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Vol. 1 of 2

HISTORIC LAND USE STUDY  
OF  
A PORTION OF THE BARATARIA UNIT  
OF  
THE JEAN LAFITTE NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

Prepared for the  
Jefferson Historical Society  
and the  
Jean Lafitte National Historical Park

PART I

Betsy Swanson  
January 15, 1988

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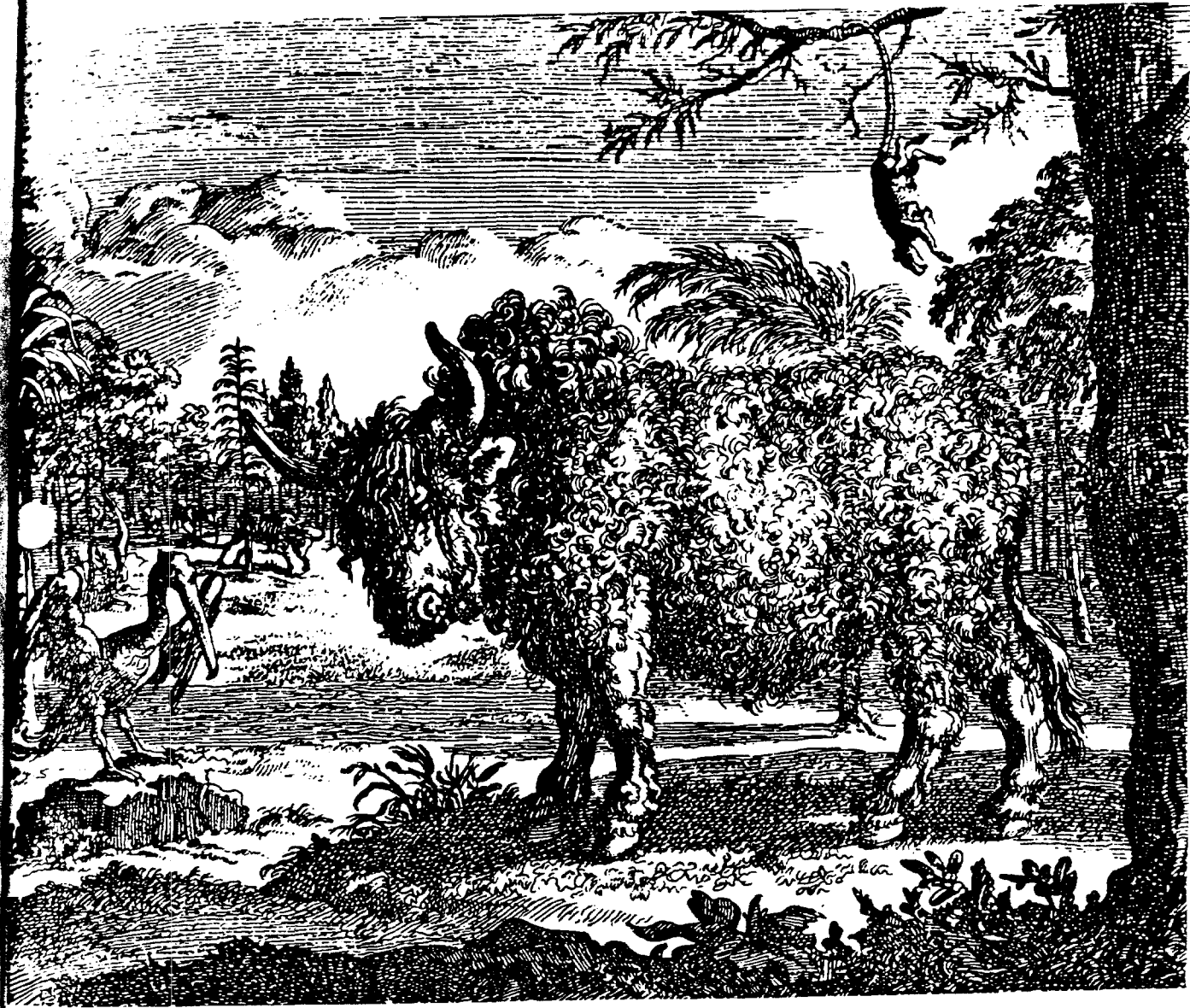


Illustration from Father Louis Hennepin, A New Discovery of  
A Vast Country in America, vol. 1 (London: Printed for M.  
Bentley, J. Tonson, H. Bonwick, T. Goodwin, and S. Manship,  
1698), p. 90. SCD/TUL.

## THE WAY THROUGH THE WOODS

They shut the road through the woods  
Seventy years ago.  
Weather and rain have undone it again,  
And now you would never know  
There was once a road through the woods  
Before they planted the trees.  
It is underneath the coppice and heath,  
And the thin anemones.  
Only the keeper sees  
That, where the ring-dove broods,  
And the badgers roll at ease,  
There was once a road through the woods.

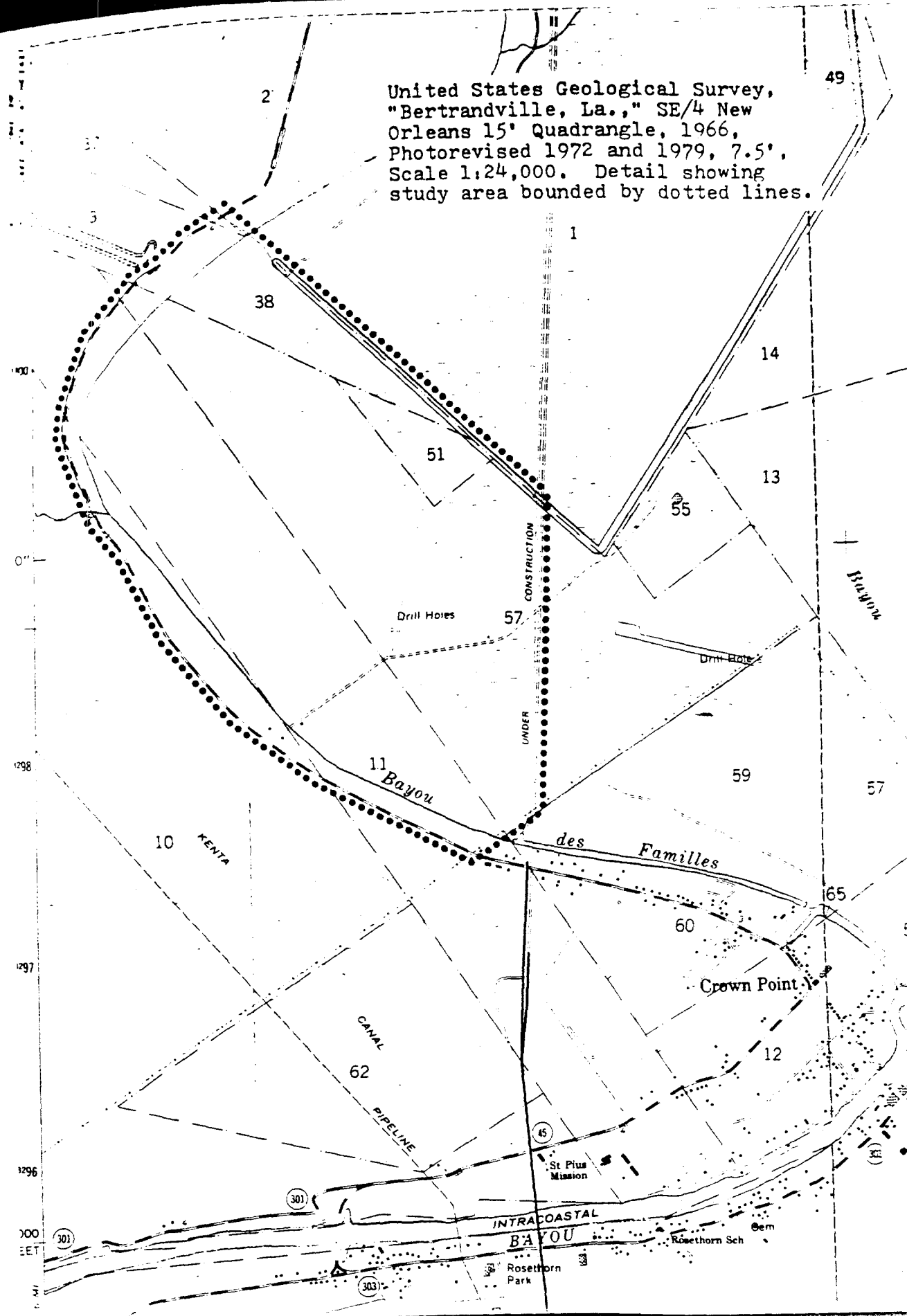
Yet, if you enter the woods  
Of a summer evening late,  
When the night-air cools on the trout-ringed pools  
Where the otter whistles his mate,  
(They fear not men in the woods,  
Because they see so few.)  
You will hear the beat of a horse's feet,  
And the swish of a skirt in the dew,  
Steadily cantering through  
The misty solitudes,  
As though they perfectly knew  
The old lost road through the woods...  
But there is no road through the woods.

Rudyard Kipling



Chemin de Barataria/Camino Real de Barataria/Old Barataria Road,  
in southern part of study area, looking southeast. 3/86.

United States Geological Survey,  
"Bertrandville, La.," SE/4 New  
Orleans 15' Quadrangle, 1966,  
Photorevised 1972 and 1979, 7.5',  
Scale 1:24,000. Detail showing  
study area bounded by dotted lines.



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## SUMMARY OF REPORT

This report documents historic land use and identifies historic sites and features in that portion of the Barataria Unit of the Jean Lafitte National Historical Park which lies east of Highway 45. The study area measures approximately two miles by one and one-quarter miles. It represents a relatively undisturbed example of an abandoned Mississippi River deltaic distributary, the Barataria-des Familles Distributary. It is composed of the old river's natural levees, filled channel with upland hardwood forest, cypress swamp beyond the backslope of the natural levee, and the old scour channel (Bayou des Familles). The entire geological feature is undergoing subsidence, and the vegetation reflects this process.

The study attempts to detail the historic land uses, land ownerships, and the human alterations to the natural environment. The entire environment is, to some degree, man-altered. Chapter I discusses the historical reapportionment of the wilderness by man.

Chapter II outlines French and early Spanish settlement. The earliest French land grant to the area including the study area was made in 1726. The grantee established a tobacco and cotton plantation on the land. By the early Spanish Period, the land surrounding and including the study area had been divided into a series of tracts.



Chapter III relates the history of the Canary Islander settlement established along Bayou des Familles by the Spanish government in 1779. Several probable Spanish building sites have been located in the study area. The Chemin de Barataria/Camino Real de Barataria/Old Barataria Road, now used in part as a park trail, dates back at least to this period.

Chapter IV treats settlement of the late Spanish Period, following the abandonment of the area by most of the Isleños because of floods. Several farms were located in the study area in the late eighteenth century.

Chapter V concerns the early American Period, or the first half of the nineteenth century. Crossing French and Spanish grants held many of the properties in litigation during this period, however, a number of the tracts were inhabited. Sugarcane was first grown in the study area or nearby in the early 1800s.

Chapter VI describes the Christmas Plantation, a sugar plantation established immediately after the Civil War. A number of features and sites associated with the Christmas Plantation were located during field surveys, including field ditches and furrows, roads, and building sites.

Chapter VII, Plantation Backlands, describes properties east of the Christmas Plantation that remained wooded and were used for logging and livestock grazing.

Chapter VIII lists and maps extant road beds and possible road beds of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in the study area. Some of these roads are used as park trails, while others are overgrown by the forest.

Chapter IX, the Paper Subdivision, describes an attempt to establish a housing subdivision on a portion of the study area, as well as other twentieth century uses to which the land was put. A principal feature of this period is the pecan orchard, planted when the subdivision was laid out in 1910.

Chapter X gives the history of the Crown Point Oil Field which is in part located in the study area. The oil drill sites of the 1960s and 1970s are described and mapped.

Humans have exploited the environment of the study area for 2000 years and, in so doing, have altered the land. A spectrum of prehistoric and historic activities typical of man's occupation of the Mississippi River Delta have impacted the natural setting of the study area. The original habitats have been largely modified, and countless man-made features have reshaped the ground itself. The man-altered, unnatural wilderness that is reinstating itself is a demonstration of the complex interrelationship of natural and human history in the Mississippi River Delta.

Because of the dense vegetation in the study area, many more cultural features may yet remain unlocated. The numerous sites and features discovered by this study suggest that a similar number may exist outside of the study area in other portions of the park unit.

## INTRODUCTION

This study was conceived by James L. Isenogle, Superintendent of the Jean Lafitte National Historical Park, in response to the suggestion of Rev. Msgr. Henry C. Bezou, President of the Jefferson Historical Society, and Chris Lochbaum, Chairman of the Jefferson Historical Commission, that a cooperative historical project be undertaken by the Society and the Park. The idea for the study was first advanced in 1984. It was carried out between July, 1985 and January, 1988 as a cooperative agreement between the Society and the Park, under the Superintendency of Mr. Isenogle and the Presidencies of Albert J. Robichaux, Jr. and Hilda Knoff. The Chairman of the Study Committee was Society Board Member Frank Ehret, Jr.

Others serving on the Board of Directors were Loretta P. Brehm, Esther L. Eble, Annie Justice, Joseph M. Miller, Gertrude M. Beauford, Lou Douglass, Janet Foster, Everette F. Gauthreaux, Collin Hamer, Jr., E. J. Rovira, Jr.; Charles W. Wall, Sr., Florence Schouest, Mary G. Curry, and Louis Senac. Jeanette Lynch of the Jefferson Parish Office of Community Relations, who acts as Office Secretary to the Jefferson Historical Society, facilitated the business aspects of the project.

The purpose of the study, as defined by the contract, was to "identify the location and significance of cultural features in the area of the Park east of Louisiana Highway 45 and to reveal the history of human activity there." The Jean Lafitte National Historical Park was established in 1978 "in order to preserve for the education, inspiration and benefit of present and future generations significant examples of natural and

historical resources of the Mississippi Delta region and to provide for their interpretation in such manner as to portray the development of cultural diversity in the region . . . ." The study area is located in the Park's Barataria Unit which is located in Jefferson Parish (County).

This study could not have been accomplished without the volunteer assistance of many individuals. Foremost among these were Bethlyn McCloskey, who provided working quarters; Rose Marie Bauer, who donated innumerable hours in archival assistance; and Michael Comardelle, who provided indispensable help in field survey work.

Important contributions were made to the substance of the report by Sally K. Reeves; Barbara Holmes; Paul Newfield, III; Gerald L. Schroeder, Jr.; David Muth; and Paul Ramp. Especially important oral history contributions were made by Frank Ehret, Jr.; Louis V. Ehret; and Percy Prestenbach, Sr. The study is also especially indebted to Msgr. Henry C. Bezou; James J. McLain; Fontaine Martin; Diane Ribando; Barry Kohl; and Guillermo Nájuez-Falcón, Manuscripts Librarian of the Special Collections Division of the Tulane University Library.

Significant finds were made as a result of field surveys made by members of the Delta Chapter of the Louisiana Archaeological Society. These members were Mr. Comardelle and Mr. Newfield, Marco Giardino, Emily Vincent, Helen S. Landry, Connie Hauschild, Larry Basta, Dan Shipman, Ned Shipman, and Bill Edwards.

David A. White and Steven P. Darwin of the Biology Department of Tulane University, and Linda Glenboski, Ethnobotanist with the

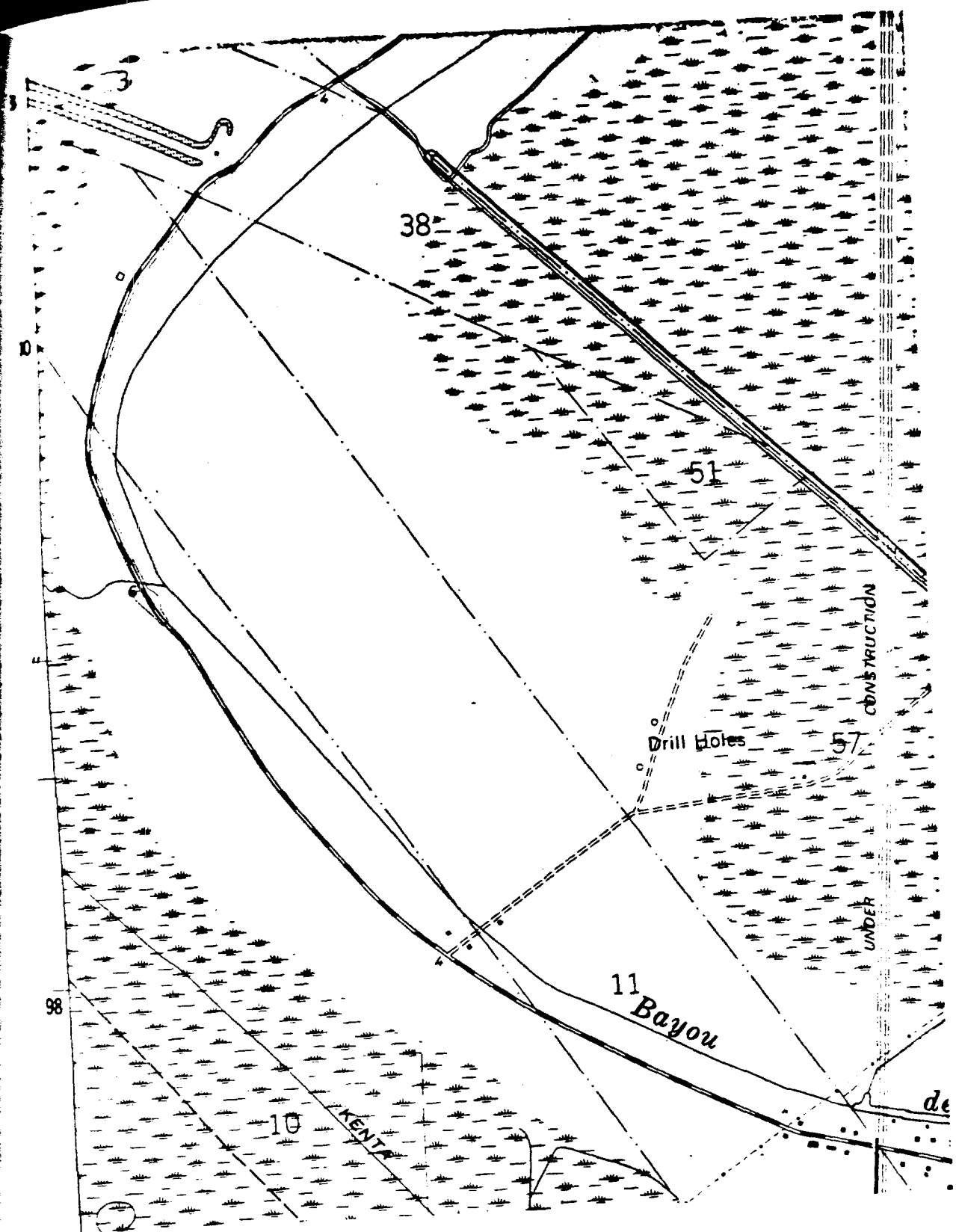
New Orleans District U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, gave botanical information in field tours. Archaeologists Charles Pearson, George Castille, and David Kelley of Coastal Environments, Inc. in Baton Rouge analyzed artifacts found in field surveys.

Others who provided much assistance were Ed Haas and Rose Lambert of the Louisiana State Museum; Arthur Lemann of the Historic New Orleans Collection; Wilber E. Meneray and the staff of the Special Collections Division of the Tulane University Library; Gay Craft of the Louisiana Collection of the Tulane University Library; Collin B. Hamer, Jr. and the staff of the Louisiana Division of the New Orleans Public Library; Marie Windell, Manuscripts Librarian of the Special Collections of the University of New Orleans Library; and John Hughes of the Map and Photo Department of the New Orleans District U. S. Army Corps of Engineers. Melody Webb, Chief Historian of the Southwest Regional Office of the National Park Service, facilitated research for the study in Park Service records in Santa Fe.

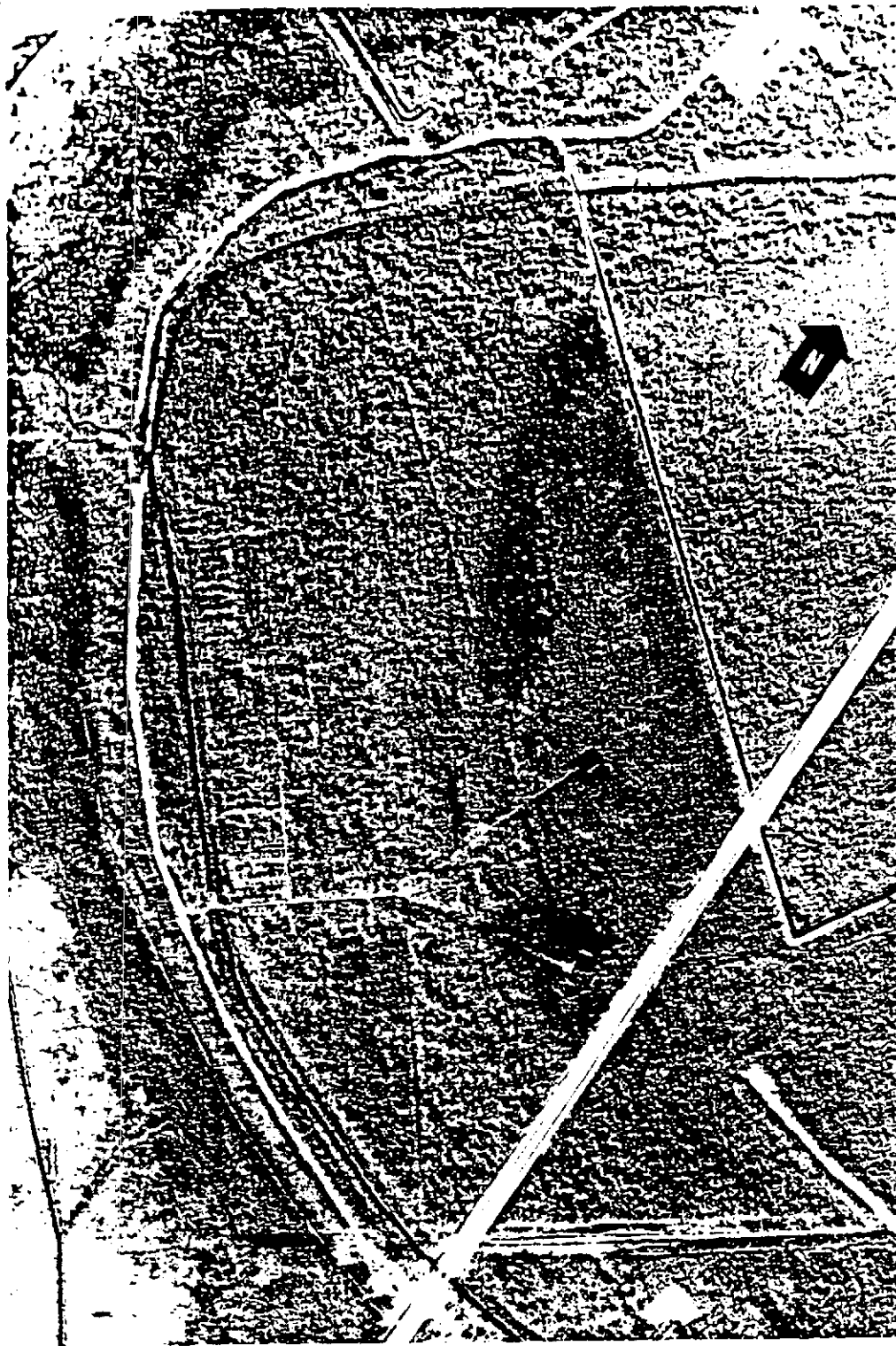
Also helpful were Michael F. Bauer, Jr.; Lynn Muller; Marilyn Smith; and William Hyland. Many hours were donated by Penelope Ballinger in helping to proof and compile the final product.

Abbreviations used in endnotes  
and captions for illustrations

- JPCH - Jefferson Parish Courthouse
- HNOG - Historic New Orleans Collection
- LC/TUL - Louisiana Collection, Tulane University Library
- LSCC/UNO - Louisiana Supreme Court Collection of Legal Archives, Acct. 106, Archives and Manuscripts/  
Special Collections Department, University of  
New Orleans
- NONA - New Orleans Notarial Archives
- SCD/TUL - Special Collections Division, Tulane University  
Library

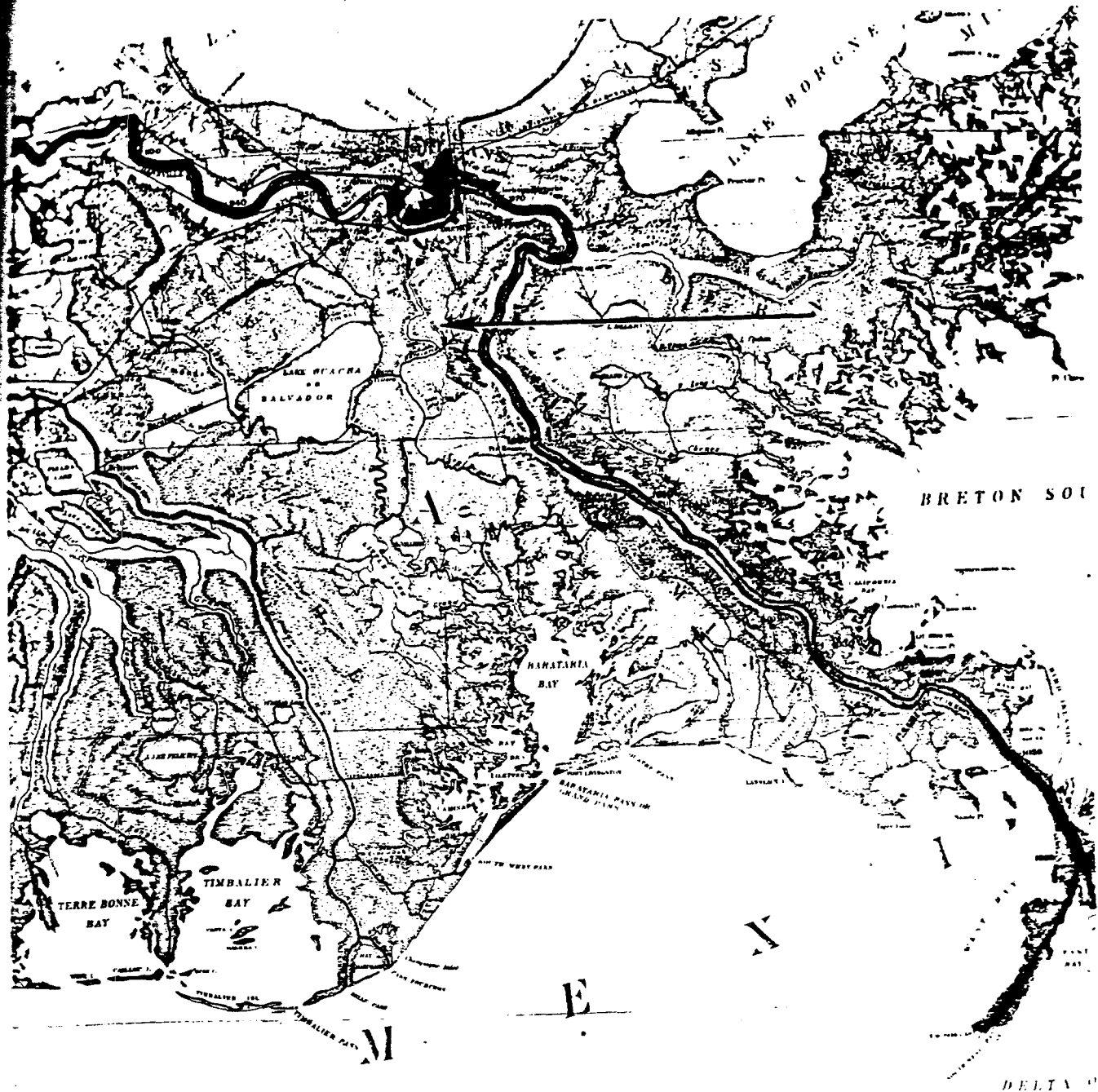


United States Geological Survey, "Bertrandville, La.," 7.5  
 Minute Topographic Quadrangle, 1966, Photorevised 1972 and 1979.  
 Enlarged detail of study area, scale: 1½ inch = 2000 feet.



