights, side-lights, classical columns, entablatures and, increasingly, pediments -- all considered "Greek Revival" elements. Among

the more popular stylistic innovations were trapezoidal shaped door surrounds which sprouted up on vernacular structures throughout the city, even on humble shotgun houses.



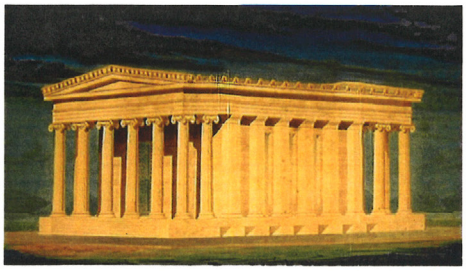
3-Bay Duplex with pseudo ashlar Façade c. 1839. NONA 070.019.



Side Hall Shotgun with Greek Key door surround, ca. 1845. NONA 078.047.

These surrounds were referred to as "mouldings with diminshed architraves" in building contracts of the period. Since the 1970s they have been called "Greek Key""architraves by New Orleans architectural historians. All of these elements were, in fact, a new reworking of the Classical Revival which had been popular in America since the 1780s.

This stylistic revolution is curiously coincident with the rise of the gable fronted shotgun house and the end of construction of new Creole cottages. They co-occur beginning in the 1835 - 1845 decade. Could they possibly be causally linked? I believe that they are. It is difficult to Greek Revivalize a Creole cottage. The steep gable roof is unlike the massing of any classical building so the entablature must be very tall to mask the shape of the roof. On the other hand, a linear cottage with a gabled front is simply a Greek temple form in miniature. All that is required is the addition of Classical Revival columns, pilasters, entablature and a pediment and, OIPA! you have your own Greek temple.



Chas. Dakin design for Duane St. Church. Courtesy NOPL.



Shotgun in Classical Revival Trim Chartres St. in Holy Cross.



3222 Baudin, near Jeff Davis. Classic Revival Camelback abandoned to the weeds.



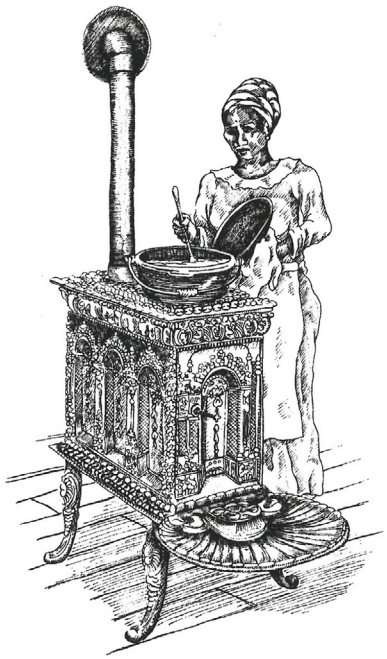
128 S. Lopez. Pedimented Classical Revival.

Jump ahead two decades to 1855 and you find such a variety of Greek Revivalized shotgun houses throughout every district of the city that the term architectural revolution is not an exaggeration. By the end of the 1840s, the single room wide linear cottage had become popular with both working class and middle class Anglo businessmen, as well as with Germans, Irish and other European immigrants. They began to construct larger and more elegant shotgun houses for themselves in the new neighborhoods of the Garden District, the Irish Channel, Faubourg Pontchartrain, Carrollton, and elsewhere throughout the American sector. The shotgun grew to four or more rooms deep with rear extensions. Side-Hall and Side-Gallery Shotguns were popular, as were Doubles. Gable fronts replaced earlier hip roofs and abat vents. Elaborate Greek Revival and Italianate entablatures were added to the facades of whole groups shotgun houses, now being built in rows and entire squares. Some were raised a

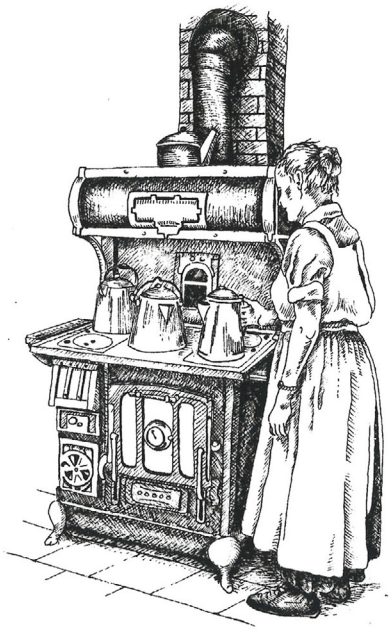
full story on a masonry ground floor or on pillars. Others were built two full stories in height.