Study area. Black and white photo from infra-red photo of January 19, 1984, 84039, LN3-RN1, 406, Environmental Monitoring Systems Lab., Office of Research and Development, U. S. Environmental Protection Agency, Las Vegas. Nevada.

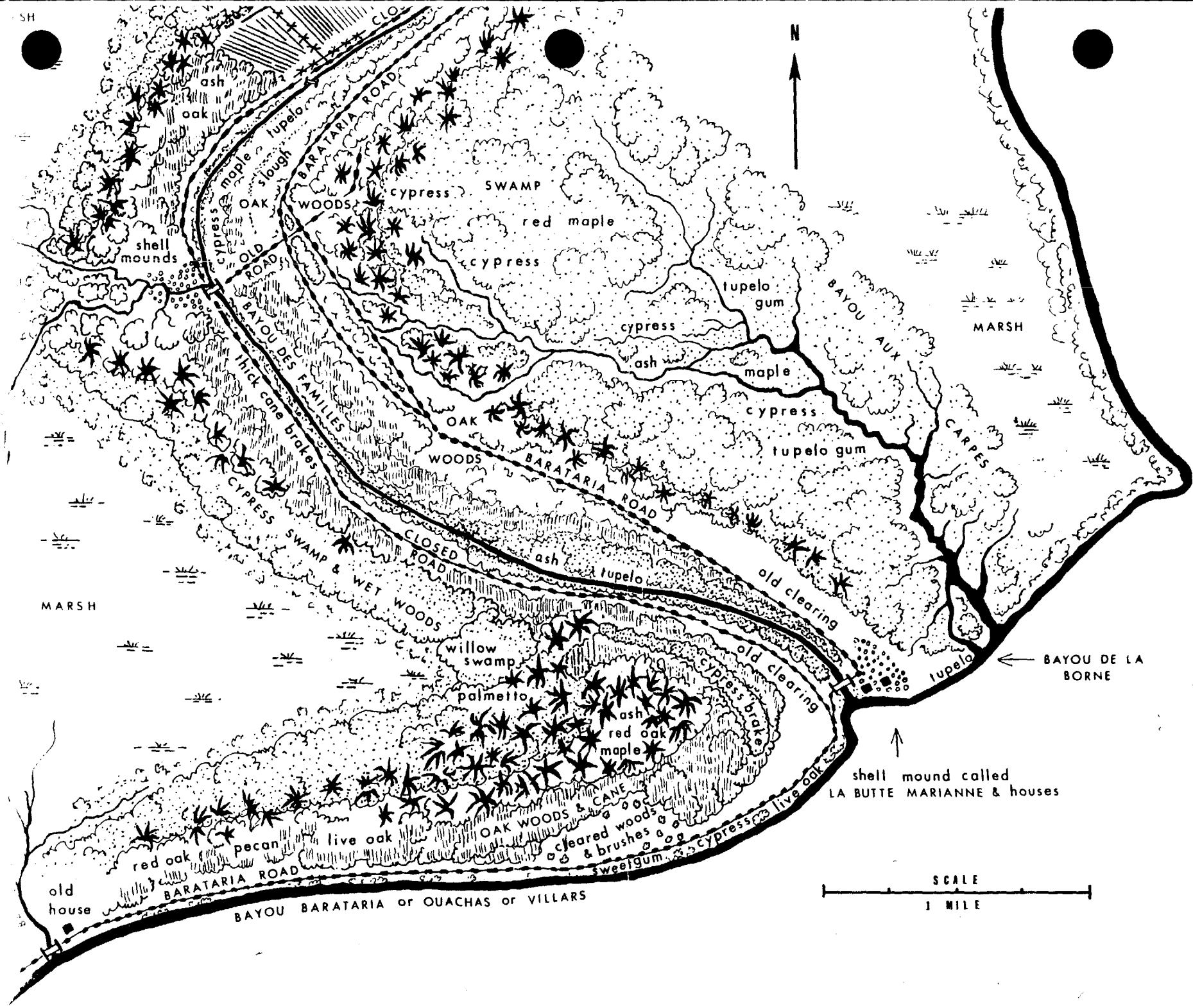




The Barataria Basin. Detail of a map of the Mississippi River Delta, unsigned, undated (about 1885). LC/TUL. Arrow points to study area.



Study area and environs showing confluence of Bayous des Familles and Barataria. Black and white photograph made from a color infrared aerial photograph flown December 14, 1985, Project 58500, frame 1644, detailed enlargement, National Cartographic Information Center, National Space Technology Laboratories, Mississippi. Scale: 1 inch = 4000 feet.



SCALE  
1 MILE

SOURCES USED TO RECONSTRUCT MID-NINETEENTH CENTURY  
TOPOGRAPHY FOR MAP OF "TERRE HAUTE DE BARATARIA"

The principal source of information used in drafting the map was the 1855 field notes of Maurice Hauké, Deputy Surveyor for the United States Surveyor General's Office. The field notes are housed in the Eastern States Office of the Bureau of Land Management in Reston, Virginia. Hauké precisely identified the positions of plant growth, water bodies, agricultural features, roads, fences, swamp lines, and other natural and man-made features as he ran the chain measurements of the various property lines.

A line from the private land claim of Marie Dauberville, widow Bouligny, shows the specificity of information given in the field notes: "Thence on the lower side line of this claim and the upper side line of the claim of Sosthene Roman, Syndic, N. 63 3/4 W. 3.60 chs. cross old road to cane (at 0.69 & 3.40 set new posts) 14.61 chs. to the line between the claim of Sosthene Roman, Syndic, and the claim of Widow Guerbois, set post, Ash 24 in. N. 82 E. 11 lks, Ash 15 in. N. 52 W. 30 lks, continuing between this claim and the claim of Widow Guerbois, 25 chs. leave cane to palmetto, 31.00 chs. enter overflow, 35.00 chs. low swamp, 47.00 chs. enter prairie . . ."

Visual information was taken from maps of the mid-nineteenth century. These maps included:

An unsigned, incomplete, watercolor, ink and pencil cadastral survey map of townships in the Baratavia area, probably dating

from the mid-nineteenth century, LC/TUL.

field survey maps of J. J. Williams, 1842, National Archives, RG 77, Series 161, Cupboard 13, Shelf 1, No. 14 and 15, Box 125, Book 1, pp. 69 and 70.

J. A. d'Hémécourt, "Plan of 31 Valuable Tracts of Land situated in the Parish of Jefferson, District of Barataria," November 3, 1865, attached to act of sale of Rochefort to Chapron, November 11, 1865, E. J. Gottschalk, notary, NONA.

Allou d'Hémécourt, "Plan presentant les pretentions de Mr. Degruise," April 13, 1835, Plan Book 66, folio 18, NONA.

Captain George W. Hughes, "Map of a Military Reconnaissance And Survey of the Approaches to New Orleans between the Mississippi and Atchafalaya Rivers, 1842, National Archives, RG 77, Civil Works Map File, M69-1, versions A and B.

John La Tourette, "La Tourette's Reference Map of the State of Louisiana," drawn 1845, printed 1848, New Orleans, SCD/TUL.

The United States Geological Survey 7.5 minute quadrangle maps "Bertrandville, La.," and "Lake Cataoatche East, La.," both 1966 and photorevised 1972 and 1978, were used as a base for the drafting of the map. In preparing the map, historical topographical information was compared to aerial photographs dating back to 1945. It is apparent that there has been a significant loss of dry land to swamp forest and loss of swamp forest to marsh since the mid-nineteenth century.

In support of documentary evidence, information pertaining to palmetto growth and distribution was provided by personal communication on the part of Paul Ramp, a Tulane University graduate student who is engaged in a study of the "Life History of the Palmetto" in the Barataria Unit.

"Terre Haute de Barataria" (High Land of Barataria) was the name given to the area in the early-to-mid-nineteenth century, according to the testimony of Zenon Trudeau in *Mc Donogh v. De Gruys et al.*, Docket No. 1007, June 2, 1845,

1850000. This court case, and others in the same archive, provided graphic descriptions of the area that were applied in the making of the map. Of special interest is Police Jury of the Parish of Jefferson v. Allou D'Hémécourt and John Mc Donogh, May, 1844, Docket No. 5209.

CHAPTER I

THE WILDERNESS REAPPORTIONED BY MAN

If an original primeval and pristine landscape ever existed in Louisiana, it has long since vanished. Even before European discovery of the American continent, the land was subjected to numerous and widespread man-made changes. Subsequent historic alterations largely transformed the environment of Louisiana. Vast areas were reshaped by agriculture, industry, and urbanization, and most remaining natural areas were significantly man-altered. The processes of human recreation of Louisiana wilderness have been so extensive and so complex, that only a few examples may be mentioned.

The pure longleaf pine forests which, before logging, covered much of Louisiana, were fire sub-climaxes created by aboriginal man. The fire-resistant longleaf pines were the only species which survived the Indian practice of burning to clear the ground for agriculture, and for the gathering of nuts, and to produce better forage for game. Natural plant succession on the prairies and in many bottomland hardwood forests was also altered by fires set by Indians for the same purposes.<sup>1</sup>

Historic agricultural, logging, hunting, and trapping activities, and reclamation and water control projects have had massive impacts on the ecology and appearance of Louisiana's remaining wilderness areas. Millions of forest acres have been denuded and virgin forests do not survive in the State. When reforestation has occurred in clear-cut forest tracts or on abandoned agricultural land the process is so out of keeping with the plant succession growth patterns normally found in



nature, that scientists consider the resulting plant communities to be almost entirely man-made. These include the scrub oak and grassland communities in the pinelands, and the oak-elm-hackberry types in the aluvial bottomlands.<sup>2</sup>

The impact of human activities on cypress swamps has been even greater. Cypress seedlings have exacting water requirements for germination and growth, and they normally regenerate in the proximity of the parent tree. Clear-cut logging and man-made disturbances of wetland conditions have so interfered with cypress regeneration processes that most of Louisiana's great cypress forests have been replaced with sub-dominate tupelo-gum forests, or with marsh or open water.<sup>3</sup>

The traditional practice of trappers in south Louisiana of burning the marshes to favor the growth of muskrat food plants has changed the composition of marsh plant communities. Deep burns, made to improve feeding conditions for migratory waterfowl, have created ponded areas in the marshlands. Abandoned and subsided agricultural reclamation projects have resulted in diked lakes in the marshes. In these geometrically shaped lakes, unusual aquatic plant communities have developed. Other impoundments have been created in the swamps and marshes by dredged canal spoil, road construction, and pipelines, and as a means of floating out timber. Canal-cutting, which allows salt water intrusion from the Gulf of Mexico, has greatly accelerated the natural processes of deltaic deterioration in the coastal marshes and swamps, with extensive land loss. The accelerated processes have resulted in the rapid conversion of

freshwater habitats to brackish and saltwater habitats.<sup>4</sup>

The introduced exotic plants water hyacinth and alligator-weed have exterminated many natural water bodies in the swamps and marshes by choking bayous and forming solid mats over ponds and lakes. Artificial levees on the Mississippi River have been largely responsible for the creation of a type of plant community peculiar to the batture lands. The composition of grasses on the prairies of southwest Louisiana has been altered by the introduction of non-native grasses to improve cattle grazing. Approximately thirty percent of Louisiana's grass species have been introduced from the tropics and from the Old World, and some recently introduced grasses are just as abundantly found in the State as are the native species.<sup>5</sup>

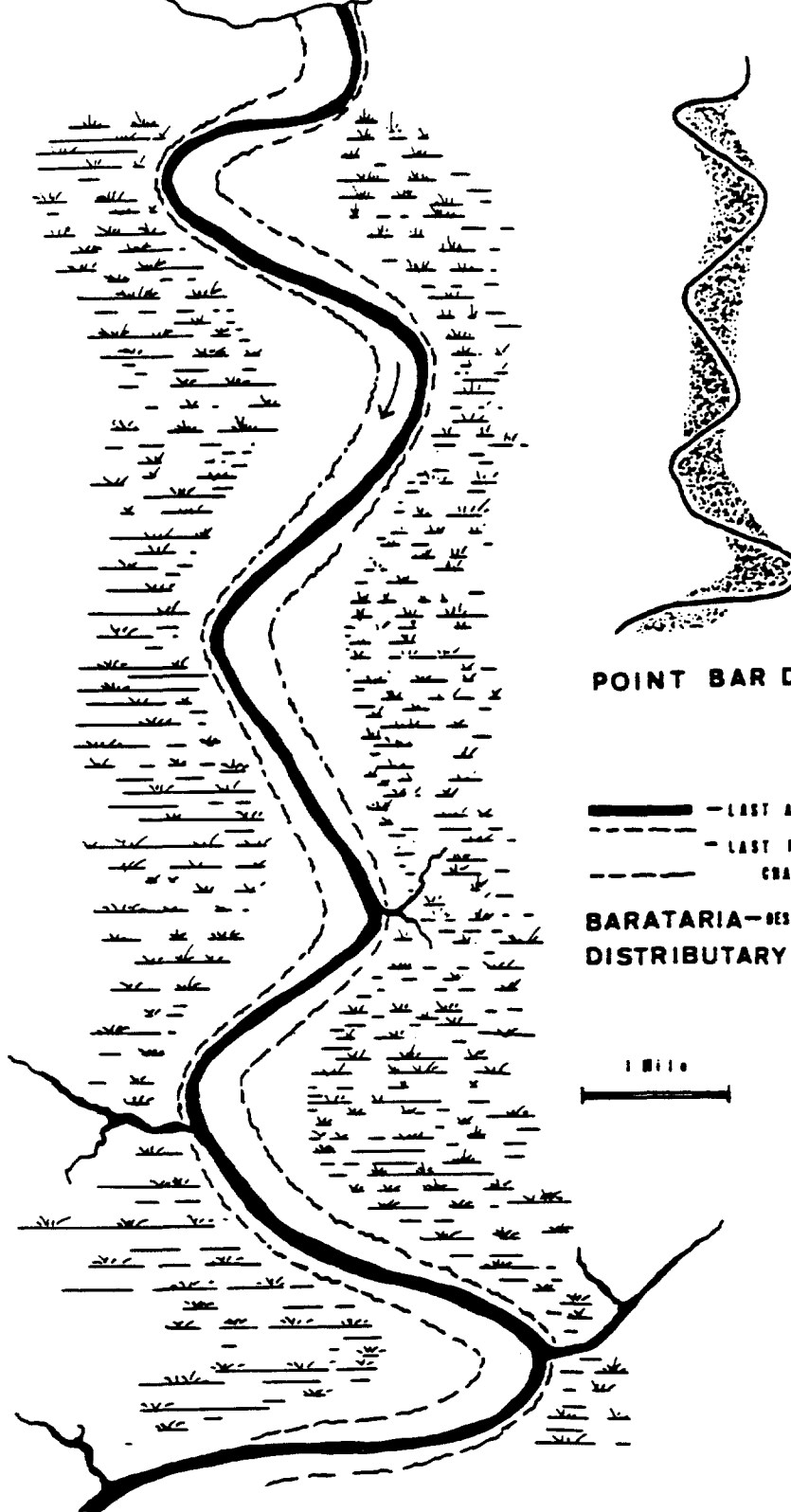
Agricultural and industrial pollutants have altered the biological ecosystem of wilderness areas in Louisiana. The ecological balance of various habitats has also been changed by introduced animals. Many original native wildlife species are no longer found in the State. Some animals and birds that were once plentiful survive in small numbers.

No wild area in Louisiana remains totally unaffected by the activities of man. Surviving wilderness areas therefore reflect both the natural and human history of the State. This dual history is most noticeable in the displacement of the natural relationships between geological formations and their original vegetation. As stated by Geographer Fred B. Kniffen, "Human use of Louisiana, then, has clearly resulted in a reapportionment of the original vegetative species."<sup>6</sup>

An even more dramatic manifestation of historic land use is the man-induced acceleration or retardation of the geologic processes of the land itself. Artificial confinement of the Mississippi River within man-made levees has eliminated alluvial deposition of seasonal overflows and has restricted delta-building processes to the mouth of the river. Until the early twentieth century, crevasses, or breaks in the levee, produced frequent localized soil deposition and land-building. The modern levee and revetment system prevents crevasses and discourages the river from abandoning its present channel in favor of other distributaries. Whereas the normal delta-building process is one of a state of flux between alluvial accretion and marine deterioration with a net increase in the size of the deltaic plain, human control of the river is allowing the sea to rapidly encroach upon the land in South Louisiana.<sup>7</sup>

The Mississippi River Delta is composed of the overlapping alluvial deposits of a series of major deltaic complexes which have formed during the last 7000 years. Scientific investigations continue to add to the knowledge of the geology of the delta, but recent studies name nine major delta lobes: Lafayette, Maringouin, Salé-Cypremort, Metairie, Teche, La Loutre (or St. Bernard), Lafourche, Plaquemines, and the present Balize. The Barataria-des Familles river channel upon which the study area is located was one of several distributaries of the La Loutre or

MODERN MISSISSIPPI RIVER →



POINT BAR DEPOSITS

— LAST ACTIVE STAGE  
- - - LAST FULL RIVER CHANNEL

BARATARIA-DES FAMILLES DISTRIBUTARY

1 Mile

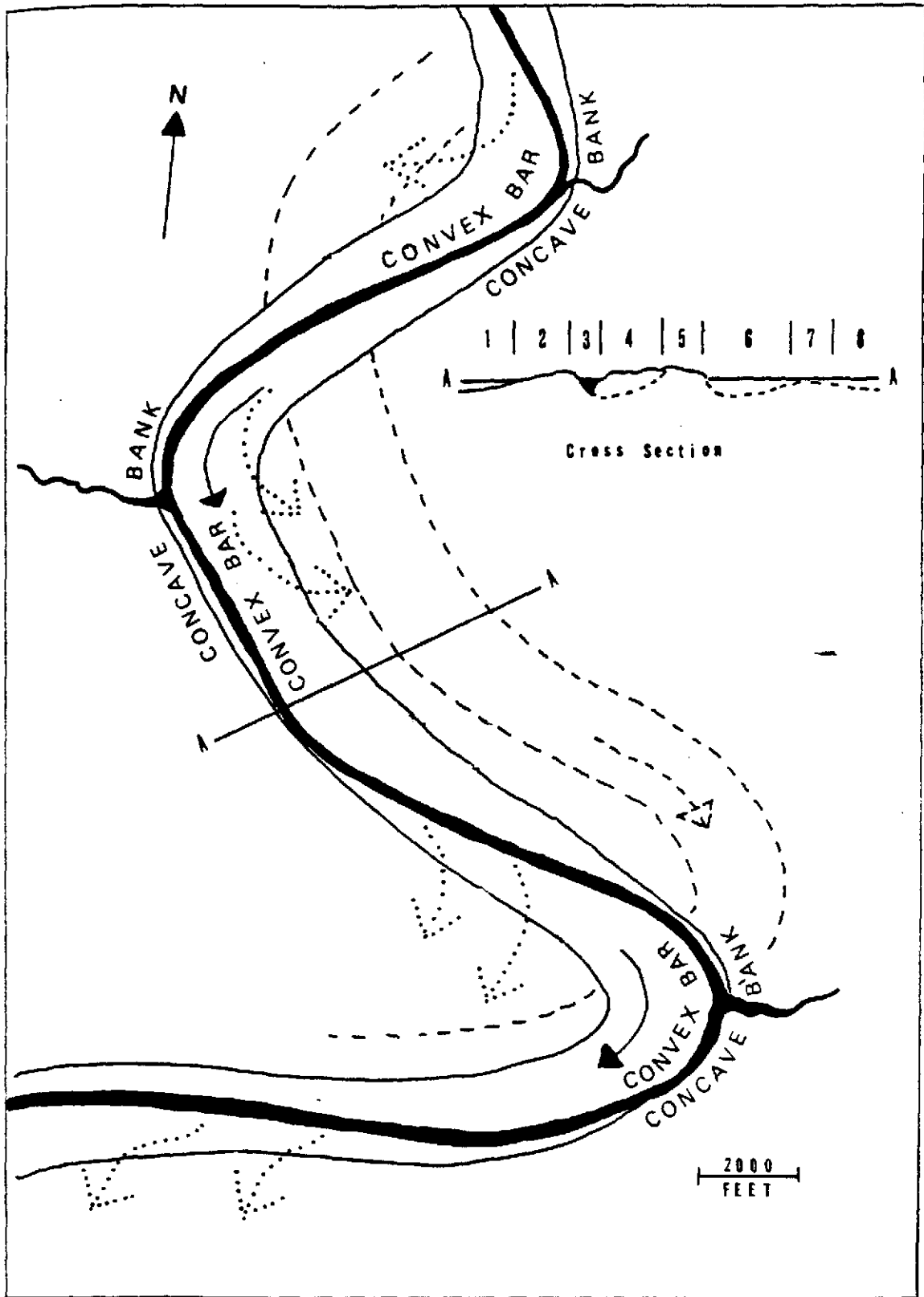
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Oblique air view of the Barataria-des Familles Distributary, looking north toward New Orleans, Mississippi River at top, Bayou Barataria at bottom, Bayou des Familles and study area at center. 2/23/86.

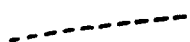


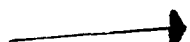




Study area and environs. Black and white photo from infra-red photo, January 19, 1984, 84039, LN3-RN1, 406, Environmental Monitoring Systems Lab., Office of Research and Development, U. S. Environmental Protection Agency, Las Vegas, Nevada.



Probable course of the final meander shift of the Barataria-des Familles river channel in the study area.

FOR DIAGRAM OF PROBABLE COURSE OF FINAL MEANDER SHIFT  
THE BARATARIA-DES FAMILLES RIVER CHANNEL IN STUDY AREA:

-  - old abandoned channel
-  - river channel at full active stage
-  - scour channel and present-day bayou
-  - downstream
-  - direction of alluvial deposition
-  - crevasse distributaries

CROSS SECTION AT A-A:

1. Level of swamp and marsh
2. Natural levee, concave (or cut) bank
3. Scour channel, Bayou des Familles
4. Convex (or point) bar, channel fill
5. Natural levee
6. Old filled and submerged channel
7. Old submerged natural levee
8. Level of swamp and marsh



Bernard Delta which was active between about 1500 B.C. and about 200 A.D. The other distributaries of this delta were Bayou Metairie, Rivière aux Chênes, and Bayou La Loutre. At different times, various of these streams were active together and carried more or less of the river's flow. The Baratavia-des Familles distributary never carried the full flow of the river nor ever reached the breadth and depth of the present river channel. The natural levee crests of the old distributary in the study area are located about 2000 feet apart, while the present width of the Mississippi River between Baton Rouge and New Orleans ranges between about 2380 and 2900 feet.<sup>8</sup>

After about 200 A.D., the Baratavia-des Familles distributary no longer served as a major channel of the river, but the stream remained partially active until historic times. The channel slowly filled with silt, but the natural levees received little deposition and began to undergo subsidence. The lower reaches of the stream, fed by a later, minor distributary that discharged from the present river, continued to carry more flow and remain today the principal drainage of the Baratavia Basin.<sup>9</sup>

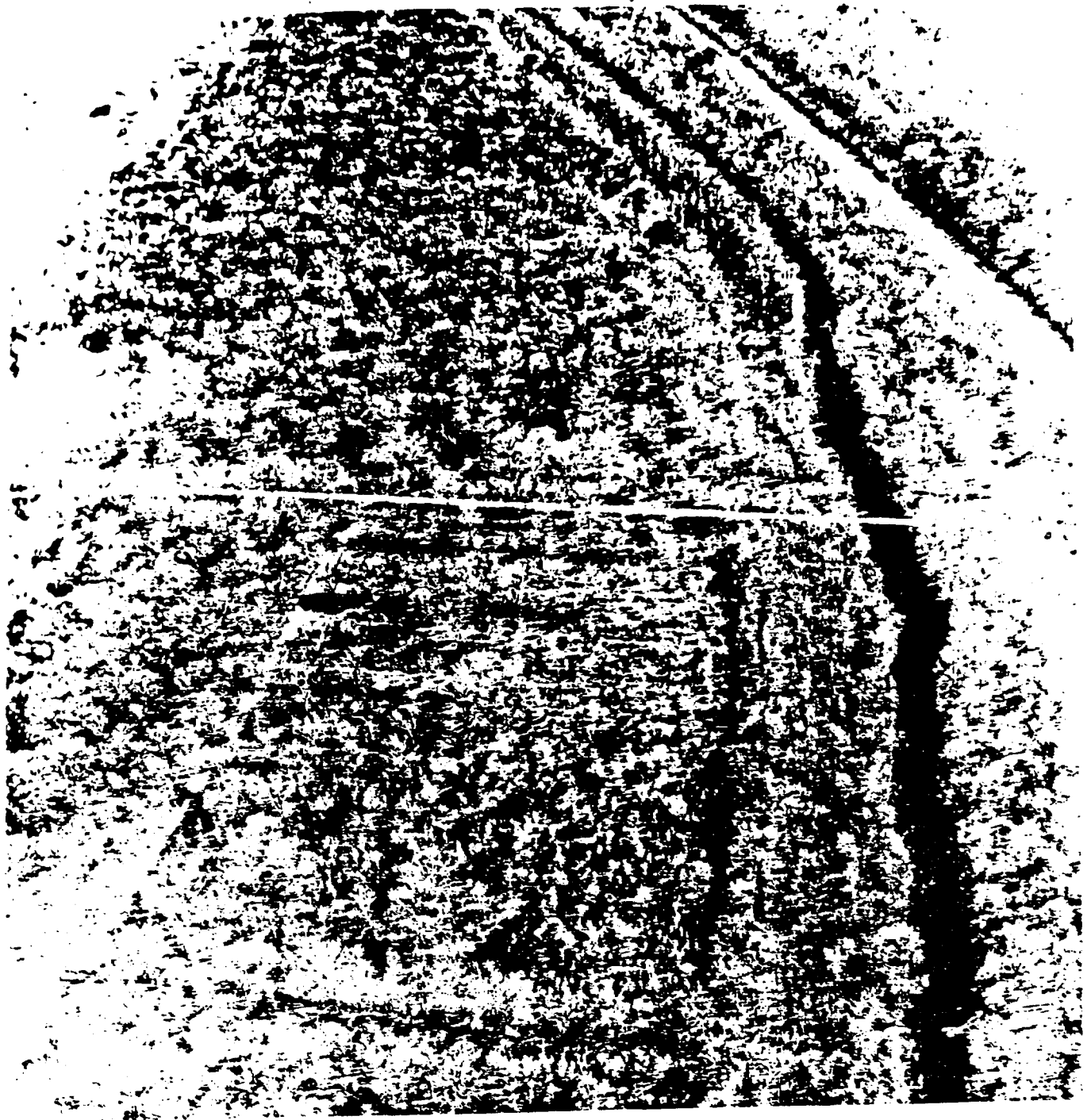
The saucer-like depression of the Baratavia Basin is bordered by the natural levees of the later channels of Bayou Lafourche on the west and the Mississippi River on the north and east. Most of the area contained within the Baratavia Basin consists of marsh, lakes, and bays. All the

waters of the basin drain toward Barataria Bay and the Gulf of Mexico.

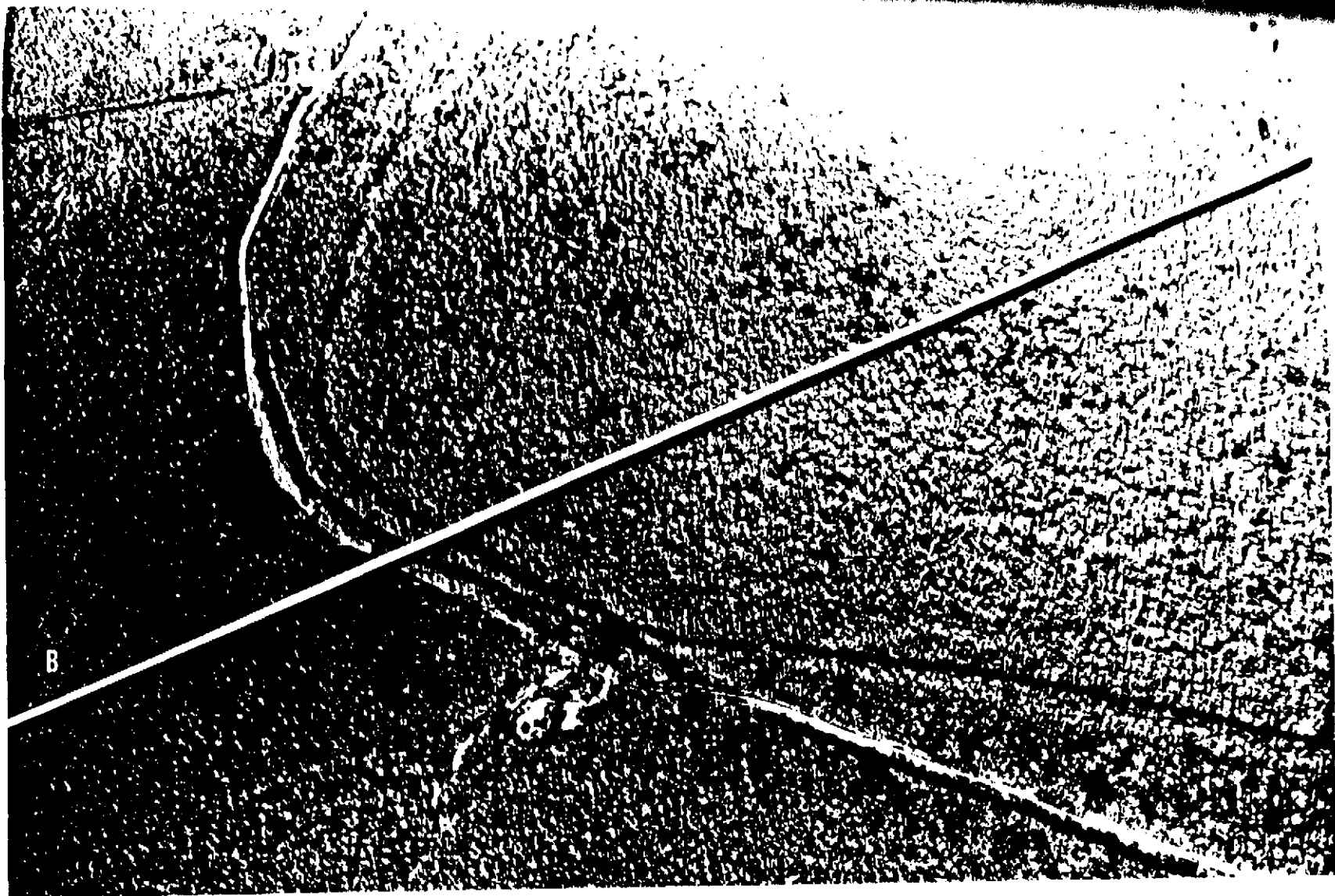
Even though the Barataria Basin is regarded as a single unit in relation to its hydrological and biological processes, the natural levees of the Barataria-des Familles distributary actually divide the area into two large interdistributary basins, that bounded by Bayou Lafourche on the west and that bounded by the Mississippi River on the east. The interdistributary basins are characterized by cypress swamp at the edge of the back slope of the natural levees with grassy marsh, ponds, and lakes in the center of the basins.<sup>10</sup>

The Barataria-des Familles distributary loses surface expression as it sinks below the marshes near Barataria Bay. When it was active, the deltaic lobe extended out into the Gulf of Mexico. Eventually, all of the abandoned deltaic areas of coastal Louisiana will disappear beneath the Gulf unless they are built up once again by alluvial sediment from the river.<sup>11</sup>

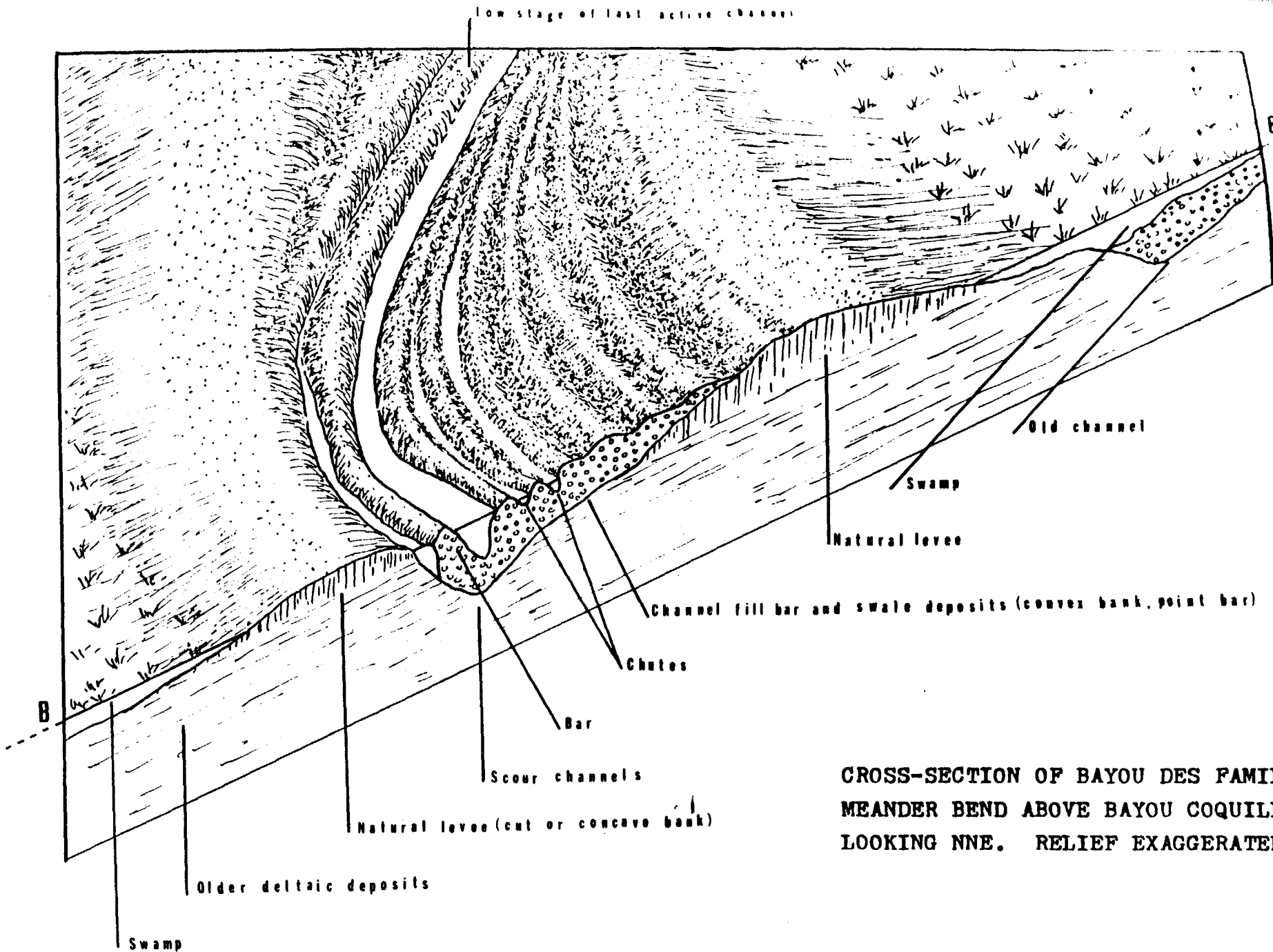
That portion of the abandoned Barataria-des Familles distributary that comprises the study area lies seven air miles south of the crescent-shaped bend of the Mississippi River that contains the City of New Orleans. Whereas the upper reaches of the old channel are almost entirely clogged with alluvium, the river bed in the study area is partially filled and exhibits what is called bar and swale topography.



Filled bed of the Barataria-des Familles river channel in the study area, looking downstream, showing Bayou des Familles, pecan orchard, Shell Road (Old Road) at center, Third Road at left, and State Highway 45 at upper right. Oblique aerial photo, 2/23/86.



Meander bend of Bayou des Familles at confluence of Bayou Coquilles (lower left), looking NNE.

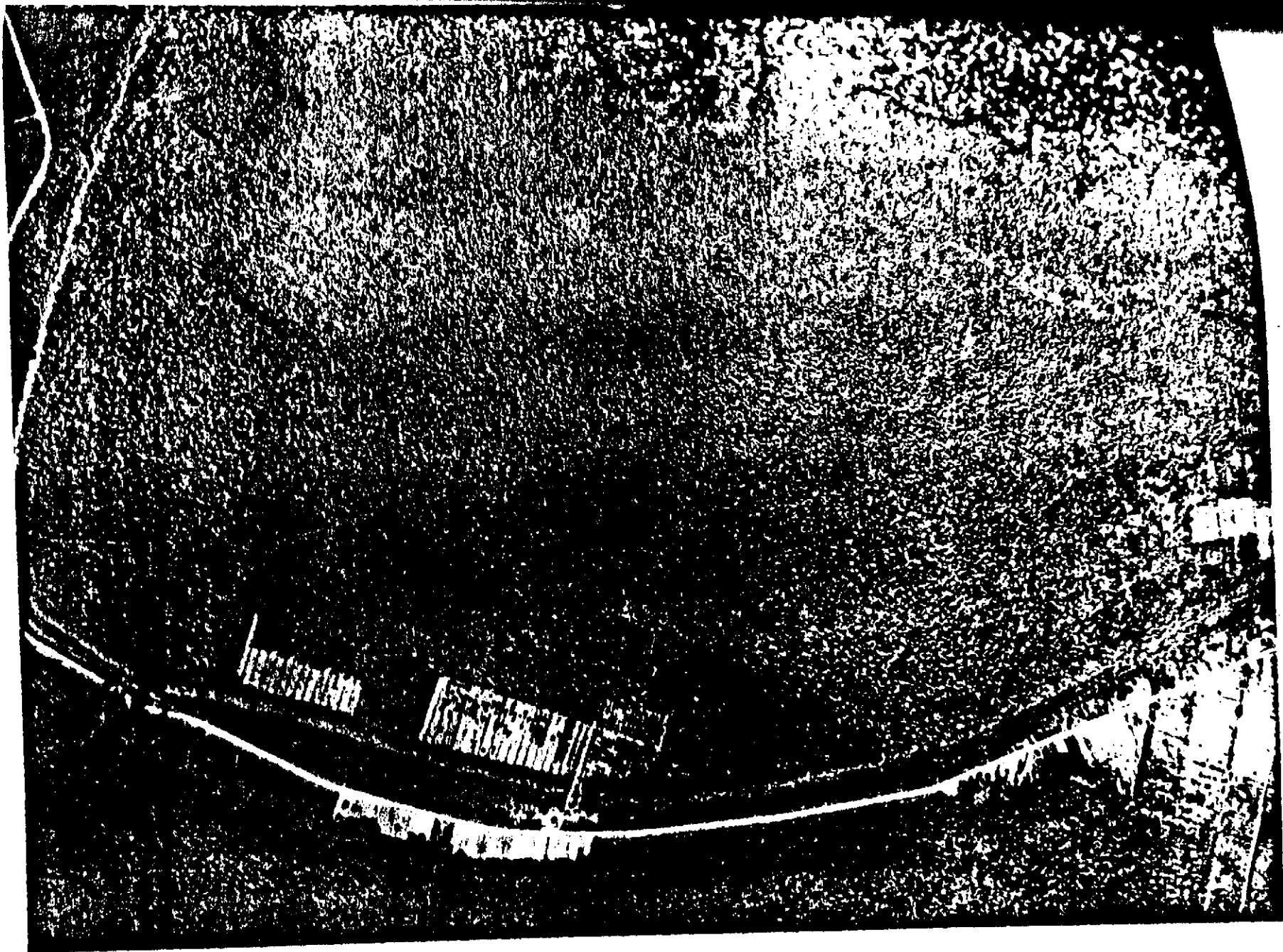


CROSS-SECTION OF BAYOU DES FAMILLES  
 MEANDER BEND ABOVE BAYOU COQUILLES,  
 LOOKING NNE. RELIEF EXAGGERATED.

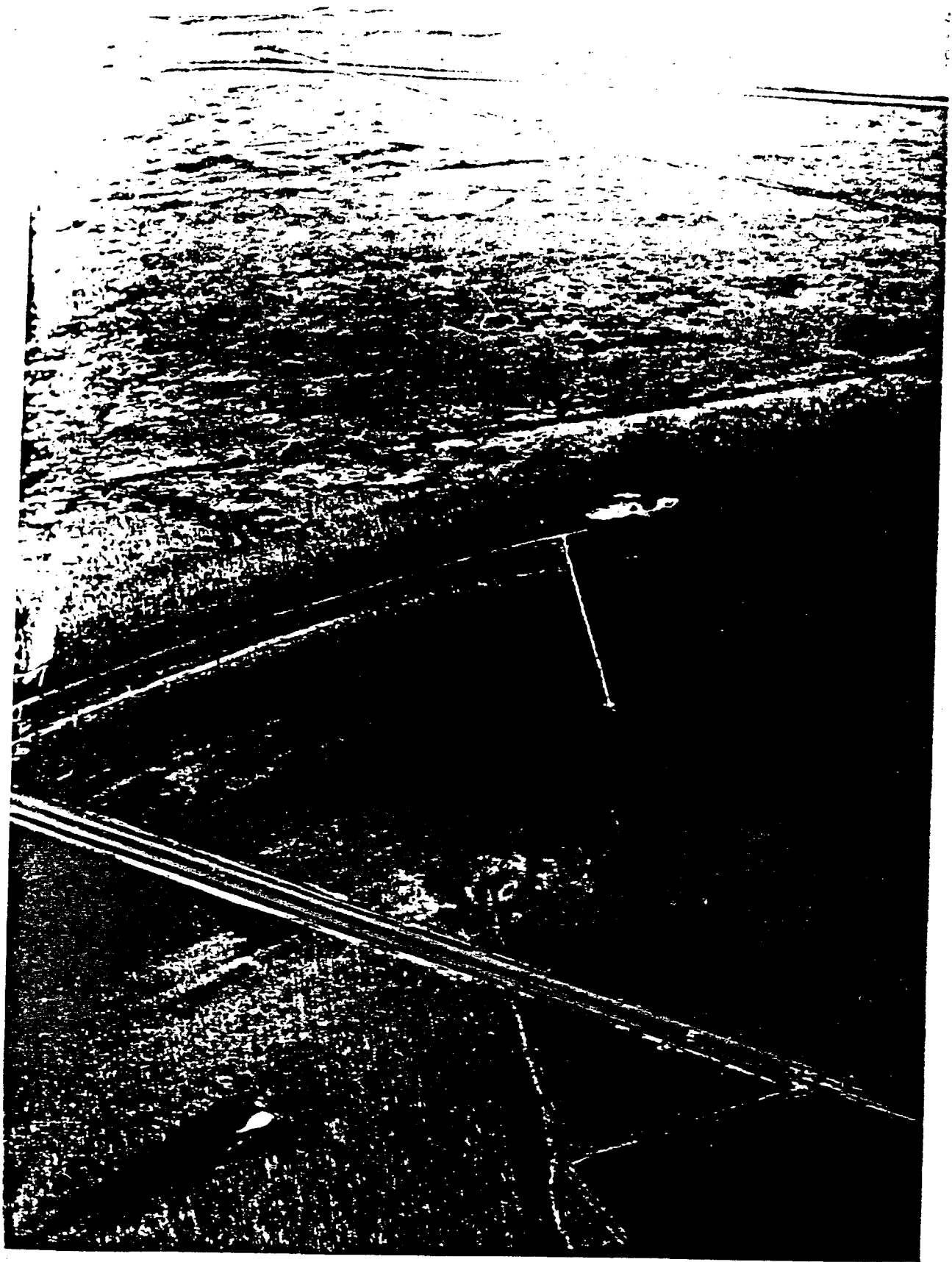
The bars are low ridges formed by deposits of coarse bed load sediment during the stream's flood stages. They are formed on the convex curve of the stream's meander bends because the intensity of water turbulence decreases on the inner bend of the water's flow. These areas of built-up sediment on the convex curve of the meander bend are called point bars. They have the appearance of a series of concentric terraces, and they often display varied tree succession.<sup>12</sup>

The study area comprises the central portion of such a point bar, as well as the opposite bank of the old river channel which is called the cut bank or the concave bank. The rapid flow of water at the outer bend of the meander curve causes the concave (or cut) bank to recede. The stream scours a deeper channel on the outer bend of the meander and undercuts the bank, causing the bank material to slump or slide off into the channel. Bayou des Familles is the remnant of the old river scour channel which may have been as deep as 100 feet when the distributary was active.<sup>13</sup>

As distributaries of the Mississippi become inactive, their channels begin to anastomose, or interconnect, and form a braided pattern. Periodic flooding of the channels causes crevasses in the subsiding natural levees. Smaller streams are formed at the points of these crevasses, with their own small natural levees. These crevasse splays typically occur near the most acute angles of the meander



Study area, May 17, 1945. National Ocean Survey for the National  
Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, C&GS 20 LA.1250 29 90 C  
2790, National Archives, Washington, D. C.



Oblique air view showing, from bottom to top, natural levee, bar and swale topography of filled river channel and old sugarcane fields of the Christmas Plantation, Bayou des Familles which was the old scour channel of the river, natural levee followed by Highway 45, cypress swamp beyond backslope of levee, marsh, Lake Salvador. 2/23/86.



bends of the distributary. Bayou Coquilles, which discharges from Bayou des Familles in the study area, is an example of a crevasse splay.<sup>14</sup>

Old channel beds of abandoned distributaries also develop braided patterns as the slackening stream bifurcates and rejoins amid the bars and swales of the old river bed. In the study area, this pattern is still noticeable along Bayou des Familles. At time of flood, some swales may deepen and become branch channels or chutes. Occasionally, the course of the stream is diverted by a chute. In the study area, some water-filled swales distant from the bayou probably served as chutes when the distributary was still partially active.<sup>15</sup>

The pattern of the meander bends of the Barataria-des Familles Distributary is well developed and more mature than those along the river downstream from New Orleans. The sinuous course of the old channel with closely spaced bends denotes a stream of less discharge than one with widely spaced, long meander loops.<sup>16</sup>

As long as the Barataria-des Familles Distributary carried fresh water from the river, Indians dwelled along its banks. Archaeological investigations show that they were present from the Tchefuncte Period in about 200 B.C., through the Marksville, Troyville, Coles Creek, Plaquemines, and Historic Periods. They lived on the crest of the natural levees or on artificial mounds of earth and shell, and fished and hunted in the streams, forests, swamps, and

marshes. Middens, or refuse heaps, as well as mounds, are located along Bayous des Familles and Coquilles. The mounds and middens are composed largely of the clam shell Rangia cuneata. Many mounds and middens have subsided beneath the surface; many others have been removed for their shells.<sup>17</sup>

Before the founding of New Orleans, Jean-Baptiste le Moyne, Sieur de Bienville, settled the Ouachas Indians in the Barataria region. According to his memorandum, he settled the Ouachas about six miles above New Orleans on the west bank of the river in 1715. The Indians lived scattered in the woods and along the borders of the Barataria lakes. These lakes, as well as Bayou Barataria, were originally named for the Ouachas. Their allies, the Tchouachas, were apparently already living in the Barataria region.<sup>18</sup>

From the time of their earliest habitation in Barataria, aboriginals undoubtedly altered the natural landscape while exploiting the environment, setting fire to the woods and marshes for hunting purposes, and, later, in cultivating portions of land. Certainly, the most striking additions that the Indians made to the landscape were the enormous piles of gleaming white shells that they deposited in mounds and middens along the shores of the bayous and lakes.

Claude Joseph Villars Dubreuil, an early French land owner in Barataria, noted in 1740 that there were on the borders of the Barataria lakes "everywhere so many shells that New Orleans and its environs will never lack lime." A

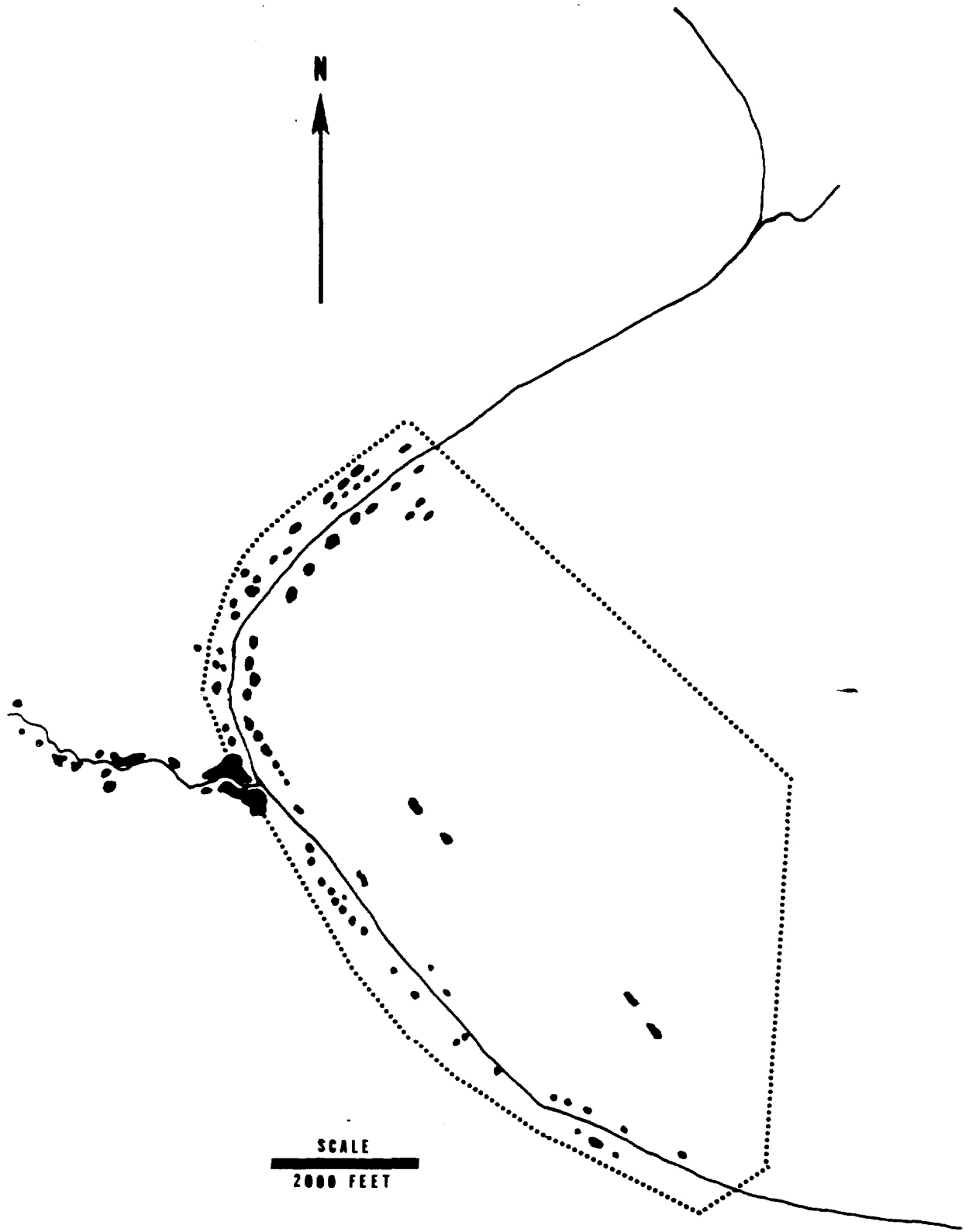
map of 1803 made reference to the clams found in Barataria and noted:<sup>19</sup>

This shellfish is so abundant that the different tribes that inhabit the lake make it their principal diet. And as these tribes gather around their villages, the shells make structures in the form of pyramids which still exist. And from the earliest time in the province lime was taken from these shell mounds for the public buildings in all of lower Louisiana. These were not formed in a single period. We ought then to infer that the tribes which gathered were innumerable.

The French began mining the shell mounds of Barataria in the early 1700s. It was noted in 1874 that "vast accumulations" remained along Bayou Barataria even though the shells had for years "been used for street grading and garden-walks in New Orleans." The account said that many thousands of cubic yards of the shells were annually brought to the city, and that "A constant trade in small sail-boats and barges is kept up." Oral history accounts collected for this study describe the shell mounds at Bayou Coquilles as being of great height in the early twentieth century.<sup>20</sup>

The mining of shells for the making of lime was a principal industry in Barataria for two centuries, and accounts of this industry are given in later chapters. Mere vestiges remain in Barataria of aboriginal occupation. However, many prehistoric sites are located in the study area. Their locations are given on a map with this study. A number of these sites have not been previously recorded.