The Camelback House, A Technological Transformation

With the spectacular coincident growth of the urban population and the cypress lumber industry in Louisiana in the 1870s and 1880s, the number of wooden houses mushroomed. Growing prosperity among working class people resulted in a variety of expansions of the shotgun house--the old linear cottage still had a few tricks up its sleeve. As early as the 1830s, and continuing through the 1870s, it was not unusual for single story shotguns and doubles to have detached two-story *cuisine/garçonnier* service buildings at the rear. The kitchen was on the first floor and the second story functioned for servants' quarters, bachelor's rooms, and rental spaces. With the appearance of increasingly inexpensive and convenient cast iron stoves pouring from retooled iron foundries following the Civil War, detached kitchens might be safely brought up and connected directly to the rear walls of the houses, or the two might be joined by an extension.



A cook working at a cast iron cook stove, Ca. 1840.

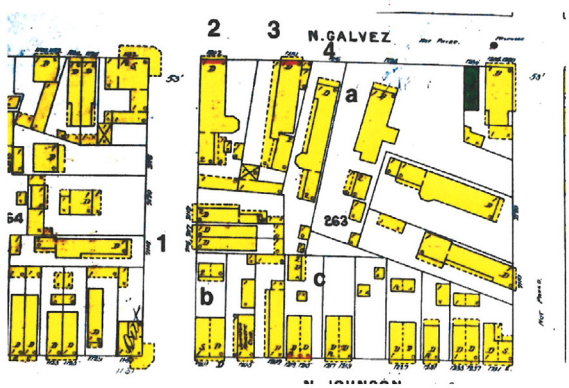


A housewife cooking on a ca. 1880s Cast iron cook stove.

When a two-story kitchen unit is attached directly to the rear of the single-story shotgun or Shotgun Double, the result is the curious and unique Camelback house. Proto-Camelbacks appear in small numbers in all stages of attachment in the 1876 Sanborns, and by the 1896 edition, Camelbacks, fully formed, are commonplace.



Proto-Camelback house with two-story Kitchen, Arabi.



1896 Sanborn map of a block in Tremé. Numbers = houses w. attached kitchens. Letters = detached 2-story kitchens.

During Reconstruction, the second floor bedroom over the kitchen, once a slave quarter or rental unit, is given a new role as the secluded master bedroom. Homeowners had created a new zone of undisturbed privacy in the otherwise very public shotgun house. Soon, the rear kitchen section is fully integrated with the shotgun front, creating the familiar New Orleans Camelback.

A remarkable variety of "Victorian" shotgun forms appear in the late nineteenth century. Double Shotguns become more popular than single-wide shotguns. The shotgun is expanded creatively into two-story single shotguns (sometimes called "Duplexes"), and double-wide versions of these (Fourplexes). The two-story-tall shotgun merges with the East Coast style two-story townhouse so that in many cases it is not possible to tell which form is the progenitor. With the appearance of elaborate but inexpensive machine-manufactured wooden decoration from steam-powered sawmills and sash and blind companies, the shotgun is dressed up in Italianate, Eastlake, Queen Anne, and other popular styles of the day. The "bracket style" is also popular in the 1880-1900 decades. The last two decades of the nineteenth century witness a cultural florescence in which the once humble shotgun enjoys enormous expansion and decorative variation in every part of the city. It has become an architectural canvas on which every family may paint its own new distinctive autobiography of cultural identity and social success.

VI. CONCLUSION

The story of the shotgun house is hardly complete with this report. More historical and survey data remain to be gathered. New perspectives and angles of interpretation are required. More neighborhoods remain to be completely surveyed. The story of the bracketed style Victorian shotgun has not yet been told.

This report represents the first of a two-part report. The second part will be submitted in 2010. Thanks to the Louisiana Division of Historic Preservation, and the Historic American Building Survey, the work will continue through June of that year, and hopefully beyond. It is our hope that by broadening the history of an American vernacular house type, and by having the privilege of conducting historical research on its many transformations and social meanings, we will have opened a new chapter in the culture history of one of our oldest urban vernacular houses.

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