Important discoveries made during field surveys for this study are apparent earth and shell middens located as



SCALE  
2000 FEET

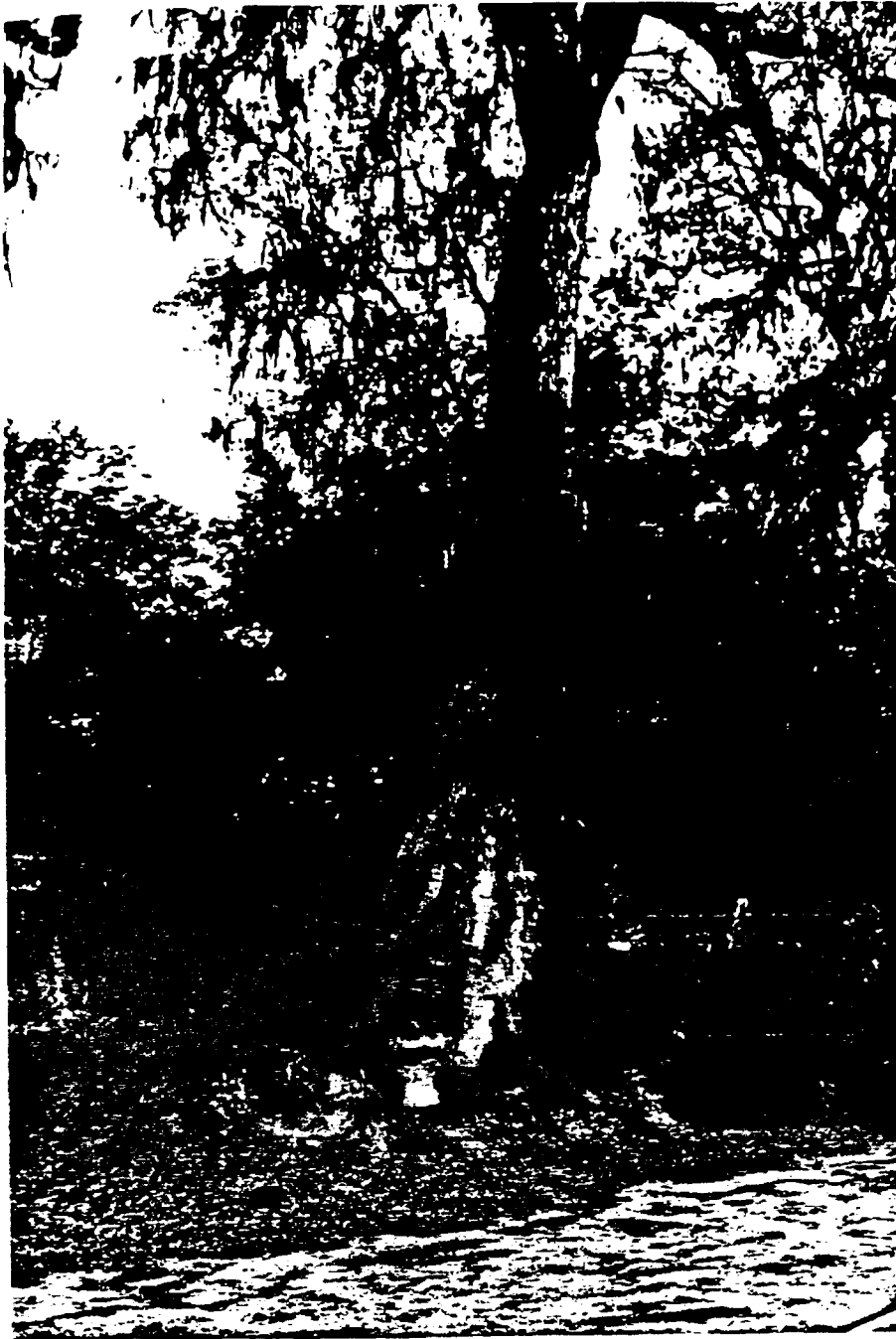
STUDY AREA  
BOUNDARY

Prehistoric sites, recorded and unrecorded, tested and untested.

stant as 1800 feet east of Bayou des Familles, on or near the crest of the natural levee of the old river channel. The shells located at these sites are water-worn, and the sherds are plain. The sites could be seasonal dwelling sites inhabited during times of floods in the abandoned distributary, or they could be very early sites occupied when the river channel was still active.

Ethnobotanical studies have suggested that prehistoric man introduced flora to areas of south Louisiana and especially to mounds and middens that served as dwelling sites. Prehistoric sites in the swamps and marshes of coastal Louisiana frequently support upland plant communities. However, it has also been pointed out that most of these mounds and middens were historically used as dwelling and camp sites. Nevertheless, prehistoric Indians were undoubtedly responsible for some changes in the composition of plant communities in south Louisiana.<sup>21</sup>

An ethnobotanical study made in 1977-81 of the plant community at the prehistoric village site on Bayou Coquilles identified many plants known to have been used by Indians for food, medicine, building material, and other purposes. The study concluded that there was "a distinctive diversity in the vegetation at the site." However, a floristic inventory of the park completed two years later identified all but eight of the Coquilles flora as growing elsewhere in the park. Because of the multiplicity of prehistoric sites that have been located in the park, the influence of Indians upon the vegetation may have been widespread over all elevated areas.<sup>22</sup>



Live oak on Indian mound at Bayou Coquille, looking E. 4/86.



Bayou des Familles south of confluence of Bayou Coquilles,  
looking downstream. 4/86.

prehistoric Indians in Louisiana cultivated gardens, and they also encouraged wild edible plants to grow in the vicinity of villages by scattering wild seeds. By the time that Europeans arrived in Louisiana, the Indians were cultivating corn, beans, and squash. They practiced a slash-and-burn technique of improving the quality of the soil by cutting branches and burning the branches and weeds on the ground. They also gathered nuts, berries, and other plant foods in the woods, swamps, and marshes, and they hunted and fished. Many of the animals that they hunted no longer exist in Barataria.<sup>23</sup>

The earliest descriptions of Barataria stress the great size of trees in vast forests. Dubreuil wrote to the French minister in 1740 that there were along Bayou Barataria six or seven leagues (a league is about three miles) of "magnificent cypress, so much that you will never run out of wood." He said that the "red cypress of Barataria was much better than the "white cypress" of the river. He described Bayou Barataria (also named Bayou Ouachas) as beginning as a small stream but becoming "magnificent and at least 90 feet deep and always widening toward the sea" with forests of large live oak on the high land bordering the bayou. Other useful trees noted by Dubreuil were "a good kind of ash tree, very fat," and elm, sassafras, red laurel, and white oak. He said the trees grew very big and touched each other.<sup>24</sup>

Grass on the prairies or marshes provided good forage year-round, and Dubreuil had placed 120 female cows on the Isle of Barataria which had been conceded to him. So much game, fish, and oysters could be extracted "as to never be



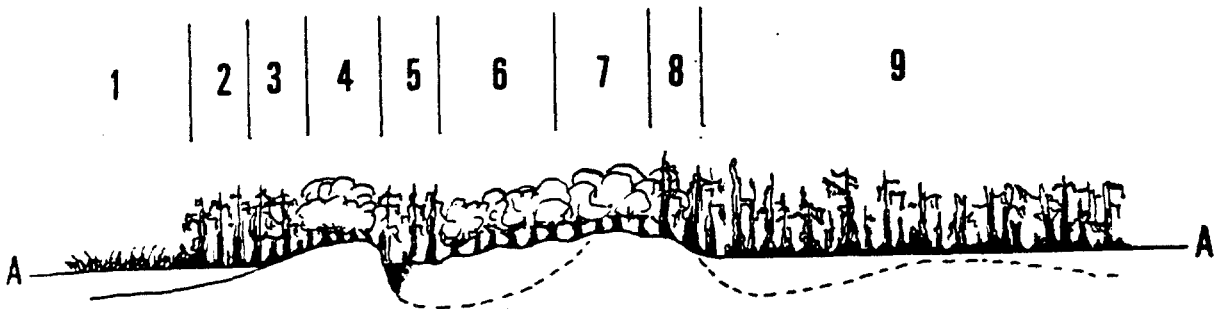
...ing in the city." Buffalo could be hunted on the higher  
ground.<sup>25</sup>

Antoine Simon Le Page Du Pratz, who lived in lower Louisiana between 1718 and 1734, also wrote of the large evergreen oaks of Barataria, "fit for ship building." The buffalo, he said, strayed into the marshes to pasture. He described the lakes of Barataria as

... stored with monstrous carp, as well for size as for length; which slip out of the Mississippi and its muddy stream, when overflowed, in search of clearer water. The quantity of fish in these lakes is very surprising, especially as they abound with vast numbers of alligators. In the neighbourhood of these lakes there are some petty nations of Indians, who partly live on this amphibious animal.<sup>26</sup>

Historic land uses have altered every ecosystem in Barataria. It would be difficult to surmise what the appearance of the Barataria landscape would be had man never been present. However, historic accounts emphasize the great size, age, and number of live oak and cypress which are the climax species of the upland alluvial areas and the swamp. These old-growth forests of Barataria undoubtedly had specialized ecosystems based on decadence and death which have been obliterated by historic use of the land.

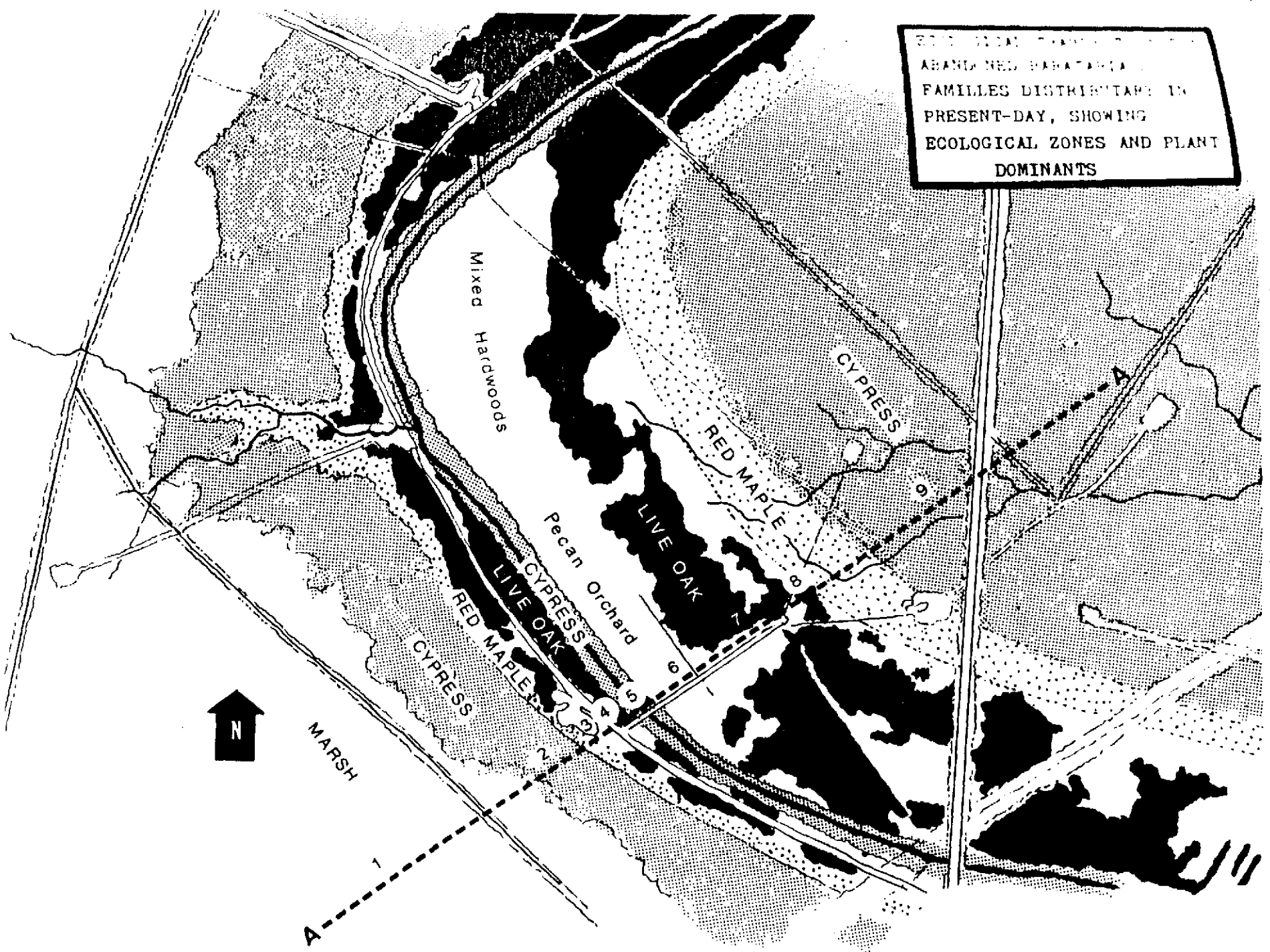
When viewed together, groupings of species that historically occupied their habitats depict the historical appearance of the various ecological zones in the study area. The following zone descriptions are keyed to maps in this study. Information on soil types in the zones was derived from the Soil Conservation Service's Soil Survey of Jefferson Parish, Louisiana, January, 1983. Species identifications were largely provided by Park Ranger David Muth.



ECOLOGICAL TRANSECT OF THE ABANDONED BARATARIA-DES FAMILLES  
DISTRIBUTARY

- ECOLOGICAL ZONES:
1. FRESHWATER MARSH
  2. SWAMP
  3. NATURAL LEVEE BACKSLOPE
  4. NATURAL LEVEE CREST
  5. STREAM CHANNEL AND SHORES
  6. FILLED CHANNEL
  7. NATURAL LEVEE CREST
  8. NATURAL LEVEE BACKSLOPE
  9. SWAMP

ECOLOGICAL ZONES AND PLANT DOMINANTS IN ABANDONED BARATARIA FAMILIES DISTRIBUTION IN PRESENT-DAY, SHOWING ECOLOGICAL ZONES AND PLANT DOMINANTS



TRANSECTED ECOLOGICAL ZONES OF THE ABANDONED  
BARATARIA - DES FAMILLES DISTRIBUTARY

ECOLOGICAL ZONE #1 - FRESHWATER MARSH

Soil types: Kenner muck and Allemands muck.

These are semifluid soils that consist of a thick mucky surface layer of decomposed organic material and mucky and clayey underlying material with buried stumps and logs. These areas are flooded or ponded most of the time. The Kenner soils are in interbasin areas, and the Allemands soils are on submerged natural levees along distributary channels.

Notable historic flora and fauna that characterize the zone:

Conspicuous among the plants that have historically characterized the marsh zone are pickerel-weed, cat-tail, duck-weed, white water-lily, common rush, spider-lily, bulrush, Southern wild-rice, maiden-cane, marsh fern, pennywort, bull tongue, arrowhead, Delta duck potato, common buttonbush, deer pea, swamp-potato, spike-rush, and rose-mallow.

Mammals that historically occupied the marsh zone were cougar, red wolf, white-tailed deer, American black bear, swamp rabbit, North American mink, Northern raccoon, Nearctic river otter, bison, Virginia opossum, common muskrat, and marsh rice rat.

Outstanding among the birds that have historically frequented the marsh zone are American bittern, least

bittern, great blue heron, great egret, snowy egret, little blue heron, tricolored heron, green-backed heron, black-crowned night heron, white ibis, glossy ibis, white-faced ibis, pied-billed grebe, double-crested cormorant, anhinga, snow goose, green-winged teal, mottled duck, mallard, blue-winged teal, Northern shoveler, gadwall, American wigeon, osprey, Northern harrier, king rail, Virginia rail, sora, purple gallinule, common moorhen, American coot, semipalmated plover, killdeer, black-necked stilt, greater yellowlegs, lesser yellowlegs, common snipe, belted kingfisher, red-tailed hawk, Eastern kingbird, sedge wren, marsh wren, water pipit, loggerhead shrike, palm warbler, common yellow throat, song sparrow, swamp sparrow, boat-tailed grackle, solitary sandpiper, spotted sandpiper, semipalmated sandpiper, Western sandpiper, least sandpiper, white-rumped sandpiper, and dunlin.

Notable reptiles and amphibians that have historically inhabited the marsh zone are American alligator, lesser siren, three-toed ampherima, Gulf Coast toad, green tree frog, narrow-mouth toad, bullfrog, pig frog, leopard frog, snapping turtle, alligator snapping turtle, stinkpot, common mud turtle, painted turtle, pond slider, cooter, spiny softshell, green anole, banded water snake, green water snake, diamond-back water snake, plain-bellied water snake, glossy water snake, brown snake, ribbon snake, hognose snake, mud snake, rough green snake, rat snake, king snake, and cottonmouth.

Crustaceans of the marsh zone are white or river crawfish, red shrimp crawfish, and grass shrimp.

Notable fish of the marsh zone are bowfin, largemouth bass, perch, crappie, catfish, freshwater drum, paddlefish, spotted gar, shortnose gar, alligator gar, American eel, gizzard shad, threadfin shad, carp, golden shiner, weed shiner, blacktail shiner, bullhead shiner, river carpsucker, black bullhead, pirate perch, golden topminnow, mosquito fish, least killifish, sailfin molly, brook silversides, yellow bass, banded pygmy sunfish, green sunfish, bluegill, warmouth, redear sunfish.

#### ECOLOGICAL ZONES #2 and #9 - SWAMP

Soil types: Allemands muck and Barbary muck.

Allemands muck is a semifluid soil on submerged natural levees. This soil type is described above under the Freshwater Marsh Zone. Barbary muck is a semifluid mineral soil which is flooded most of the time. It is composed of semifluid clay and mucky clay and has logs, stumps, and wood fragments throughout.

Notable historic flora and fauna that characterize the zone:

The swamp overstory has historically consisted of bald cypress, tupelo gum, Drummond red maple, black willow, pumpkin ash, and Spanish moss.

Prominent plant species of the swamp understory are wax-myrtle, red iris, giant blue iris, spider-lily, duckweed, butterweed, buttonbush, pickerel-weed, water fern,

swamp-potato, smart-weed, bur-marigold, creeping burhead, pennywort, bugle-weed, palmetto, roseau-cane, trumpet-creeper, and poison-ivy.

Mammals that have historically occupied the swamp habitat are white-tailed deer, American black bear, swamp rabbit, North American mink, Northern raccoon, Nearctic river otter, Virginia opossum, muskrat, marsh rice rat, American beaver, Southern flying squirrel, gray squirrel, bobcat, striped skunk, and cougar.

Birds frequently found in the swamp are white ibis, wood duck, great horned owl, yellow-crowned night heron, winter wren, Eastern bluebird, yellow-throated warbler, prothonotary warbler, rusty blackbird, American crow, red-winged blackbird, red-bellied woodpecker, yellow-bellied sapsucker, downy woodpecker, hairy woodpecker, pileated woodpecker, blue jay, Carolina wren, and Northern Cardinal. The extinct Carolina parakeet, which ate cypress seeds and spread them in its droppings, formerly played an important role in the geographical distribution of the cypress tree.

Reptiles and amphibians common to the swamp are American alligator, lesser siren, three-toed amphiuma, newt, Woodhouse's toad, Gulf coast toad, Northern cricket frog, green tree frog, gray tree frog, Eastern narrow-mouthed toad, bullfrog, pig frog, green frog, leopard frog, common snapping turtle, stinkpot, keel-backed musk turtle, common mud turtle, painted turtle, pond slider, river cooter, cooter, spiny softshell, green anole, banded water snake,

green water snake, diamond-backed water snake, Graham's water snake, glossy water snake, mud snake, and cottonmouth.

The red swamp crawfish is the well-known crustacean of the swamp.

#### ECOLOGICAL ZONES #3 and #8 - NATURAL LEVEE BACKSLOPE

Soil type: Sharkey clay.

This is a poorly drained, firm mineral soil located in low positions on natural levees. These soils formed in clayey alluvium. Water runs off slowly and stands for brief period in low places after rains. Areas having this soil type can be flooded after heavy rains. Elevations range from about one foot to five feet above sea level.

Notable historic flora and fauna that characterize the zone:

The most prominent plants of the overstory are sweet gum, water oak, bald cypress, pumpkin ash, tupelo gum, Drummond red maple, water hickory, honey locust, black willow, red bay, American elm, Carolina ash, green ash, box elder, Eastern cottonwood, Nuttall oak, hackberry, and Spanish moss.

Most notable plants of the understory of the natural levee backslope are palmetto, wax-myrtle, spider-lily, pickerel-weed, green hawthorne, deciduous holly, rough-leaf dogwood, dewberry, and bur-marigold.

The fauna of the natural levee back slope is largely that of the natural levee crests and filled channel zones, listed below.



ECOLOGICAL ZONES #4, #6 and #7 - NATURAL LEVEE  
CRESTS AND FILLED CHANNEL

Soil types: Sharkey clay and Commerce silty clay loam.

Sharkey clay is located in low positions on natural levees and is described above under the Natural Levee Backslope Zone. Commerce silty clay loam is a highly fertile, somewhat poorly drained, firm mineral soil formed in loamy alluvium and located on elevated portions of natural levees. Water runs off the surface of this soil slowly and stands in low places for short periods after heavy rains.

Notable historic flora and fauna that characterize the zones:

The dominants of the plant overstory have historically been live oak, water oak, Nuttall oak, hackberry, bitter pecan, American elm, mulberry, red bay, sweet gum, Southern magnolia, persimmon, honey-locust, American sycamore, Drummond red maple, Eastern cottonwood, Carolina ash, Slippery elm, box-elder, green ash, water hickory, Spanish moss, tree orchid, mistletoe, and resurrection fern.

Notable plants that have historically characterized the understory are palmetto, wax-myrtle, rough-leaf dogwood, yaupon, elderberry, river cane, roseau-cane, green hawthorne, dewberry, deciduous holly, wild onion, common ragweed, peppervine, aster, false nettle, trumpet creeper, Virginia dayflower, Indian strawberry, morning glory, oak

forest grass, smart weed, poison ivy, skullcap, muscadine, wild grape, possum-haw, supple jack, Virginia creeper, violet, baby blue-eyes, forget-me-not, bedstraw, cardinal flower, hedge-nettle, rose-gentian, milkweed, leather-flower, chick-weed, mouse-ear, eardrop, clear-weed, spiderwort, widow's-tears, green dragon, bulrush, ebony spleenwort, and Southern shield fern.

Mammals historically common to the natural levee crests and filled channel areas were white-tailed deer, American black bear, bison, fox squirrel, Eastern gray squirrel, cottontail rabbit, swamp rabbit, Northern raccoon, Virginia opossum, bobcat, cougar, red wolf, Eastern wood rat, marsh<sup>s</sup> rice rat, cotton mouse, Southern flying squirrel, North American mink, Eastern pipistrelle, red bat, seminole bat, Northern yellow bat, Rafinesque's big-eared bat, free-tailed bat, fulvous harvest mouse, white-footed mouse, cotton mouse, hispid cotton rat, common muskrat, Nearctic river otter, striped skunk, and coyote.

Among the birds that were historically found in the forest habitats of the natural levee and filled channel are red-shouldered hawk, yellow-billed cuckoo, Eastern screech owl, barred owl, common night hawk, ruby-throated hummingbird, red-bellied woodpecker, yellow-bellied sapsucker, downy woodpecker, hairy woodpecker, Northern flicker, pileated woodpecker, Eastern wood-pewee, yellow-bellied flycatcher, Acadian flycatcher, Eastern Phoebe, great

crested flycatcher, tree swallow, blue jay, American crow,  
 fish crow, Carolina chickadee, tufted titmouse, brown  
 creeper, Carolina wren, golden-crowned kinglet, ruby-crowned  
 kinglet, blue-gray gnatcatcher, veery, gray-cheeked thrush,  
 Swainson's thrush, hermit thrush, wood thrush, American  
 robin, gray catbird, Northern mockingbird, brown thrasher,  
 cedar waxwing, white-eyed vireo, solitary vireo, yellow-  
 throated vireo, warbling vireo, Philadelphia vireo, red-eyed  
 vireo, blue-winged warbler, golden-winged warbler, Tennessee  
 warbler, orange-crowned warbler, Northern parula, chestnut-  
 sided warbler, magnolia warbler, Cape May warbler, black-  
 throated blue warbler, black-throated green warbler,  
 Blackburnian warbler, pine warbler, bay-breasted warbler,  
 Blackpoll warbler, Cerulean warbler, black and white  
 warbler, American redstart, worm-eating warbler, Swainson's  
 warbler, ovenbird, Northern waterthrush, Louisiana water-  
 thrush, Kentucky warbler, hooded warbler, Canada warbler,  
 summer tanager, scarlet tanager, Northern cardinal,  
 rose-breasted grosbeak, red-wing blackbird, common grackle,  
 brown-headed cowbird, orchard oriole, Northern oriole,  
 purple finch, American goldfinch, black vulture, turkey  
 vulture, and bald eagle. Scrub areas of the natural levee  
 and filled channel are the habitat especially of such birds  
 as mourning dove, alder flycatcher, willow flycatcher, least  
 flycatcher, Nashville warbler, yellow warbler, palm warbler,  
 Wilson's warbler, yellow-breasted chat, blue grosbeak,  
 indigo bunting, painted bunting, rufous-sided towhee,

chipping sparrow, song sparrow, swamp sparrow, and white-throated sparrow.

Among the reptiles and amphibians found on the natural levee and filled channel areas are lesser siren, newt, Gulf coast toad, green tree frog, Eastern narrow-mouthed toad, bull frog, pig frog, green frog, leopard frog, box turtle, ground skink, five-lined skink, slender grass lizard, Eastern ribbon snake, rough green snake, rat snake, common king snake, copperhead, cottonmouth, and canebrake rattlesnake.

Crustaceans that live in these zones are white or river crawfish and red swamp crawfish.

#### ECOLOGICAL ZONE #5 - STREAM CHANNEL AND SHORES

##### Notable historic flora and fauna that characterize zone:

Dominants of the plant overstory of Bayou des Familles are bald cypress, tupelo gum, Drummond red maple, green ash, sweet gum, pumpkin ash, Carolina ash, and black willow. Live oak, hackberry, and other hardwoods grow in places where the banks of the bayou are slightly elevated.

The plant understory along the bayou historically consisted largely of river cane, but little of this plant remains along the bayou today. Conspicuous understory plants growing along the bayou today are roseau-cane, spider-lily, giant blue iris, copper-colored iris, golden-rod, butterweed, cat-tails, buttercup, and pickerel-weed. Floating and submerged aquatic plants such as duck-weed,

water-lily, fanwort, and coon-tail probably grew in the bayou in historic times.

Mammals that were historically characteristic of the bayou habitat are Virginia opossum, North American mink, common muskrat, Nearctic river otter, Eastern pipistrelle, red bat, seminole bat, Northern yellow bat, Rafinesque's big-eared bat, free-tailed bat, swamp rabbit, marsh rice rat, bobcat, white-tailed deer, and American beaver.

Among the most conspicuous birds along the bayou are belted kingfisher, screech owl, barred owl, great horned owl, red-tailed hawk, red-shouldered hawk, American kestrel, common nighthawk, downy woodpecker, hairy woodpecker, red-bellied woodpecker, red-winged blackbird, great blue heron, great egret, snowy egret, little blue heron, tricolored heron, black-crowned night heron, yellow-crowned night heron, osprey, and swamp sparrow.

Reptiles and amphibians typical of the bayou habitat are American alligator, Woodhouse's toad, Gulf coast toad, Northern cricket frog, green tree frog, gray tree frog, Eastern narrow-mouth toad, bullfrog, green frog, common snapping turtle, keel-backed musk turtle, common mud turtle, painted turtle, banded water snake, green water snake, diamond-backed water snake, Graham's water snake, glossy water snake, mud snake, and cottonmouth.

Crustaceans found in the bayou are white or river crawfish, red swamp crawfish, and grass shrimp.

Among the fish in the bayou are bowfin, largemouth bass, perch, crappie, catfish, freshwater drum, paddlefish, spotted gar, shortnose gar, alligator gar, American eel, gizzard shad, threadfin shad, carp, golden shiner, weed shiner, blacktail shiner, river carpsucker, black bullhead, pirate perch, golden topminnow, mosquito fish, least killifish, sailfin molly, brook silversides, yellow bass, banded pygmy sunfish, green sunfish, bluegill, warmouth, and redear sunfish.

#### SPECIES EXTIRPATED AND INTRODUCED

The pronounced ecological changes that historically occurred in Barataria are indicated by the numerous changes in flora and fauna. Most of these changes were the result of man's intervention in the environment. Faunal species driven to extinction or extirpated from the region include the cougar, red wolf, long-tailed weasel, coyote, American beaver, American black bear, bison, passenger pigeon, Carolina parakeet, whooping crane, ivory-billed woodpecker, Bachman's warbler, and the trumpeter swan. The European starling, house sparrow, house mouse, roof rat, Norway rat, and nutria were introduced to this country by man. The cattle egret and the nine-banded armadillo are recent natural intrusions.

Numerous exotic plants that were introduced by man to this country have escaped from cultivation and have become

naturalized in the study area. These include champhor-tree, Chinese tallow-tree, water-hyacinth, alligator-weed, elephant's ear, kudzu, privet, chinaberry, golden rain-tree, citrus, St. Augustine grass, smut grass, blue grass, knot grass, crab grass, goose grass, and barnyard grass. Some ornamental plants that grow in the study area appear have been planted near former house sites. These include bamboo, Japanese plum, asparagus fern, mimosa-tree, yucca, crape myrtle, and pine.

As detailed in later chapters of this report, documentation shows that numerous domestic plants and animals were historically present in the study area. Archival records specify the introduction of cattle, horses, tobacco, cotton, and indigo during the French Period. Horses and cattle were allowed to run wild. Domestic plants and animals recorded as being in the study area during the Spanish Period are cattle, sheep, pigs, pigeons, horses, chickens, goats, cotton, indigo, potatoes, peas, and apparently, corn, wheat, and/or other grains.

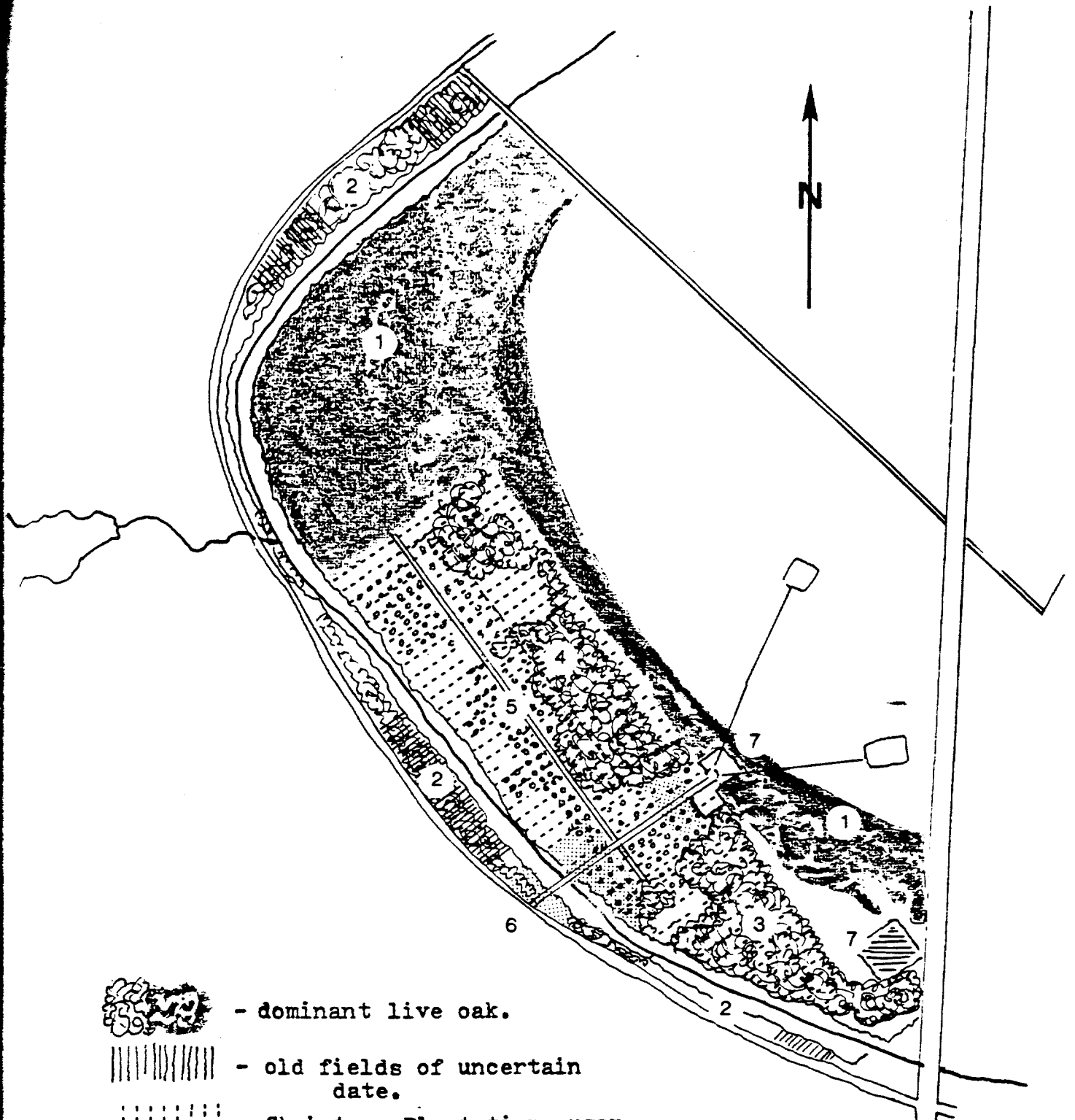
During the nineteenth century, the record specifies that cattle, chickens, goats, pigeons, horses, mules, and sheep were raised in the study area, and that corn, rice, sugarcane, cotton, turnips, lettuce, radishes, cabbage, hay, and sweet potatoes were grown. Domestic plants and animals known to have been in the study area in the twentieth century are sugarcane, orchard pecans, potatoes, beans, cabbage, beets, peas, peppers, cattle, hogs, rabbits, geese,

mules, horses, and dogs. Domestic ducks and cats have probably also been present.

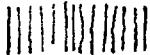
The appearance today of the ecological zones or habitats in the study area is described in the following pages. The character of the zones or habitats has been altered by historic use of the land, and these alterations are most noticeably reflected in the vegetation. The numerous differences in plant succession in the elevated hardwood areas are the combined results of both geomorphic variants and human activities. The series of gradual changes, called stages, that take place in the process of reforestation is called succession. In order to demonstrate the affects of historic land use on the environment, hardwood succession is shown as a number of areas where plant growth is responding to the differing human modifications of the land.

Park Ranger David Muth made important contributions to the following descriptions.





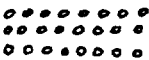
- dominant live oak.



- old fields of uncertain date.



- Christmas Plantation sugar cane fields, 1865-c.1900.



- pecan orchard, 1910.



- disturbed environs of recent dwelling sites.



- oil drill sites, 1960s.

THE PATCHWORK OF HARDWOOD  
SUCCESSION IN THE  
STUDY AREA

## THE PATCHWORK OF HARDWOOD SUCCESSION IN THE STUDY AREA

Succession area #1:

This area of plant succession covers parts of the east bank natural levee and a portion of the filled bed of the abandoned river course. There are few signs of agriculture in the area, and the oldest trees of the study area grow there. This forest was last logged in the 1950s, but the large oaks and some other "defective" older trees were never cut. The dominant plants are live oak, sweet gum, American elm, Carolina ash, red ash, water oak, Nuttall oak, hackberry, box-elder, green Hawthorn, slippery elm, deciduous holly, roughleaf dogwood, and palmetto. The area exhibits many of the plant communities and ground conditions that are typical of a Mississippi River Delta natural levee hardwood forest. It comprises the most unaltered portions of the study area.<sup>27</sup>

The natural levee crest rises to an elevation of about six feet. The point bar deposits of the old filled river bed slope slowly away from the natural levee toward the bayou over a distance that ranges from about 700 feet to about 1800 feet. The alluvial deposits consist of a series of concentric semi-circular ridges and swales. These vary several feet in elevation and are spaced 25 or more feet apart. Some swales contain water during all or part of the year. They frequently lack vegetation but sometimes contain aquatic plants. They are typically bordered by swamp species such as pumpkin ash, tupelo gum, red maple and cypress. The levee crest and the ridges between the swales are dominated by live oak and other



Live oaks on natural levee ridge of the Barataria-des Familles  
distributary, cut by the Lafitte-Larose Highway. Looking NW. 3/86.



Live oak measuring 21 feet in circumference at 4 feet from the ground located northeast of the juncture of the Big Woods Trail (Old Barataria Road) and the "Old Derrick Road," looking NE. 3/86.

upland hardwood trees described above as the plant dominates. Thick palmetto growth, standing seven feet or more in height, dominates much of the ridge and crest understory, but brambles, vines, and herbs are also numerous. The resulting overall pattern of vegetation is a series of semi-circular bands alternating between upland and swamp species. The wet bands are relatively small. Drier soil conditions cover most of the alluvial deposits and an upland plant community prevails.

The alluvial soil of the natural levee crest and the point bar ridges consists of silty loam and coarse clay, while that of the levee backslope consists of finely textured clay which drains more slowly. As the backslope of the natural levee nears the swamp, the higher water table and frequent inundations encourage the growth of increasing numbers of water-tolerant species and discourages the growth of upland hardwood species. Likewise, within several hundred feet of the bayou swampy conditions and species replace those of the raised areas. The ponded sloughs between the ridges are miniature wetlands that partially mimic growth conditions of the swamp and levee backslope. The soil in the sloughs is composed of fine clay and decayed vegetable muck washed by rain water runoff into the depressions.

When inhabited by prehistoric and historic peoples, the land was higher, wider in extent, and supported more upland vegetation. Subsidence has caused the relative elevation of the water table and the encroachment of the swamp on the backslope of the natural levee. Dead and dying live oaks and

Large stumps fringe the levee backslope and the lower slopes of the point bar deposits. These trees are unable to tolerate excessively wet conditions, and "ghost forests" of live oak are an indicator of subsidence.

Live oak is the dominant or codominant crown cover of the levee crest, and the closely grouped trees form a semi-circular band about 1000 feet wide following the shape of the old river meander. Some of the live oaks are 21 feet to 23 feet in circumference, as measured four feet from the ground. These trees have been variously estimated to be between 200 and 300 years old. Many of the oaks are smaller and are probably between 100 and 200 years old.

On some portions of the levee crest, the old live oaks are surrounded by saplings and young trees in the early stages of reforestation. These areas were logged in the 1950s. On other parts of the natural levee, the large live oaks are mixed with nearly-mature first-succession trees, the fast-growing sweet gum, ash, elm, water oak, and hackberry. These areas were logged in the 1930s or earlier. Since they were not clear-cut when they were logged and many old trees remain, these oak forests somewhat resemble a natural state of partial reforestation. They probably approximate normal sub-climax conditions in natural levee forest succession following fire, drought, or other natural disasters.<sup>28</sup>

Historical accounts and scientific treatises alike suggest that the climax forests of the Mississippi River distributary levees, where unaltered by man or natural dis-

asters, consisted of almost pure stands of live oak and some stands of southern magnolia. The shade cast by the dense canopies of these large, long-living trees discourages the growth of non-shade-tolerant species. Because of this, the live oak and southern magnolia are preemptive species on moderately well-drained alluvial soils. In keeping with natural processes, however, the live oak forests would have been temporary climaxes.

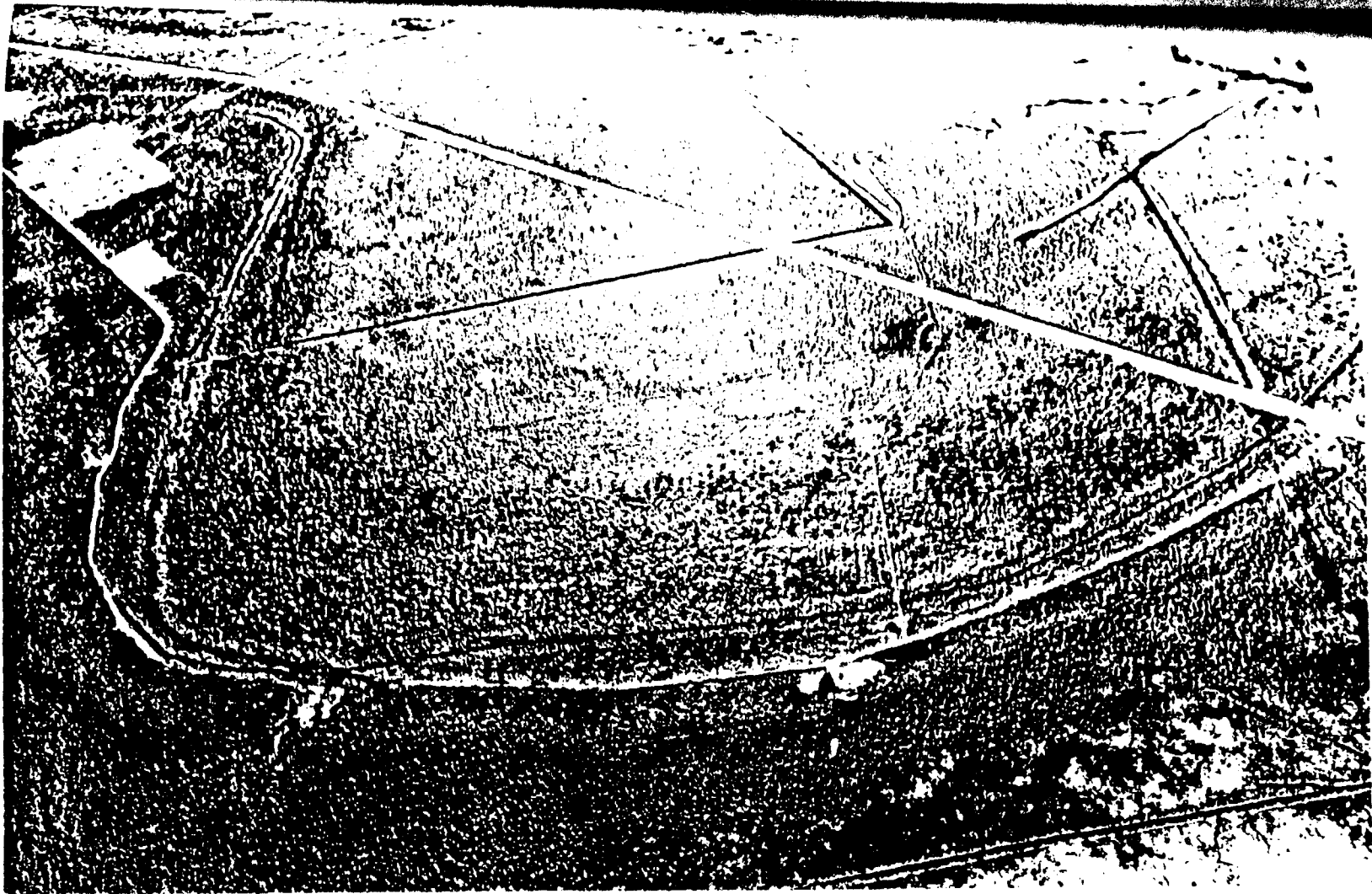
Plant succession climaxes in the Mississippi River Delta, where geological processes are constantly in a dynamic state of flux, are temporary edaphic climaxes. These are climaxes which are influenced by soil conditions rather than climatic climaxes in which ecological stability is directly influenced by climate. As abandoned distributaries subside, their forests exhibit a series of edaphic climaxes which culminate with cypress swamp. This procession from a mesic, or moderately wet forest, to a hydric, or abundantly wet forest is an inversion of the sequence of plant succession on an active distributary where the land is building in elevation. As the Barataria-des Familles Distributary continues to subside and the relative water table continues to rise, plant succession will increasingly favor the water-tolerant species located in the bottom lands of the old river bed and in the back swamp.

The normal effects of subsidence are best observed in Succession Area #1 where ground conditions remain in a relatively natural state. Human use has been responsible

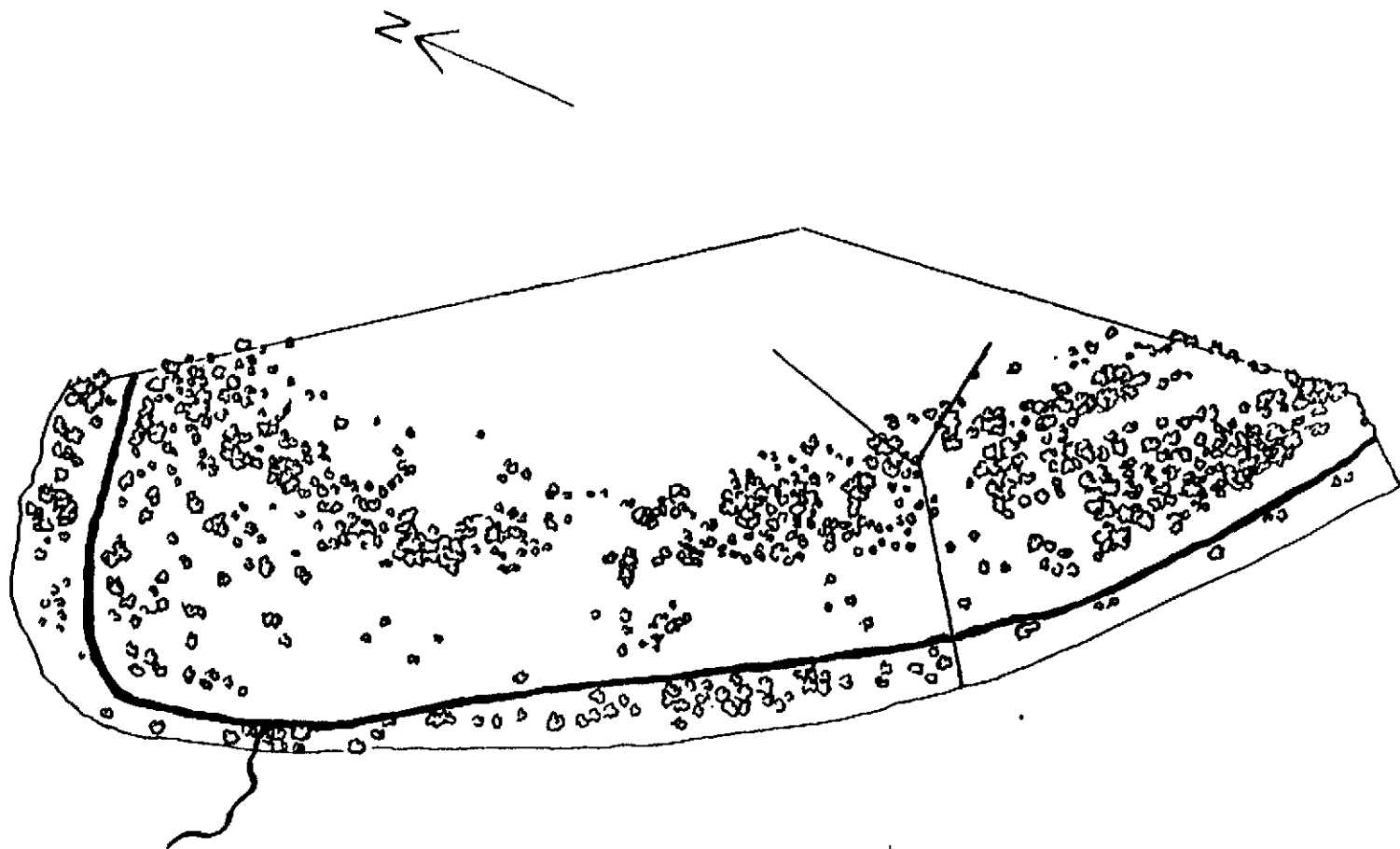


Live oak on the Chemin de Barataria at the north end of the study area, measuring about 23 feet in circumference at about four feet from the ground.





Oblique air view of the study area, looking NE. 2/23/86.



1  
Live oak distribution in study area in 1986, drawn from an oblique air photo,  
looking NE.

For some changes in the land. Indian middens located on the point bar deposits provide artificially elevated areas for upland growth on the lower slopes of the alluvial fill and disrupt the natural progression of vegetation from the swamp near the bayou to the crest of the natural levee. Historic documentation shows that the area was partially cleared for agriculture in the Spanish Period, but had little subsequent use except for logging and cattle grazing. There are no visible signs of furrows in the area, but there are a few ditches of undetermined date. Spanish building sites have been located in the area. Roads have been constructed through the area since colonial times. The public highway passed through the area until the 1930s. Road grading altered natural ground levels where the roads passed, and traffic through the area introduced occasional exotic plants.

Succession area #2:

This area of hardwood succession consists of that part of the natural levee on the west side of Bayou des Familles which lies between the bayou and Highway 45. Both sides of the highway on the west side of the bayou were logged about 1946, but the large live oaks were not cut. Therefore, this semi-circular strip of high land is characterized by young trees and saplings intersperced with old oaks. The dominant trees include live oak, water oak, hackberry, sweetgum, box elder, American elm, slippery elm, and green hawthorn. 29

portions of this natural levee were historically farmed, and furrows and ditches can be seen on the forest floor in these areas. Documentation shows that the most northern furrowed area was in cultivation before 1855 and was probably farmed in the Spanish Period. The two more southern cultivated strips are located within the former Christmas Plantation tract and may date from that plantation period (1865-circa 1900). However, these strips may also have been farmed in colonial times. The furrows and ditches on this natural levee are shallow and faint, and they give the appearance of long abandoned fields.<sup>30</sup>

The land forms of the west bank natural levee differ from those of the east bank natural levee because the west bank was the cut bank of the old river meander. Changes in elevation on the east bank are abrupt. The natural levee rises from the level of the bayou to a height of five or six feet at the levee crest within a distance of 200 or 300 feet. The sudden rise in elevation is reflected in the vegetation as narrow linear strips of species adapted to successively dryer soil as the ground ascends to the levee crest. This progression of plant growth is interrupted by ponded sloughs containing water-tolerant swamp species. When the bayou was still a partially active stream, these sloughs were chutes that carried some of the flow during times of high water.

The dominant trees of the ridges between the sloughs are those mentioned above as the dominant hardwoods on the natural levee. The ground cover of the levee crest and the

ridges consists of a mixture of brambles, ferns, grasses, vines, shrubs, and palmetto. The ponded sloughs are bordered by red maple, cypress, pumpkin ash, and tupelo gum. Aquatic plants such as pickerel-weed sometimes grow in the ponded sloughs, although the ponds are frequently devoid of vegetation.

The natural configuration of the ridge-and-swale land forms has been largely leveled in the formerly cultivated areas, and some leveling was done in road construction. The natural sequence of the ridges and swales rising to the levee crest is also disrupted by prehistoric Indian middens which are elevated above the natural ground level. Many of these middens are located near the bayou on the lower slopes of the natural levee, but they often support live oak and other upland plants in contrast to the differing vegetation adapted to the surrounding swampy ground.

The natural composition and succession processes of the plant communities of the west bank natural levee have also been disturbed by the proximity of the modern highway, powerlines, and human habitation sites, as well as by long recreational use and trash dumping. Numerous exotic species can be found along this natural levee.

#### Succession area #3:

This hardwood succession area consists of reforested sugar cane fields of the Christmas Plantation (1865-circa 1900). The area is located at the southern end of the former

plantation field. This part of the field is located on the alluvial fill in the bottomland flood plain between the natural levee and the bayou. However, the vegetation is that of an upland forest because the character of the land has been altered by man. When the fields were created, the original ridge-and-swale topography was largely leveled, and the area was drained by ditches and ringed with levees. The ditches drain from the natural levee toward the bayou, and are spaced about 100 feet apart. The furrows also drain down the slope of the old river bed in the same direction, and are spaced about five feet apart. A deep perpendicular ditch and a levee were built along the eastern plantation property line to control runoff from the crest of the natural levee. A large ditch and levee system that borders the swamp of the bayou carries the runoff downstream and helps prevent overflow from the bayou during floods.

In essence, the flood plain of the old river bed has been reshaped into a washboard of closely-spaced, narrow, linear reliefs running in a direction roughly perpendicular to the bayou. These well-drained linear reliefs constitute artificially created upland soil conditions, and they support upland plant growth. The intersperced ditches, which are intermittently wet, support little or no vegetation, and drainage runoff also discourages growth in the furrows.

Because plant growth in this area has been in response to the man-altered ground, the plant community is an example of one that scientists consider to be man-made. The mature hardwoods are largely even-aged trees dating from the aban-

donment of the sugar cane field in about 1900. In the race to establish crown cover, the trees have grown tall and straight. Most have grown in alignment with the linear agricultural features, having taken root on the raised beds between the furrows and on the spoil banks of the ditches. In some parts of the old field, the trees are so equally spaced that they appear to have been planted in measured rows as in an orchard, or for an ornamental garden, resembling alley ways in a geometric parterre. Some closely-spaced trees appear to form small squares, but, of course, these are chance arrangements.

Of the reforested sugar cane fields of the Christmas Plantation, this area appears to be most advanced in the phases of plant succession. Aerial photographs appear to show that the dominant crown cover is live oak. The sub-dominant seem to be water oak, hackberry, and elm. The understory is relatively clear, with a ground cover of grasses, ferns and vines, and a scattering of palmetto. There are some fallen trees, and in occasional small clearings there are numerous seedlings and saplings. The sparse understory may indicate that the area was extensively used as a woodland pasture until recent years.

This area apparently escaped logging and therefore appears to represent relatively undisturbed tree succession in an abandoned field over a period of nearly 100 years. A study made in 1937-38 of a 50-year-old forest on a former sugar cane field on the Bayou Sauvage natural levee found

that water oak was the dominant in the tree stratum, and that live oak was a close subdominant. Hackberry was the only other important subdominant. The study showed that palmetto was the only common shrub, and that oak forest grass (Oplismenus setarius) was the most frequent herb.<sup>31</sup>

On the Christmas Plantation field, the upland oak forest stops abruptly at the levee of the ditch bordering the bayou swamp. Twelve feet away, on the bayou side of the ditch, is another ecosystem and biological community in the swamp forest wetland. This sudden change is unnatural and is man-made. In its natural state, the river bed flood plain became gradually wetter as it descended to the bayou, and the number of water-tolerant plants gradually increased as the number of upland plants gradually decreased. This type of natural plant distribution is seen in Succession Area #1.

The field levee of the plantation levee/ditch system was constructed along the bankline last occupied by prehistoric Indians. The middens that represented their dwelling sites have been reshaped into parts of the plantation levee. The clam shells characteristic of the middens are frequently noticeable in the levee. Live oaks grow on the levee at some of the locations composed of midden material, suggesting a preference by these trees for the soil of middens even if it is reshaped as a levee.

A large, water-filled slough drains through the plantation levee/ditch system bordering the eastern side of the Christmas property. This drainage is several hundred feet wide and follows the course of the old river meander in a north-





Christmas Plantation front ditch and levee bordering Bayou des  
Milles, showing man-made abrupt change from cypress swamp near  
ditch (right) to upland hardwood community with live oaks (left  
ditch), looking SE. 3/86.



Live oaks on backslope of natural levee of the Barataria-des  
Lafitte distributary, cut by the Lafitte-Larose Highway. Looking  
west, 1966.



Oblique air photo looking SW across abandoned Barataria-des Familles distributary, showing swamp and tributaries of Bayou aux Carps on backslope of natural levee in foreground, filled river bed with field ditches of the Christmas Plantation, scour channel of the old river (Bayou des Familles), west bank natural levee and swamp on backslope, and marsh. Lake Salvador at upper right; Bayou Barataria at upper left.



Deer tracks in Christmas Plantation sugarcane field ditch on  
the backslope of the natural levee. Animals use the field ditches  
as trails and help to keep them open through the dense palmetto  
forest. 3/86.

west-southeast direction for about 2000 feet. The drainage inundates the forested fields that it crosses but must have been dammed by the plantation levee during the years of cultivation. A map of about 1815 shows two "coulees" located here.<sup>32</sup>

Documentation shows that this area was farmed in the Spanish Colonial Period. Archival evidence suggests that it may have been cultivated during the French Period.

#### Succession area #4:

This succession area consists of reforested cane fields located on the natural levee and on the levee backslope. It is a partially logged, patchy, mixed hardwood forest. The area forms a rectangle measuring about 700 feet by 3500 feet and is located at the northeast corner of the former Christmas Plantation sugar cane field. It is bounded by a former pecan orchard bordering the Shell Road on the southeast, the Old Barataria Public Road on the northeast, the Old Derrick Road on the northwest, and Second Road of the housing subdivision on the southwest.

This area and Succession Area #3 are the only areas of the former Christmas sugar cane field that retain the furrows and beds of sugar cultivation. As in Area #3, the ditches and furrows drain the soil in a washboard fashion and help to maintain relatively dry soil for an upland plant community. However, being on the natural levee and levee backslope, the ground conditions and vegetation differ from those of the old cane fields in the river bottom.

The soil of the backslope of the natural levee is composed of fine clay and is poorly drained. Water stands on the surface after a heavy rain. Several branches of Bayou aux Carpes begin on the backslope in this area, cross the Old Barataria Public Road, and finger into the field. These tributaries of Bayou aux Carpes appear in this position on a nineteenth century map. During the years of sugar production, a ditch and a levee along the eastern Christmas property line controlled overflow from the backslope at times of high water. As a result of subsidence, the fields on the backslope are now wet much of the time. A drainage that leaves Bayou des Familles opposite Bayou Coquilles and inundates the bottomland in that vicinity, appears to flow in an eastward direction toward the Bayou aux Carpes tributaries. It may contribute to the wet soil conditions in the northeast portion of this section of the old cane fields.

The forest of the backslope consists of a mixture of hardwoods with an understory of palmetto. Some of the thickest palmetto growth in the study area is located in the former cane fields on the backslope of the natural levee in this area. The palmetto stratum is six or seven feet high and is so dense that it is almost impassable. Water stands in the field furrows and ditches much of the year. The palmetto growth tends to favor the field beds and spoil banks. Deer and other animals use the ditches as trails in order to pass through the thick growth.

as can be seen by their numerous tracks.

The semi-circular crest of the natural levee passes through this field area. The firm, silty soil of the natural levee supports a varied understory of herbs, vines, and shrubs. Palmetto are not as numerous as on the backslope where they essentially compose the entire understory. The crest of the natural levee is defined by a large, semi-circular ditch from which the perpendicular field ditches drain toward the bayou. Only a few of the ditches on the backslope drain into this semi-circular ditch; most drain down the backslope.

This area is in itself a patchwork of plant relationships and phases of growth, but each variation shows the modification of sugar cane cultivation and logging activities as well as the influence of the natural topographical changes. Thus, the plant communities are among those that scientists consider to be man-made.

Tree growth in the area is uneven as a result of logging. There are numerous seedlings, saplings, and young trees. The largest trees are on the natural levee crest where live oak is dominant in patches. Water oak is probably the overall dominant in this old cane field area. Among the subdominants are hackberry, sweetgum, box-elder, American elm, honey locust, champhor, and nuttall oak. Many of the live oaks and some of the other trees are large and appear to exceed 100 years in age. It is possible that some portions of the cane fields were abandoned prior to

others. Louis Ehret, who first visited the area in 1912, states that it was wooded at that time.<sup>33</sup>

The old colonial road passed along the levee crest in this area, and traces of at least one road bed remain. The 50-foot right-of-ways of First Road and Second Road of the housing subdivision are difficult to detect on the ground, but are evident in aerial photographs as linear demarcations in the crown cover. This, in corroboration with Louis Ehret's statement, seems to demonstrate that the subdivision streets were cut after the reforestation had begun. The subdivision was laid out in 1910.<sup>34</sup>

A pipeline clearing about 25 feet wide runs between the fields and the Old Barataria Public Road, just inside the eastern Christmas property line. The right-of-way dates from 1935 and is overgrown with young trees and saplings. Many of the larger trees along the right-of-way have forked trunks because they regenerated from saplings slashed during clearing or maintenance of the right-of-way.<sup>35</sup>

Documentation shows that this area was farmed at least as early as the Spanish Colonial Period. One Spanish colonial house site has been located in the area. Archival evidence indicates that the area may have been farmed in the French Period. Until recent years, cattle were pastured in these woods, and they kept the understory clear. Louis Ehret, who frequented the woods between 1912 and 1930, recalls that they used to be cleared of undergrowth and small trees and had a grassy ground cover.<sup>36</sup>



Succession area #5:

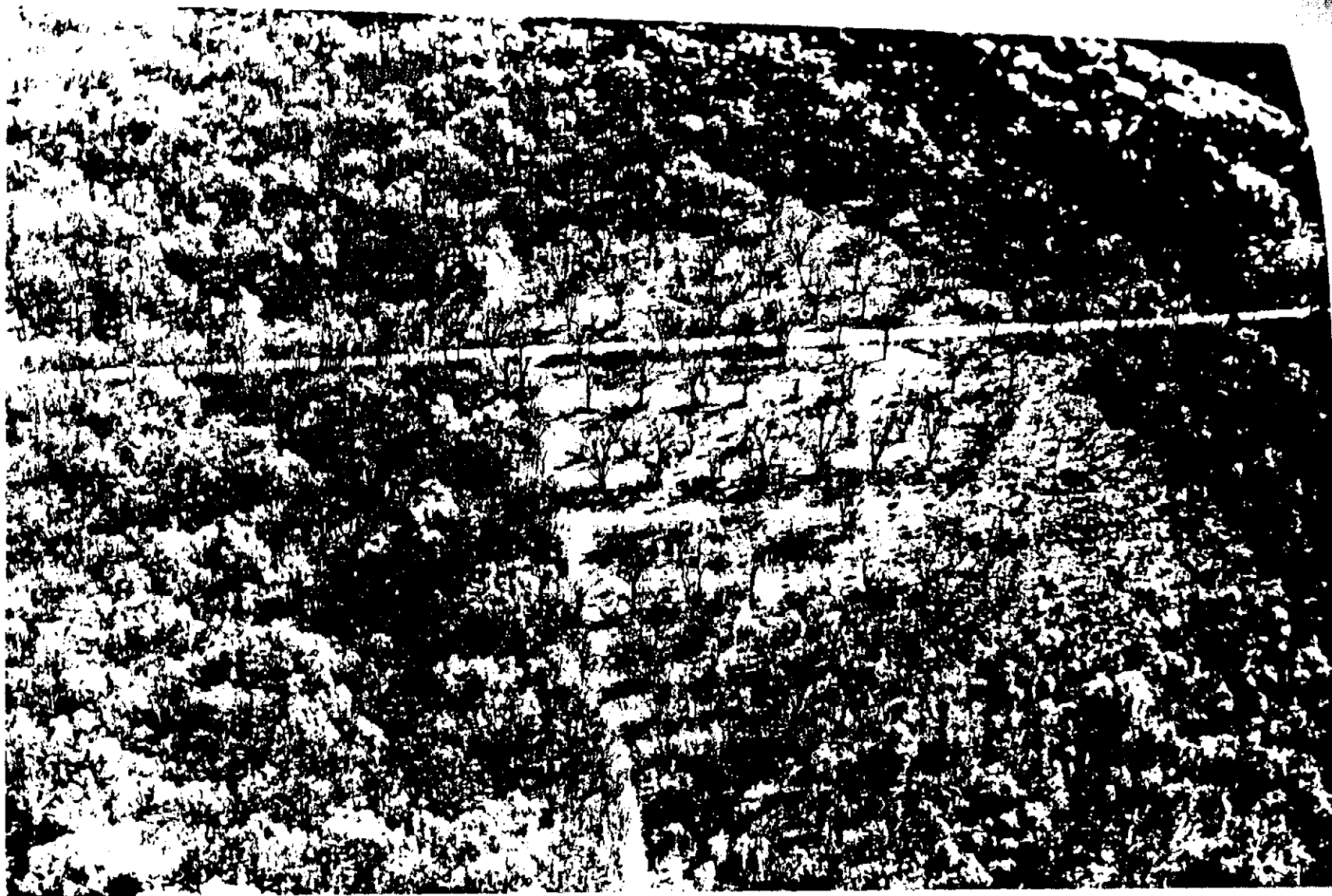
This plant succession area composes the remains of the pecan orchard, planted when the subdivision was laid out in 1910 as an income-producing incentive to buy lots. The orchard was established on parts of the abandoned sugar cane fields of the Christmas Plantation.<sup>37</sup>

As originally planted, the orchard seems to have filled an area bounded on three sides by Bayou des Familles, the Old Derrick Road, and Second Road. It also bordered both sides of the Shell Road (the subdivision "Old Road") for several hundred feet. Some pecans were also originally planted on the west bank natural levee of Bayou des Familles, near the Shell Road. A 1945 aerial photograph shows the trees in these locations, although, by that time, some had died, leaving patches in the orchard.

The pecan (*Carya illinoensis*) is native to the Mississippi River Delta. Many varieties of orchard pecans were developed through graftings. The orchards are begun with transplanted trees ranging between three to five years in age and two to six feet in height.<sup>38</sup>

The surviving pecans are now enveloped in woods and brush that have grown up around them. The pecans are suffering from the encroachment and from lack of fertilization. They may also be adversely affected by subsidence and the relative rise in the water table.

The orchard was laid out in rows 50 feet apart, with a space of 50 feet between each tree. The pecans stand upon 20-foot-wide beds banked about one foot in height. At least



Pecan orchard at the Shell Road, crossed by Third Road. Bayou des Familles and Highway 45 at upper right. Oblique infra-red photo of 2/23/86. White trees are evergreen oaks. Looking S.



Large outfall ditch of the Christmas Plantation located about 1000 feet NW of the Shell Road in pecan orchard, showing front ditch and levee of the Christmas Plantation and Bayou des Familles at right. Oblique infra-red photo of 2/23/86. White trees are evergreen oaks. Looking S.

Some of the former sugar cane field ditches seem to have been reused in the orchard. However, the orchard ditches near the Shell Road are spaced about 60 feet apart, while those of the remaining sugar cane furrows and beds are 100 feet apart.

The pecans always produced good fruit. Some of the trees are smaller and younger than the majority, having been planted later to replace trees that died. The largest standing in the orchard today are about 38 inches in diameter. Pecans grow to great age and size. One that formerly grew near White Castle, Louisiana was said to be the largest pecan tree in the world. It measured seven feet in diameter three feet above the ground.<sup>39</sup>

For many years, cattle and hogs were pastured in the pecan orchard to keep the understory clear. Vegetables were also raised between the rows of trees for the same purpose. Some parts of the pecan orchard were abandoned to the forest before others, such as the rectangle of orchard between Second Road and Third Road. In this rectangle, only a few pecans survive, but the regularity of their placements can still be seen. A few pecans also survive in the orchard areas that border the Shell Road between Third Road and the Old Barataria Public Road. The largest number of pecans are located west of Third Road, on both sides of the Shell Road. These orchard rows were maintained until recent years. A number of pecans also remain at the north end of the orchard, west of Third Road, but this part of the orchard has been over grown for many years. A few pecans have escaped



skull in the pecan orchard. Livestock helped to keep the orchard  
clear. 2/86.



Many oak trees in the park have been burned by hunters to flush out rabbits. 3/86.

the orchard and grow in the adjacent woods. Various stages of plant succession can be seen in portions of the orchard dating from differing times of abandonment.<sup>40</sup>

In terms of forest succession, the pecan orchard is an artificial plant community being absorbed by wild vegetation under the influence of the man-made orchard setting. The large beds and furrows create relatively dry soil conditions in the bottomland, and upland trees such as live oak grow on the beds near the bayou. The shade cast by the pecan overstory allows shade-tolerant trees such as live oak to compete successfully in the early-successional undergrowth of the orchard.

The normal ecological sere of a fallow field in the Lower Mississippi Delta progresses from weeds to shrubs to tree seedlings in less than 25 years. The first trees to invade a field are fast-growing and multilayered in leaf distribution. Depending on local variations in seed recruitment, these include sweetgum, hackberry, cottonwood, box-elder, and elm. Such seedlings require a sunny canopy. The wax-myrtle, a large shrub or small tree, is frequently first to invade the fields. Within a few years, this fast-growing plant forms a closed canopy about 25 feet high over the old field. The dense canopy shades out existing early-succession weeds and creates a suitable condition for the germination of shade-tolerant trees.<sup>41</sup>

Late-succession seedlings, such as oak, magnolia, and dogwood, are intolerant of open sunlight but flourish in the canopy shade of early-succession trees. The leaves of

Succession trees are arranged in a monolayer, and their branches are flat and spreading as saplings. This shape permits maximum interception of light in the shaded understory in order that photosynthesis for adequate growth can occur.<sup>42</sup>

Plant succession in the pecan orchard shares some aspects of that of a fallow field and some aspects of that of a sparsely thinned forest. In the long-abandoned parts of the orchard, other trees are now competing in size with the surviving pecans. The dominant invaders of these parts of the orchard are hackberry, live oak, water oak, and sweet gum. Many of these trees are 30 inches or more in diameter. In recently abandoned portions of the orchard, the 50-foot spacing of the pecans provides a partially open canopy beneath which succession is advancing in accordance with available skylight, as well as ground conditions and other factors. The understory of these areas is a dense thicket of weeds, shrubs, vines, seedlings, saplings, and many young live oaks. Wax-myrtle are numerous and reach a height of about 15 feet. The young trees and shrubs tend to line up upon the orchard beds.

A rectangular area of the orchard that stretches for about 1000 feet north of the Shell Road and between the bayou and Third Road was the last large clearing to remain in the study area. The plot was farmed as a truck garden, and its surviving pecans were harvested. Animals were also penned in the area. Reforestation of this last plot did not



begin until acquisition of the land by the National Park Service. An aerial photograph of 1978 shows that the 1000-foot rectangle, plus a 300-foot-wide strip bordering the south side of the Shell Road, and a small garden plot southeast of the junction of the Shell Road and Highway 45 were the only cleared portions of the study area. By 1978, the rest of the study area had been taken over by forest.<sup>43</sup>

That portion of the 1000-foot cultivated rectangle located within several hundred feet of the bayou had, by 1978, lost most of its pecan trees. This open area demonstrates an early phase of plant succession in a fallow field. It is covered with grasses, goldenrod, and dewberry. Notable shrub and seedling tree invaders are palmetto, wax-myrtle, sweet gum, hackberry, ash, honey locust, camphor, and tallow.

A study of plant succession on recently abandoned sugarcane fields along the lower Mississippi River, made in 1940-42, found that a perennial weed stage persisted until the seventh to tenth year. The only important dominant of the weed community was found to be goldenrod (Solidago hirsutissima). Some shrubs became established during the second year after abandonment. Between the seventh and tenth years, the goldenrod community was gradually replaced by a shrub community. Wax-myrtle was found to be the dominant species in the shrub community of most of the fields studied. On some fields, dogwood (Svida asperifolia), or buckbrush (Baccharis salicifolia), or elderberry (Sambucus canadensis) predominated.<sup>44</sup>

The field that had been abandoned for 25 years was found

resemble a young forest, with a closed crown of wax-myrtle and persimmon that allowed little penetration of light. The perennial weeds had been replaced by a scant ground cover of herbs typical of an evergreen oak forest floor. Numerous live oak seedlings grew in the canopy shade. They averaged two feet in height and numbered about 160 to the acre. The investigator noted that this evidence suggested that the shrub community would be replaced by an evergreen oak forest in which live oak predominated, and that the evergreen oak forests that then existed along Gentilly and Metairie ridges, the Lafitte Highway, and "along practically every uncultivated cheniere in southeastern Louisiana suggested the possibility that live oak may be dominant or co-dominant in the climax forest of this area."<sup>45</sup>

Plant succession in the fallow fields along the edge of Bayou des Familles is in transition between the perennial weed and shrub stages and appears to be proceeding in a manner similar to that described in the study of fields along the Mississippi. However, variations may be expected in the moist bottomland near the bayou. The ease of seed dispersal from the encompassing forest may accelerate the stages of succession. Many young live oaks grow on the fields near the bayou. Some areas of the fields near the levee consist of disturbed midden material. Intact portions of middens may underlie the fields near the bayou in some areas.

The levee that borders the orchard at the edge of the bayou swamp contains disturbed midden material. The levee/ditch system at this location dates from the years of the sugar plantation. It abruptly separates the upland plant communities of the pecan orchard from the swamp forest community near the bayou. Live oaks grow on the levee.

The subdivision roads were used to maintain and harvest the pecan orchard. Several additional roads were made in the orchard for the same purpose. These roads are about 25 feet wide. Plant succession has not advanced as rapidly on the road beds as it has in the cultivated orchard rows. Most of the road beds are still relatively clear of vegetation. They are covered with low grasses and weeds and occasional saplings. Third Road is used as a park trail, which helps to keep it open. Retarded succession on the disused roads may be caused by the hard traffic pan that easily develops in alluvial clay. Elsewhere in the forest, surviving sections of other old roads, disused for 100 years or more, are similarly clear.

The pecan orchard is actually a patchwork of plant succession areas, exhibiting stages of succession that range from grasses to woods. However, the plant succession in each patchwork is proceeding under the influence of a man-altered environment.

The orchard has apparently not been logged since it began to undergo reforestation. Documentation shows that the orchard area was farmed in the Spanish Colonial Period.

Archival evidence suggests that it may have been cultivated during the French Period.

Succession area #6:

This hardwood succession area actually consists of several discontinuous patches bordering both sides of the Shell Road. These are recently disturbed areas which were used as habitation sites as late as the early 1980s.

Houses and other structures, animal pens, and a small farmed plot bordered the Shell Road at the junction of Highway 45. Similar use was made of the orchard area bordering the Shell Road on the opposite side of the bayou as far as Third Road. A plot on the north side of the Shell Road between First and Second Roads was used until the early 1980s as a camp for a hunting club.<sup>46</sup>

The ground in these areas has been leveled and shells and other fill have been added in some places. A few building foundations are still present, as is some trash. A number of large hardwoods are located in these areas, some having served as shade trees for the buildings. The ground cover generally consists of perennial weeds commonly found in early plant successions.

In the disturbed areas on both sides of the bayou, notable recent-succession species are the tall roseau-cane, goldenrod, aster, blackberry, giant rag weed, butter-weed, thistle, vetch, wild geranium, verbena, and broom sedge. Vines include poison ivy and Virginia creeper. Also notable are numerous seedlings and saplings of the exotic camphor

The hunting club plot remains forested, but the understory was cleared for use by the club. The low ground cover consists of forest grasses and briars, with some young palmettos. Scattered saplings are beginning to establish a new understory. According to Louis Ehret who frequented these woods between 1912 and 1930, the hunting club plot best resembles the former appearance of most of the woods, with a largely clear understory and grassy ground cover. This appearance was maintained by the cattle pastured in the forest.<sup>47</sup>

The hunting club plot illustrates reforestation of a largely shaded understory in which some of the early plant succession phases and communities are bypassed in favor of tree seedlings and saplings. The plot is located in a portion of the pecan orchard that was abandoned many years ago. Mature oaks and other hardwoods have replaced the pecans on the plot. The undergrowth is responding to a canopy less deciduous than that of the surviving orchard. Succession on this plot may be modified by ground hard-packed in places by human use.

Portions of some of these disturbed areas contain what scientists call artificial plant communities. These are found on areas that are continuously disturbed and thus prevented from following a normal course of succession, such as roadsides, the borders of parking lots, trail heads, and the protection levee at the northern boundary of the park. These are places which are regularly mown. The resulting plant community is similar to that of continuously grazed

pastures where plant succession is restricted to the earliest stage of annual grasses and perennial weeds. Many of the grasses composing these artificial communities are non-native grasses that are now widespread, such as St. Augustine grass, crab grass, barnyard grass, goose grass, knot grass, blue grass, and smut grass. Also frequently present in these artificial communities are the flowering false dandelion, wild strawberry, buttercup, morning-glory, and spiderwort.

A number of ornamental plants mark the former dwelling sites on both sides of the bayou. These include pine, golden rain-tree, mimosa-tree, yucca, and crape myrtle. The Shell Road served as part of the route of State Highway 30 until the late 1930s. Traffic may have also been responsible for spreading exotic plant seeds in areas adjacent to the road.

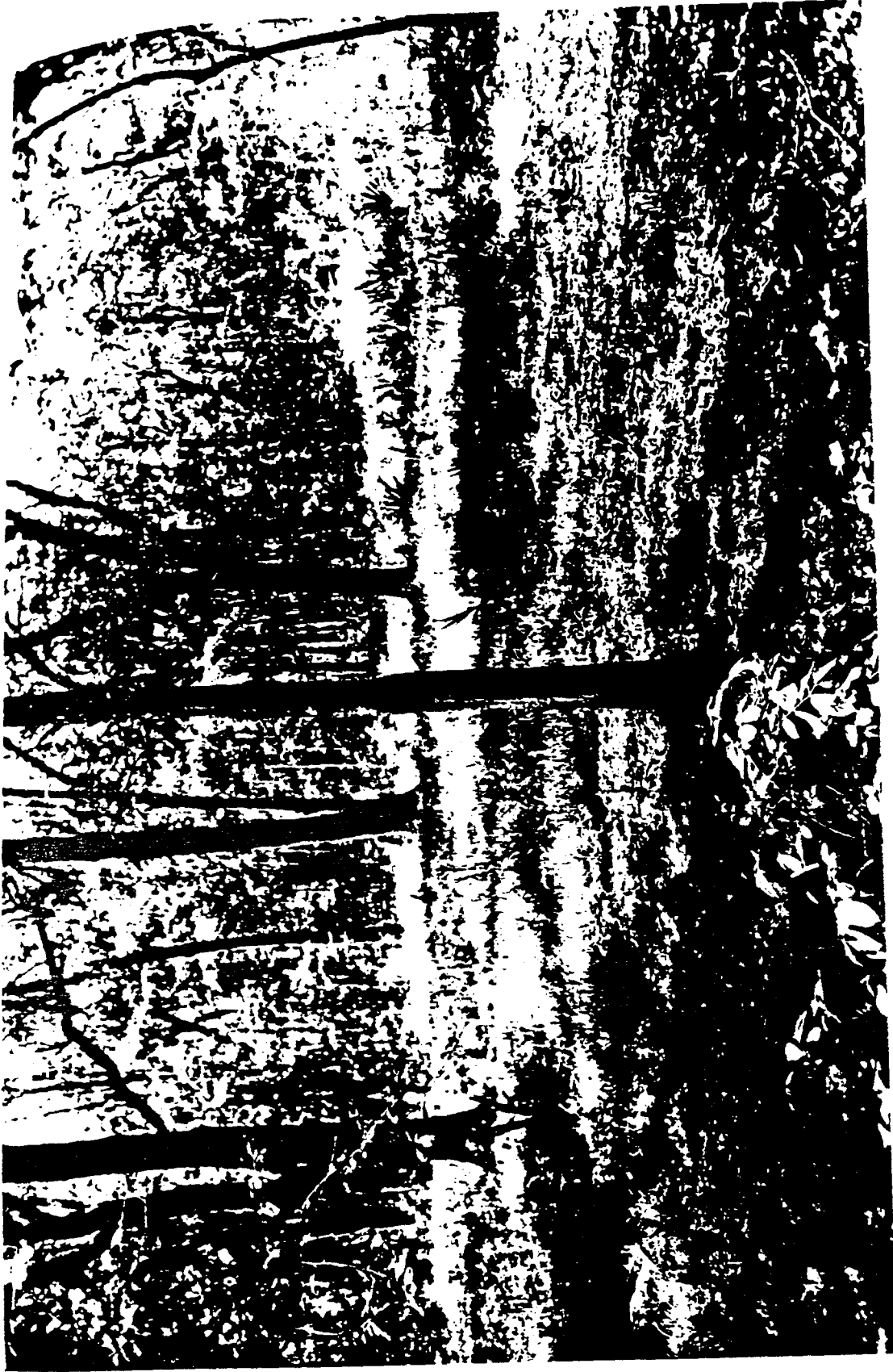
#### Succession area #7:

This hardwood succession area is actually composed of two discontinuous areas disturbed by oil exploration in the 1960s. These areas are located on the east bank natural levee and on the levee backslope. They consist of embanked oil drill pads, ring levees, drill holes, cuttings pits containing shale and rock brought up from drill holes, drilling mud pits, brine pits, piles of trash, river sand and shell road beds, and bulldozed and cleared areas with standing water, mounds of earth, and felled trees.

The oil exploration sites are square areas measuring from 300 to 500 feet square. Plant succession on the sites

at the sapling stage, and sweet gum and hackberry are among the most notable. The ground cover usually consists of thickets of briars, weeds, and vines. Some bulldozed ground contains standing water and little vegetation. Some mature trees remain in some of the oil exploration areas. Airborne spills or toxins may have killed vegetation in other areas. Some of the ponded pits have sparse vegetation, while others are overgrown.

A large ring levee at the southern end of the study area contains beds and furrows of a field overgrown with saplings. The interior of the ring levee was apparently farmed soon after being abandoned by the oil company. The woods near this ring levee may have been partially logged in gaining access to the drill site. There are few live oaks in this area, and the ground is flooded and partially cleared of trees. Some areas are a tangle of briars, shrubs, and palmettos. This large drainage is part of the wet slough that is described above as passing through the old sugarcane fields in Area #3. It follows the semi-circular shape of the old river meander and is located near the crest of the natural levee. The large ring levee is located on the crest of the natural levee and partially below the crest in the old river bed. The ring levee is built over one or more raised road beds that, at one time or another, served as the route of the old Barataria Road. Other road beds used by the Barataria Road may be located nearby.



Natural levee hardwood forest on the "Gun Club Lot." 4/86.





Cypress swamp from "Ring Levee Trail." 3/86.

## THE SWAMP FOREST

Swamp forest is located in two portions of the study area: beyond the backslope of the natural levee and along the borders of Bayou des Familles. The plant communities of these two swamp forest areas are similar in composition but dissimilar in distribution.

The swamp forest that begins at the toe of the natural levee backslope is called the backswamp. The vegetation of the backswamp reflects the active geological processes behind the natural levee.

As the elevation of the natural levee slopes downward toward the swamp and the relative level of the water table rises, water tolerant species increase in number. With some intermingling of species throughout, semi-circular bands of increasingly water-tolerant plant communities descend to the swamp. Below the crest of the natural levee, the number of live oaks decreases and water oak, hackberry, sweetgum, ash, elm, and red maple increase. Near the swamp is a band of dead live oaks and stumps of oaks that were killed by excessive wetness at the roots as the levee subsided.

The toe of the natural levee backslope is demarked by a band of red maple, with their highly visible foliage, mixed with tupelo gum, pumpkin ash, and bald cypress. This band constitutes a transitional zone of changing vegetation that borders the swamp at the base of the subsiding natural levee backslope. As subsidence continues, plant succession in this

... will proceed toward an edaphic climax forest of bald cypress, and the transitional zone distinguished by the flaming red maples will slowly advance toward the crest of the sinking natural levee.

The understory of the backslope forest consists of thick palmetto growth. Palmetto also grows in the backswamp, although less densely. The plant can not survive under conditions of continuous submersion of its roots and lower trunk, but it thrives in areas where wet and dry conditions fluctuate. Palmetto seeds are carried by water, therefore abundant growth of the shrub denotes areas subject to occasional flooding.<sup>48</sup>

The largest and oldest palmettos are in the backswamp, about 1000 feet distant from the crest of the natural levee. These palmettos have large trunks and are estimated to be more than 250 years old. The palmettos that grow on the crest of the natural levee are shrubs estimated to be less than 100 years old. The leaves of the youngest of these grow from underground rootstocks. As trunked trees, palmettos may grow to a height of six or eight feet. The trunked palmettos deep in the backswamp germinated before the land subsided and became inundated, but they have developed elevated roots and trunks. Some large palmettos in the backswamp are dying because of the increase in the water level. Early settlers in Louisiana observed that the palmetto grew above land subject to sustained annual overflow and used the plant as an indicator of land suitable for farming and

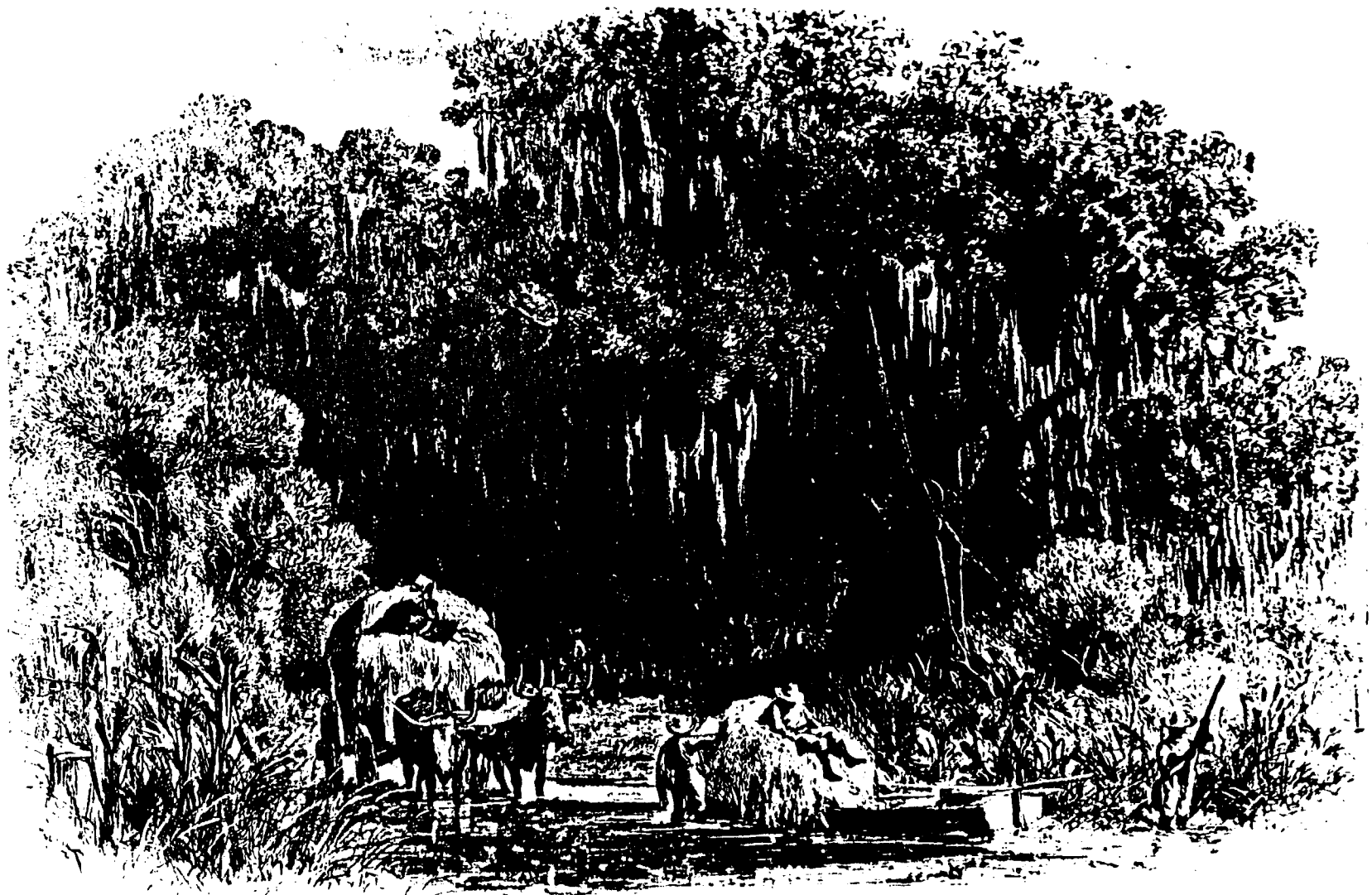
vegetation.<sup>49</sup>

About 1200 feet from the crest of the natural levee and bordering the base of the backslope is the levee-flank depression, a semi-circular band of deep water swamp with some dying trees and some ponded areas. These depressed areas are created by the subsiding load of the adjacent natural levee which compacts underlying sediments and causes their lateral displacement. Levee-flank depressions parallel the meander courses of all deltaic distributaries, both active and inactive.<sup>50</sup>

On the east side of Bayou des Familles in the study area, the levee-flank depression is about 800 feet wide. Tree growth is sparse in some areas of the depression. Beyond the depression, the ground rises and the swamp water is not as deep. In 1855, a part of this area was described by United States Deputy Surveyor Maurice Hauké as being "high land." The land is now submerged, but vegetation in the area is heavy. The rise in the ground may be part of a subsided levee of an abandoned river meander.<sup>51</sup>

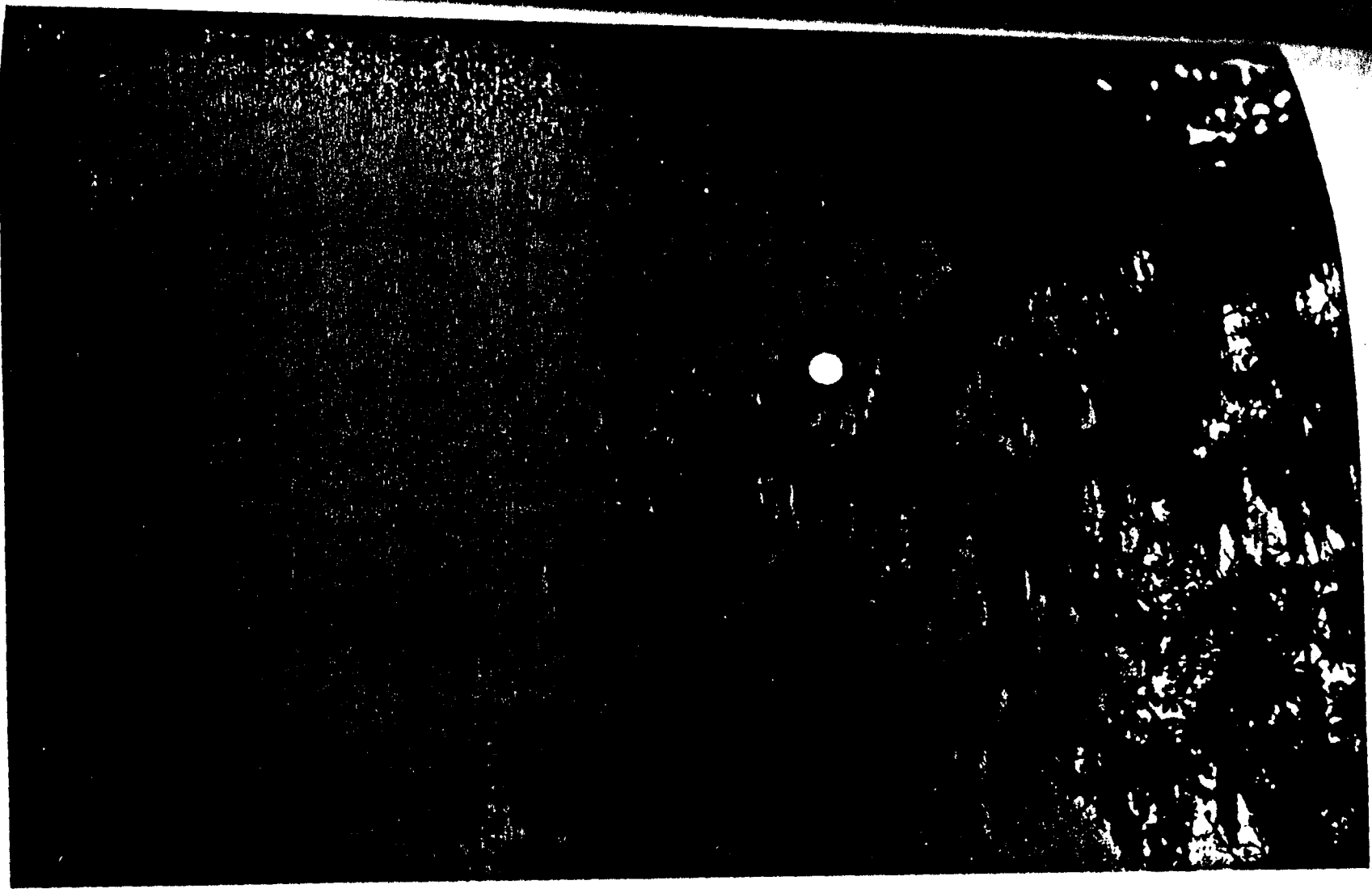
The soil of the backswamp is scientifically termed "muck." It is composed of semifluid clay, decayed vegetable matter, logs, stumps, and wood fragments. The dominant tree is the bald cypress. Subdominant trees and shrubs are pumpkin ash, red maple, tupelo gum, wax-myrtle, button-bush, and palmetto. Spanish moss is the outstanding occupant of the overstory, although it was once a more manifest part of the landscape.

Louisiana's swamps and oak forests were formerly shrouded with Spanish moss but most has disappeared. An epiphyte, or



THE MOSS-GATHERERS

"The Moss-Gatherers," engraving from George T. Ferris, ed.,  
Our Native Land; or Glances at American Scenery and Places  
(New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1886), p. 503.



Moonrise and Spanish moss on live oak at Bayou Coquilles. 4/86.

air plant, moss has suffered from air pollution which has weakened the plant and left it susceptible to deadly fungal diseases. In some areas, the moss seems to be making a slow recovery. Until recent years, moss-pickers lived in cabins in the study area and harvested moss from the swamps and hardwood forests.<sup>52</sup>

The trees and shrubs of the swamp are entwined with vines, such as cat-briar, trumpet-creeper, and poison-ivy. Ground-rooting herbs include alligator-weed, bugle-weed, swamp-potato, pickerel-weed, and the beautiful giant blue iris, red iris, and spider lily. Floating and submerged aquatics include water-hyacinth, green spider orchard, water fern, frog's-bit, water-lettuce, duck-weed, water primrose, and pennywort.

The water level in the swamp is higher than the mean tide level. Drainage is toward Bayou aux Carpes, however direction of flow is affected by winds and by lunar cycles. The natural flow toward Bayou aux Carpes is maintained by culverts under the Lafitte-Larose Highway. Several tributaries of Bayou aux Carpes begin in this swamp area. During droughts, the floor of the swamp forest dries out.

The swamp forest of the study area has been logged for centuries, but apparently was never clear-cut. The many old, large trees, measuring 15 or 20 feet in circumference, that remain indicate that the area was selectively logged. Some sections of the swamp were more heavily logged than others. Even-aged stands of cypress, and areas containing

tupelo gum as a dominant, sub-, or co-dominant, exhibit the effects of logging. Tupelo gum, which has less exacting germination requirements than cypress, often surplants clear-cut cypress forests as second growth.<sup>53</sup>

Female cypress cones mature in autumn and disintegrate on the tree or fall to the ground. The large seeds must soak in water for several months in order that the water may permeate the thick seed coat. Meanwhile, the seeds are moved about by the water and may remain viable up to one year under water. They can not germinate in water but must lodge on dry ground or the swamp forest floor must experience drought. Seedlings must have moisture but will die if submerged for a long period of time. These exacting conditions do not frequently occur. Meanwhile, other species may begin succession in logged areas. The swamp communities that result from clear-cut logging are considered by scientists to be man-made plant communities.<sup>54</sup>

In the study area, some of the largest surviving cypress trees were left by loggers because they had "defects," were hit by lightning, or were too large to be accommodated by their mill saws. These cypress remained as parent trees for regeneration of the forest. The variety of plant growth and distribution in the swamp east of Bayou des Familles probably resembles reforestation following natural disturbances or disasters. Unaltered succession would produce a nearly pure edaphic climax forest of bald cypress.



Logging took place in the study area swamp until the 1960s. Aerial photographs show that the logging was done from the Old Barataria Public Road. Logs were pulled from the swamp to the road. The scars of this activity appear in aerial photographs as fan-shaped scratches in the vegetation, radiating from the Barataria Road into the swamp. During the twentieth century, portable sawmills were established in and near the study area to lumber the logs. Negro squatters, who lived in cabins near the swamp, also logged the swamp and the hardwood forest in order to make and sell railroad cross-ties. One of these used a yoke of oxen to haul logs in the manner of the earliest French settlers.<sup>55</sup>

Removing cypress logs from boggy areas required great effort on the part of the settlers. Green cypress usually sank in water, but the French discovered that dry cypress usually floated. By girdling standing trees, the French were able to kill them. When the trees were felled, they were buoyant enough to float. Logs were then either poled or towed out of the swamp to roads where yokes of oxen waited to cart or drag the logs to the river. Float "roads," "trails," or "creeks," were cleared through the swamp in order to float the logs to dry land. Crevasses were frequently created on the river or other waterways in order to flood the swamps so that the timber could be floated out.<sup>56</sup>

The pullboat and the steam skidder were invented in the 1880s, making possible widespread and rapid industrial exploitation of the timber in the cypress swamps. The steam-

powered skidder was frequently mounted on a boat. By means of an overhead cable, the skidder lifted logs by one end and pulled or dragged them for 700 or 800 feet through the swamp. By 1925, most of Louisiana's large cypress swamps had been cut-over, and the Louisiana landscape had been severely changed.<sup>57</sup>

The cleared paths, or fan-shaped "runs," made to skid logs through the swamp, as well as what appear to be float "roads," "trails," or "creeks," are seen in aerial photographs and on the ground in the swamp portion of the study area. The dragging of logs through the swamp created deep "ditches" and destroyed much young growth. The practice is said to have changed the hard clay pan of Louisiana's swamp forest floors to soft bottoms, thereby altering both vegetation and wildlife in the swamps.<sup>58</sup>

Oil exploration has also altered some of the landscape, plant communities, and habitats of the swamp in the study area. Several oil drill sites, with embanked road and levees, partially block drainage. A brine and oil spill at one drill site has killed vegetation in the vicinity. The artificially elevated levees and drill platforms support vegetation adapted to dryer soil conditions than the surrounding swamp, such as black willow, sweet gum, red maple, and green ash. Black willow, a pioneer on new-formed land, dominates the oil drill site elevations.

The levees, drill pads, and roads are sinking under their own weight. As they subside, the vegetation on the sites will



Bayou des Familles from the bridge crossing of the Lafitte-Larose Highway, looking upstream. 2/86.



Bayou des Familles near the confluence of Bayou Coquilles, looking  
upstream. 4/86.



Bayou des Familles, looking SW from the Hurricane Protection Levee,  
showing cypress growing in bayou. 4/85.



Bayou Coquilles at confluence of Bayou des Familles (background).  
looking E. 4/86.

undergo edaphic changes that will mimic in miniature the deltaic process that creates cypress climaxes on alluvial soil. If allowed to progress in a normal manner, plant succession on the oil sites will proceed to pumpkin ash and tupelo gum, and finally to pure stands of bald cypress.

#### THE BAYOU SWAMP

As it passes through the study area, Bayou des Familles and its swampy margins forms a narrow, semi-circular swamp forest measuring about two and a half miles long and about five hundred feet wide. The bayou represents the remains of the old river's scour channel which, when active, was perhaps 100 feet deep. The channel has filled with sediment and organic decay, and the water is now about four feet deep. The bayou averages about 100 feet wide. The swamp forests that border both sides of the bayou are 200 or 300 feet wide. Along most of the length of the bayou, the swamps are artificially contained by levees and by prehistoric Indian middens.

During the Colonial and early American Periods, the bayou was somewhat larger and was still partially open at the Mississippi River. Floods that carried alluvial deposits were frequent. However, the swampy banks of the bayou, which are formed within the scour channel, constantly subside as the fill compacts. In most places, the muck in which the swamp forest grows will not support human weight.

The species of plants found in the bayou swamp are the same as those found in the backswamp, but the distribution of the species differs. The swampy shores drop quickly in their

descent to the bayou. Within several hundred feet, the slope of the bank elevation drops about three feet, and rapid changes in vegetation occur. Green ash and red maple, which can not endure long inundation, fringe the bayou wetland. Here also may grow hackberry and the exotic Chinese tallow-tree which was introduced into the United States in the 1940s. Nearer the water are pumpkin ash and tupelo gum. Bald cypress is dominant in the bayou and along its edges. Elevated banks along the bayou, some created by dredge spoil, support growths of black willow that overhang the water, and some live oaks. Wax-myrtle and palmetto are frequently present in the understory.

The ground cover of the bayou shores varies with wetness and distance from the bayou. Cover is sparse on some banks, while in other places there are lush growths that include giant blue iris, red iris, spider-lily, butter-weed, cat-tail, elephant's-ear, arrowhead, alligator-weed, pickerel-weed, bur-marigold, and buttercup. In the mid-nineteenth century, the bayou banks were described by Surveyor Hauké as being covered with river cane (Arundinaria gigantea). This large, bamboo-like cane was once common in the State and grew especially in alluvial areas. Accounts of early explorers described the banks of the Mississippi River and the natural levee hardwood forests as impenetrably thick with river cane. A few stands of the cane remain in the park today.<sup>59</sup>

The bayou contains a floating and submerged aquatic plant community composed of such plants as water-hyacinth, duck-weed,



pennywort, water-lettuce, water-primrose, and common water-cress. The open sunlight on the bayou and the flowing water in the bayou are two factors that make the aquatic habitat of the bayou more productive than that of the swamp. The flow of water in the bayou is controlled by lunar cycles and changes direction about every 12 hours.

Historical records indicate that the bayou banks supported cypress swamp in colonial times, and that the bayou was only navigable for a short distance north of its confluence with Bayou Barataria. However, according to Tommy Wildey, who was waterboy and cook's helper on a dragline that dredged Bayou des Familles in 1938, a 35-foot-long boat was dredged out of the bayou near the bridge crossing of the Shell Road. The boat came up in pieces and lay on the bank for some years before it was burned.<sup>60</sup>

In 1938, Bayou des Familles was dredged from Bayou Barataria to several hundred feet past the confluence of Bayou Coquilles by McWilliams Dredge Company. According to Louis Ehret, who first frequented Barataria in 1912, the whole length of Bayou des Familles formerly resembled the undredged portion north of Bayou Coquilles. In the undredged part of the bayou, cypress grows out into the water.<sup>61</sup>

The positions of seven former bridge crossings have been located on Bayou des Familles in the study area. Other crossings may have existed because many Spanish land grants were made to include both sides of the bayou. Some of the cypress that grows in the bayou may grow on submerged bridge

supports.

The bayou swamp has been logged many times through the centuries. It has been logged at least twice in the twentieth century. In 1902, Charles J. Brown sold the cypress timber on the west bank of the bayou in the Christmas Plantation to the Louisiana Cypress Lumber Company. The agreement stipulated that "the cypress timber only measuring ten inches or more at the stump" be cut within 13 years, that the bayou could be used to float off the logs provided there was no obstruction to the cleared and cultivated plantation lands, and that a railroad might be built on the west bank of the bayou for hauling the logs.<sup>62</sup>

The bayou swamp was logged again about 1946 by the Pontchartrain Lumber Company under contract with the land owner, the Canal Banking Company. A sawmill with a five-foot circular blade and run by a deisel engine was erected on the west side of Highway 45 just north of the park boundary line. A skidder crew hauled trees from the swamp with a 1000-foot steel cable and a rehaul cable attached to a "spur tree." All cypress and hardwoods, excepting live oak, over 16 inches in diameter was cut along both sides of the highway to Crown Point.<sup>63</sup>

According to Percy Prestenbach, Sr., who worked with the skidder crew, 30 or 40 axe-cut cypress logs were found lying cross-wise in Bayou des Familles in the bend upstream from Bayou Coquilles. The logs were so placed as if to block or dam the bayou. Prestenbach recalls that one axe-

elled log, measuring about 60 feet long and about 4 feet in diameter, remains submerged about 200 feet downstream from the protection levee at the northern park boundary line.<sup>64</sup>

These logs may have been part of collapsed bridges, or they may have, in fact, been laid to block the bayou. Linear features that cut across the natural ridges and swales of the old filled river bed are visible on aerial photographs and suggest that irrigation ditches may have once drained from Bayou des Familles at the top of the meander bend in order to water lands downstream. If such an irrigation system existed, it may have dated back to colonial times.

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CHAPTER II

FRENCH EXPLORATION AND SETTLEMENT THROUGH  
THE EARLY SPANISH PERIOD



Jacques N. Bellin, "Cours du Fleuve Saint Louis ses Embouchures jusqu'a la Riviere d'Iberville et Costes Voisines," 1764, Paris. Detail. Louisiana Collection, Tulane University Library.



Lieutenant Ross, "Course of the River Mississippi from the Balise to Fort Chartres; Taken on an Expedition to the Illinois, in the latter end of the year 1765; by Lieut Ross of the 34th Regiment; Improved from the Surveys of that River made by the French," Robert Sayer, June 1, 1775, London. Detail. New Orleans Public Library, Louisiana Division.

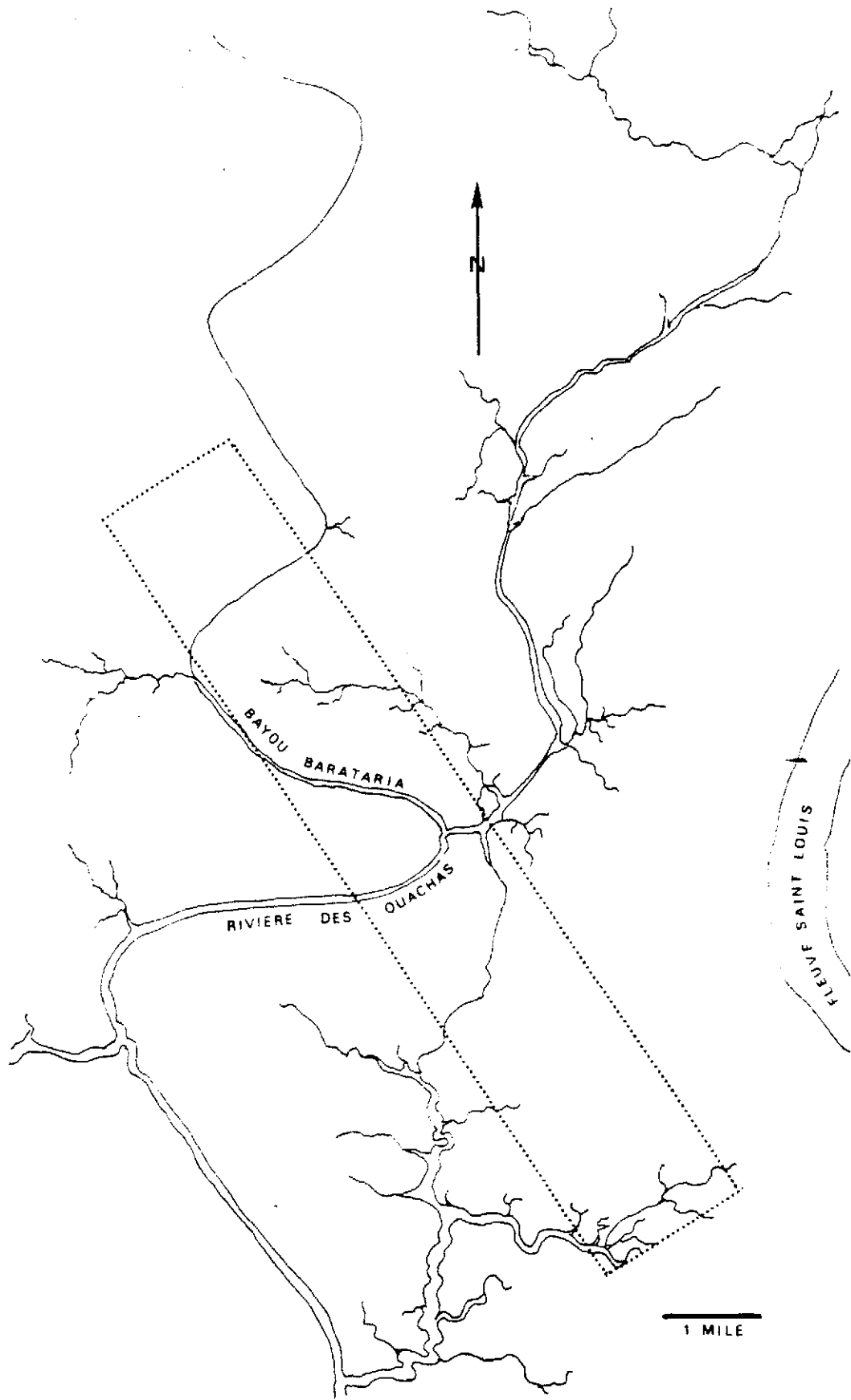
Four years after the founding of New Orleans, the French discovered Bayou Baratavia's headwaters in the swamps south of the west bank of the Mississippi River, nearly opposite the city. A map of about 1723 describes the waterway as a "Little river of 20 or 30 toises [a toise equals 6.394 feet] in width which runs to the sea discovered in the month of August 1722." The bayou was originally named Ouachas for the Indians who dwelled in the area.<sup>1</sup>

Bayou des Familles, which emerged from the west bank of the river about five miles above New Orleans was originally called Bayou Baratavia. Even in the nineteenth century, when the name Ouachas began to be dropped in favor of the name Baratavia, Bayou des Familles was still sometimes called Little Bayou Baratavia.<sup>2</sup>

The French were initially attracted to the natural resources in the area, principally timber, shells, game, fish, and furs. However, plantations and vacheries (ranches) were soon established on the high lands along the bayou now called Bayou des Familles and along the bayou now called Bayou Baratavia south of its confluence with Bayou des Familles.

#### THE JEAN-BAPTISTE MASSY TRACT

What was apparently the first of French land grants made in Baratavia was given on June 14, 1726 to Jean-Baptiste Massy and his partners Jean-Baptiste Bourbeau and Charles Frederig de Merreilleux, who was a Captain of the Swiss



The upper Barataria Region with projected position of the French land grant of Jean-Baptiste Massy.

regiment in the colony. The grant was for 40 arpents fronting both sides of Bayou Ouachas with a depth to the marshes. Records indicate that the depth extended 120 arpents on both sides of Bayou Ouachas. The right, or west, bank tract began at Bayou de la Borne and crossed the confluence of Bayou des Familles as it extended downstream. The upper boundary of the east, or left, bank tract was at Bayou Chaland. The west bank tract, which includes the study area, was probably the tract that was occupied and more fully developed because of its accessibility by road from the river.<sup>3</sup>

The partners built roads through the tract in order to log the property. Records show that they were contracted by the Company of the Indies to cut oak and ash and deliver the logs to the river. The work was done by slaves and yokes of oxen. The principal road that they built through the property undoubtedly followed the natural levee ridge on the east side of Bayou des Familles and approximated the route of the existing trace that passes through the study area.<sup>4</sup>

Massy later dissolved his partnership with Merveilleux, and his other partner, Bourbeau, was killed in the Natchez massacre. Jean-Baptiste Massy was an important figure in the early development of the French colony in Louisiana. He was engaged in numerous enterprises of commercial and agricultural exploitation. With other partners, Massy had previously owned concessions on the Chapitoulas Coast and at Point Coupée. He also owned tracts of land on the west bank

of the Mississippi River, near Barataria. He used one of these tracts as a depot and warehouse for the produce of his Barataria Plantation. The other tract was undeveloped. When he died in 1734, Massy was a counsellor of the Superior Council of the Province of Louisiana.<sup>5</sup>

The 1726 census shows that Massy was living in New Orleans on the Rue du Quay (river front). Apparently, he then moved to his Barataria plantation where he employed 49 Negro slaves and a French steward, Joseph Cazenave, to grow cotton and tobacco and to raise livestock. Before planting, it was necessary to log the oak and other hardwoods that grew along the natural levees of the bayous. The location of the plantation headquarters is not known. The buildings consisted of the main dwelling house, a house for the steward, 10 slave cabins, a building for storing cotton, and two tobacco curing houses. The curing houses were 100 feet long by 20 and 30 feet wide. They were covered with lata-nier (palmetto leaves) and had galleries supported by poles stuck in the earth. The walls of one curing house were constructed of wooden frame laid on the ground (sur solle). The walls of the other curing house were made of upright poles stuck in the earth (pieux en terre). There was also a small tobacco storehouse made of pieux en terre and covered with latanier, measuring 25 feet long by 10 feet wide. The steward's house had the same measurements, and was roofed with bark.<sup>6</sup>



*[Handwritten text in French, likely a list of slaves, with some words like 'Nègre' and 'Blanc' visible. The text is heavily obscured by ink splatters and is difficult to read.]*

List of slaves, page from the inventory of the succession of Jean-Baptiste Massy, March 20, 1735, French Superior Council Records, No. 2313, 59/19, Oversize storage Box No. 3, 1735032002, Louisiana State Museum Historical Center, New Orleans.



cast-iron sugar kettle embellished with a coat of arms consisting of an oval cartouche supported by rampant lions and surmounted by a crown, found buried in the ground on Bayou des Familles one mile north of the study area and outside of the park. 4/85.

Massy's widow, Jeanne Faucon Dumanoir, married Gilles Augustin Payen, Chevalier de Noyan, Mayor of New Orleans. She and her new husband retained the 40 by 120 arpents on the right bank of Bayou Ouachas for nearly two decades. The land was occupied for them by a Mr. Charoy who operated a horse ranch. The headquarters of the horse ranch may have been located at Massy's former headquarters.<sup>7</sup>

Massy's lands on the left bank of Bayou Ouachas were acquired by Claude Joseph Villars Dubreuil, Sr. Dubreuil also acquired lands on the west side of the former Massy tract on the right bank of Bayou Ouachas. This land was called Ile Dauphin, and may have been part of a French grant to Jean Joseph Dauphin in 1750. The land was bounded by Bayou Barataria (Ouachas), Bayou Villars, and Lake Salvador and perhaps by Bayou des Familles. The documentation is vague on the limits of Dubreuil's land holding. He probably used the land for logging, mining shells for making lime, and raising cattle.<sup>8</sup>

Claude Joseph Villars Dubreuil was the King's Contractor of Public Works. He was the wealthiest colonist in Louisiana, owning as many as 500 slaves. At the time of the founding of New Orleans, he established a plantation on the Chapitoulas Coast. Later, he developed plantations below New Orleans, on the west bank of the river above New Orleans, and in Barataria. Between 1736 and 1740, he dug a navigable canal from his west bank plantation to Barataria. The canal, which became known as the Gardere Canal, still

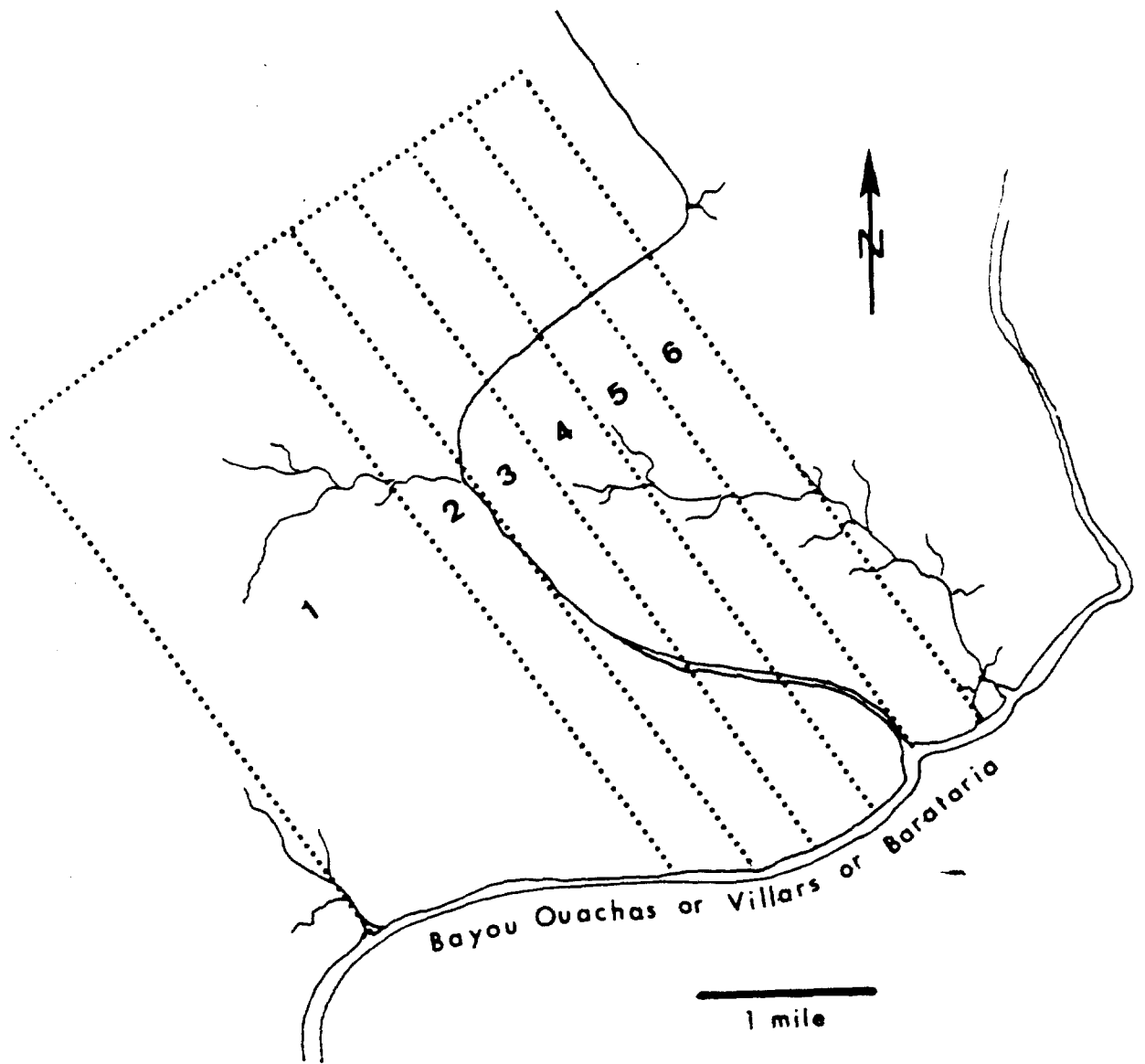
It was bordered by a road. The canal and road served as the major route of access to Barataria prior to the construction of the Destrehan (later Harvey) Canal.<sup>9</sup>

#### THE JEAN ANTOINE BERNARD DAUTERIVE TRACT

During the 1750s, Jean Antoine Bernard Dauterive obtained by grant or purchase 90 arpents stretching along the right bank of Bayou Ouachas (Barataria) between Bayou de la Borne and Bayou Dauphine. The tract included Massy's former 40 arpents of frontage, but was 110 arpents deep.<sup>10</sup>

Dauterive was a captain in the French army, recently arrived from France. He used the property to grow indigo and raise livestock and may have used parts of the study area for both purposes. His buildings consisted of a principal house built of a mixture of mud, lime and shells within a wooden framework set on the ground (sur solle), with a gallery across both front and rear; a dovecote with a room underneath; and Negro cabins. The ensemble included a courtyard and garden, and was surrounded by a palisade fence.<sup>11</sup>

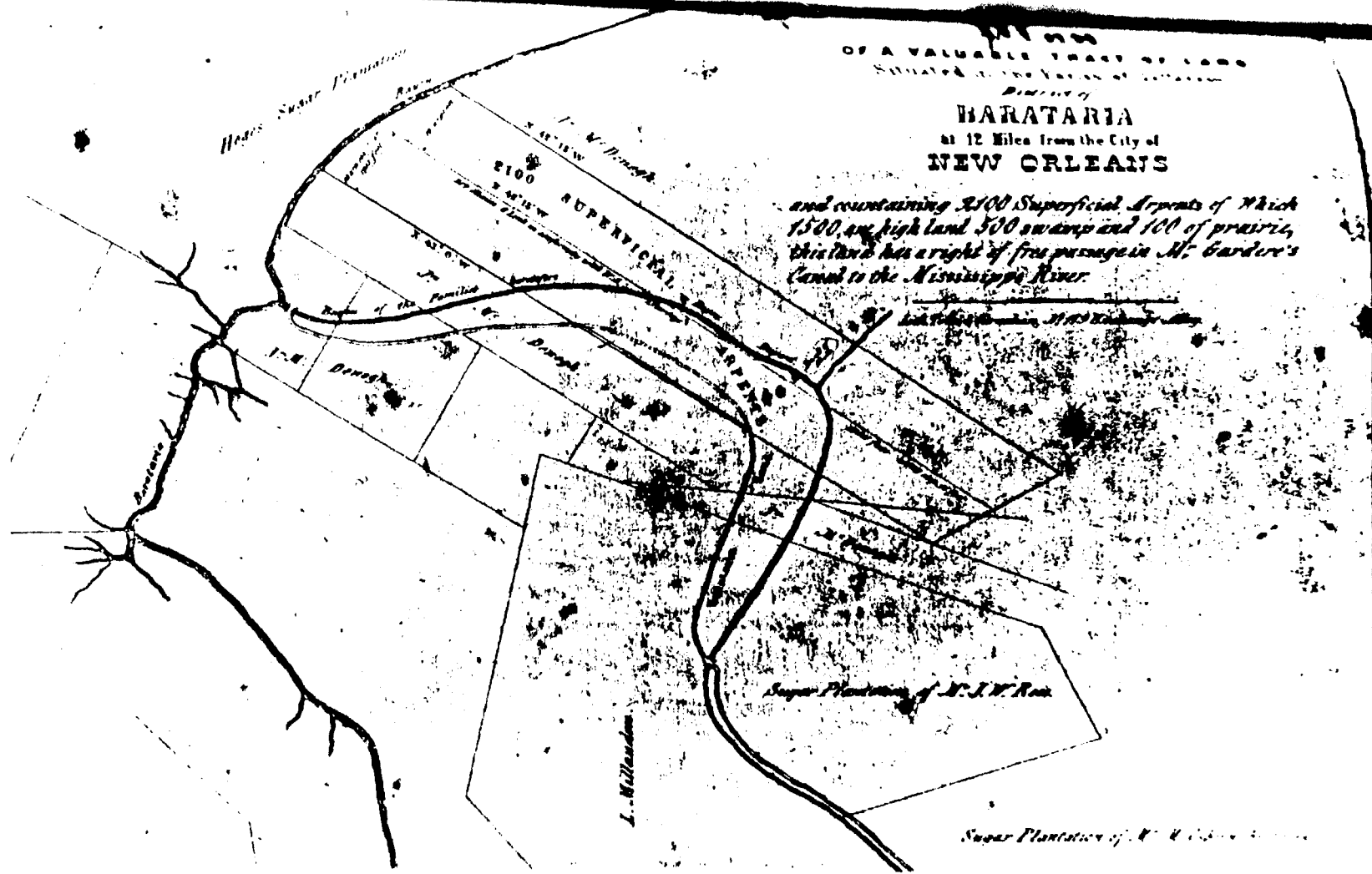
The buildings were located on the east side of the confluence of Bayou des Familles and Bayou Barataria, on a large prehistoric shell mound. This elevated site was undoubtedly safe from flooding. When he sold the property in 1768, the sale was made with 100 cattle, 100 sheep, 20 pigs, 60 piglets, and two Indian slaves, Pompée, a 25-year-old hunter and herder, and a half-grown girl named Marianne.



**SUBDIVISIONS OF THE JEAN ANTOINE BERNARD DAUTERIVE PLANTATION**

1. Heirs of J. A. B. Dauterive following his death in 1776.
2. Antoine Marigny Dauterive from his father's estate.
- 3, 4, 5, 6. J. A. B. Dauterive to Antoine Boudousquié and Elie Hugues in 1768. Alexandre Guerbois acquired Hugues undivided half of the 40-arpent tract in 1772.
3. Alexandre Guerbois by partition with Boudousquié in 1774.
4. Antoine Boudousquié by partition with Guerbois in 1774.
- 5, 6. Guerbois and Boudousquié to Pedro Alberto Bonne in 1774.





"Plan of a Valuable Tract of Land Situated in the Parish of Jefferson, District of Barataria at 12 Miles from the City of New Orleans and containing 2100 Superficial Arpents of which 1500 are high land, 500 swamp and 100 of prairie, this land has a right of free passage in Mr. Gardere's Canal to the Mississippi River," unsigned and undated (about 1850), lithograph by Tolti & Carnahan, New Orleans. Louisiana Collection, Tulane University Library. Detail showing study area and environs.



Old Barataria Public Road. Looking NW from Shell Road. 3/86.





Old Barataria Public Road. Looking SE from Shell Road. 3/86.

United States Government survey in 1855 named the shell mound which had been the site of Dauterive's house "La Petite Marianne." The mound had undoubtedly been named for Dauterive's Indian slave girl.<sup>12</sup>

In 1768, Dauterive divided his 90-arpent plantation into 10-by-110 arpent strips fronting Bayou Ouachas. Four of these strips cross the study area. One of the subdivision lines is clearly demarked in the study area. The straight portion of the old Barataria Public Road follows this property division. Another of the 1768 divisions is clearly represented near the north end of the park and study area. It is visible as a shallow ditch running between Highway 45 and Bayou des Familles, on the west side of the bayou, near the protection levee. On the east side of the bayou, the property line is marked by a linear elevation of less than one foot in height and about fifteen feet wide at the base, with depressions on either side. This appears to be the remnant of a double ditch and levee of the type commonly used for rural property divisions. These boundary divisions were usually topped by a fence and bordered by access roads.<sup>13</sup>

In 1768, Dauterive sold four of the 10-by-110 arpent strips, comprising together 40 arpents facing Bayou Ouachas, to Antoine Boudousquié and Elie or Hery Hugues. These were the same 40 arpents that had been owned by Massy, and they contained Dauterive's buildings. Boudousquié and Hugues bought the buildings, cattle, sheep, pigs, and Indian slaves

the property.<sup>14</sup>

Elie Hugues and Antoine Boudousquié, also called Ville-branche, were in the fur business, and they could have used their Barataria property for fur trapping. Hugues soon returned to France, and his undivided half of the 40 arpents was acquired in 1772 by Alexander Guerbois, also variously called Louis Alexander Guerbois, Pedro Joseph Guerbois, and Pedro Guemboy.<sup>15</sup>

An inventory made at the time of Guerbois' acquisition described the buildings on the Barataria habitation. The house was 50 feet long by 22 feet wide. It was built of palos en tierra (poles in earth) and brick plastered with lime mortar. It had a 10-foot-wide gallery across the front and rear. Exposed portions of the exterior were covered with weatherboards, and the roof was covered with tejamanils (Mexican, shingles). A separate kitchen or oven was built of palos en tierra covered with mud mixed with lime and shells and was roofed with shingles. A palomar, or dovecote, was also on the property.<sup>16</sup>

Guerbois and Boudousquié dissolved their partnership in 1774. They partitioned the land, each retaining 10 arpents, and sold half of it. They sold 20 by 110 arpents fronting Bayou Ouachas to Pedro Alberto Bonne. These 20 arpents straddle the confluence of the bayous now called Bayou Barataria and Bayou des Familles. The sale was made with buildings, fields, fences, cattle, horses, sheep, pigs, and utensils. This sale included the old Dauterive

headquarters located at the confluence of the bayous.<sup>17</sup>

It is the western boundary of this 20-arpent tract sold to Bonne that is described above as a visible feature at the northern end of the park and study area. Antoine Boudousquié, who was Printer of the King and Cabildo and New Orleans' first printer, lived in the city. By partition with Guerbois, Boudousquié retained the 10-arpent strip bordering the west side of the Bonne 20-arpent strip, sharing the property line described above as visible at the north end of the park. Boudousquié owned the property for 24 years, but records do not show that he used it.<sup>18</sup>

By partition with Boudousquié, Alexandre Guerbois retained the 10-arpent strip to the west of Boudousquié's strip. Guerbois lived on the property with his wife, Elizabeth Trepagnier and daughter Eulalia until his death in 1808. His house and fields were located on Bayou Barataria at present-day Crown Point. Records show that he made little use of his back lands on Bayou des Familles because they were on the opposite side of that bayou.<sup>19</sup>

Jean Antoine Bernard Dauterive relocated his cattle ranch on a land grant on the prairie of southwest Louisiana in 1768. There, he helped to settle the Acadians, and began the cattle industry of southwest Louisiana through a contract by which he supplied the Acadians with cattle. He retained some cattle and horses on his Barataria property.<sup>20</sup>

The remaining 50 arpents of Dauterive's original 90-arpent Barataria tract passed to Dauterive's heirs. The

10-arpent strip inherited by Antoine Marigny Dauterive adjoined Guerbois' 10-arpent strip on the west. Antoine Marigny Dauterive used the property as a cattle ranch, and planted cotton there. A dwelling house and two wooden cabins recorded as being on the property were probably located on Bayou Barataria at present-day Crown Point. Antoine Marigny Dauterive lived in New Orleans, but occasionally resided on his Barataria property.<sup>21</sup>

Marigny Dauterive was a minor at the time of his father's death in 1776 and did not occupy his Barataria land until a later date. Pierre Albert Bonne may have occupied his 20-arpent Barataria tract during the five years of his ownership. Records show that Bonne was engaged in the lumber and indigo businesses and that he owned a flock of sheep. He died in New Orleans in 1799 and left as heirs five free mulatto children. According to his will, he had a mulatto daughter named Rozetta "from his intimacy with" a Negress named Catalina with whom he had lived for many years and to whom he gave her freedom. He also had four mulatto sons of minor age named Juan Bautista, Santiago (alias Janvier), Carlos Manuel, and Adelayda from a free Negress named Nanette who had formerly been a slave of Louis Macarty. Bonne also had two slaves, a mother and daughter, whom he willed to his mulatto children.<sup>22</sup>

At the time of his death, Bonne owned an eight-arpent-front property on the west bank of the river and a 20-arpent-front property in Barataria. The Barataria property

fronted on Bayou Barataria and Bayou Villars and was bounded by the Dauterive property and Lake Salvador. It had been leased for use by José Andoesa prior to Bonne's death but the Bonne family apparently dwelled on the land during the Spanish and early American Periods. The property, which had been known as Ile Dauphin, had become known as Ile Bonne by the late 1770s. Bonne's heirs apparently inhabited the land in the early 1800s, and the name Ile Bonne was retained into the 20th century.<sup>23</sup>

## ENDNOTES

FRENCH EXPLORATION AND SETTLEMENT  
THROUGH THE EARLY SPANISH PERIOD

1. "Carte Particuliere du Fleuve St. Louis," Ayer Collection, Newberry Library, Chicago.
2. Barbara Holmes, Historic Resources Study, The Barataria Unit of Jean Lafitte National Historical Park, Southwest Cultural Resources Center, Professional Papers No. 5 (Santa Fe: Division of History, Southwest Region, National Park Service, Department of the Interior, 1986), p. 57; see also "Plan de l'habitation de Mr. Degruise dans le District de Barataria," unsigned and undated map of about 1815, annexed to act of sale of land from Antoine Carraby to Laurent Millaudon, March 10, 1829, T. Seghers, notary, NONA.
3. Inventory of the Succession of Jean-Baptiste Massy, March 20, 1735, French Superior Council Records, No. 2313, 59/19, Oversize storage box no. 3, 1735032002, Louisiana State Museum; "Plano de las Concesiones desde la Ciudad de Nueva Orleans hasta Bayu San Juan, la Metairy, Chapitoulas y Barataria," about 1778, Archivo General de Indias, Seville, Papeles de Cuba, Legajo 2358, 84-23-L, Microfilm copy, HNOC; Sieur Villars Dubreuil's request for a Concession, June 27, 1761, SCD/TUL.
4. Editors and staff of The Louisiana Historical Quarterly, Translations of the Records of the Superior Council, "Timber Contracts," September 24, 25, October 1 and October 9, 1725, "Defence of Bourbeau in Oxen Suit," August 29, 1725, "Petition for Open Road," September 13, 1725, and "Decision in Civil Suits," September 17, 1725, Louisiana Historical Quarterly, vol. 2, no. 4 (October, 1919), p. 467, p. 472, p. 473, p. 477; also "Petition in Recovery," March 10, 1727, Louisiana Historical Quarterly, vol. 3, no. 3 (July, 1920), p. 438. These cases show that Massy and Bourbeau were in the logging business before acquisition of the Barataria land grant.
5. Massy succession; Marcel Giraud, Histoire de la Louisiane Francaise (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1974), vol. 2, pp. 117-18, pp. 143-44, vol. 3, pp. 172-73, p. 321, vol. 4, pp. 209-12, p. 254; Alice Daly Forsyth and Ghislaine Pleasonton, Louisiana Marriage Contracts (New Orleans: Polyanthos, 1980), p. 24.

6. Heloise Hulse Cruzat, "Sidelights on Louisiana History," Louisiana Historical Quarterly, vol. 1, no. 3 (January 8, 1918), p. 134; Massy succession.
7. Forsyth and Pleasonton, Louisiana Marriage Contracts, p. 24; Villars Dubreuil's request for a concession.
8. Powers v. Foucher, June, 1822, Docket No. 624, LSCC/UNO; Henry P. Dart, "The Career of Dubreuil in French Louisiana," Louisiana Historical Quarterly, vol. 18, no. 1 (January, 1935), pp. 267-331; Betsy Swanson, Historic Jefferson Parish (Gretna: Pelican Publishing Co., 1975), pp. 87-88, p. 146; American State Papers. Public Lands, vol. 2, p. 322.
9. Powers v. Foucher; Dart, "The Career of Dubreuil;" Swanson, Historic Jefferson Parish, pp. 66-67, pp. 87-88.
10. The record of Jean Antoine Bernard Dauterive's grant or purchase has apparently been lost, however, records show that he was in possession of the land by the 1750s, see American State Papers. Public Lands, vol. 3, p. 509 and p. 510, and vol. 8, pp. 370-71; see also Allou d'Hemécourt's maps "Plan de une terre situé dans le paroisse de Jefferson sur le Bayou Barataria," July 8, 1835, Plan Book 9, folio 1, "Plan présentant l'état des lieux et la position des propriétés vers l'année 1780," April 13, 1835, Plan Book 107, folio 22, and "Plan présentant les prétentions de Mr. Degruise," April 13, 1835, Plan Book 66, folio 18, NONA. The matter of the lost record of the Dauterive concession is mentioned in two court cases, McDonogh v. De Gruys, et al., Docket No. 1007, and Roman v. Degruy et al., Docket No. 740, February 1823, LSCC/UNO.
11. Dargenson to M. D'hauterive, Lt. Refé de Volontaires, Meux, Fontainebleau, October 20, 1750, Dauberville-Boulogny Papers, D-B121, HNOC; Kerlerrec and d'Auberville to the minister, New Orleans, April 1, 1756, Archives Coloniales, C13A 39, folio 128, Archives Nationales, Paris; Sale of land by Bernard Dauterive to Hery or Elie Hugues and Antoine Boudousquié, October 19, 1768, Juan-Bautista Garic, notary, copy of act in McDonogh v. De Gruys et al., Docket No. 1007.
12. Sale of land from Dauterive to Hugues and Boudousquié; Dauterive's buildings were said to have been upon the same site as those of a later property owner, Jean-Baptiste De Gruy, see testimony of Louis Boulogny, McDonogh v. De Gruys, Docket No. 1007, p. 21; De Gruys buildings are shown on "Plan de l'habitation de Mr. Degruise dans le District de Barataria," annexed to sale of land from Carraby to Millaudon, March 10, 1829, T. Seghers, notary, NONA; Field notes



Deputy Surveyor Maurice Hauké, Private Land Claim of Esthene Roman as syndic for the creditors of Jean-Baptiste Degruy, Bureau of Land Management, Eastern States Office, Boston, Virginia.

13. Sale of land by Dauterive to Hugues and Boudousquié. For examples of the double ditch and levee bordered by access roads commonly used as boundary divisions see Major A. Lacarrière Latour, principal Engineer, 7th Military District, U. S. Army, "Plan of the Attack made by Major Gen. Jackson on a Division of the British Army commanded by Major Gen. J. Keane, on the 23rd December, at 7 O Clock at night," engraving in atlas of 1816 edition of Latour's Historical Memoir of the War in West Florida and Louisiana in 1814-15, trans. H. P. Nugent (Philadelphia: John Conrad and Co., 1816); and description of the double ditch boundary in Article 23 of Rules Concerning the Construction of Fences, the Police of Animals, and other Objects of Police in the Parish of Jefferson (New Orleans: John Gibson, printer, 1831), p. 8, copy in McDonogh v. De Gruys et al., Docket No. 1007.

14. Sale of land, Dauterive to Hugues and Boudousquié.

15. Case of Nicholas Delassize vs. Don Antonio Villefranche, May 6, 1769, January 3, 1770, January 4, 1770, February 2, 1770, Document No. 6, Box No. 26, File No. 4053, Louisiana State Museum History Center; Adjudication of land to Alexandre Guerbois, alias Pedro Joseph Guerbois, June 20, 1772, Andres Almonaster y Roxas, notary, copy of act in McDonogh v. De Gruys et al., Docket No. 1007.

16. Adjudication of land to Guerbois.

17. Sale of land by Pedro Guemboy and Antonio Boudousquié to Pedro Alberto Bonne, December 24, 1774, Andrés Almonaster y Roxas, notary, NONA; see also d'Hémécourt map, Plan Book 107, folio 22.

18. Sale of land by Guemboy and Boudousquié to Bonne; d'Hémécourt maps; Plan Book 107, folio 22 and Plan Book 66, folio 18: D. C. McMurtrie, Early Printing in New Orleans (New Orleans: Searcy & Pfaff, 1929), p. 53.

19. Ibid.; Sale of land from the estate of Alexander Guerbois to Joseph Soniat Dufossat, May 5, 1808, Stephen de Quinones, notary, NONA. See "Plano de las Concesiones . . ." of about 1778, which shows Guerbois' property as a small tract on the western side of Bayou des Familles. Although this map is inaccurately drawn and places the Guerbois tract too far to the west, it probably correctly represents the idea that Guerbois utilized only his lands fronting Bayou Ouachas (Barataria).

20. Grover Rees, trans., "The Dauterive Compact: The Foundation of the Acadian Cattle Industry," Attakapas Gazette, vol. 11, no. 2 (Summer, 1980), pp. 60-63; United States Senate, 25th Congress, 2nd Session, Document No. 196, "Report from the Secretary of the Treasury, Transmitting a report from the register and receiver of the land at Ouachita, with a statement of the claims presented to them, together with the opinion of the Commissioner of the General Land Office on the validity of the said claims," February 14, 1838 (Washington, D.C.: Blair and Rives, 1838), pp. 11-12, pp. 20-28; The United States v. Jean-Baptiste D'Auterive et al., 10 Howard, 608-627, in Stephen K. Williams, ed., Reports of Cases Argued and Decided in the Supreme Court of the United States, Book XIII, (Newark, N. Y.: The Lawyers' Co-operative Pub. Co., 1883); Editors and staff of the Louisiana Historical Quarterly, Index to the Spanish Judicial Records, "Antonio Barnake vs. Bernardo Dauterive," 1771-73, Louisiana Historical Quarterly, vol. 8, no. 3 (July, 1925), pp. 528-29.

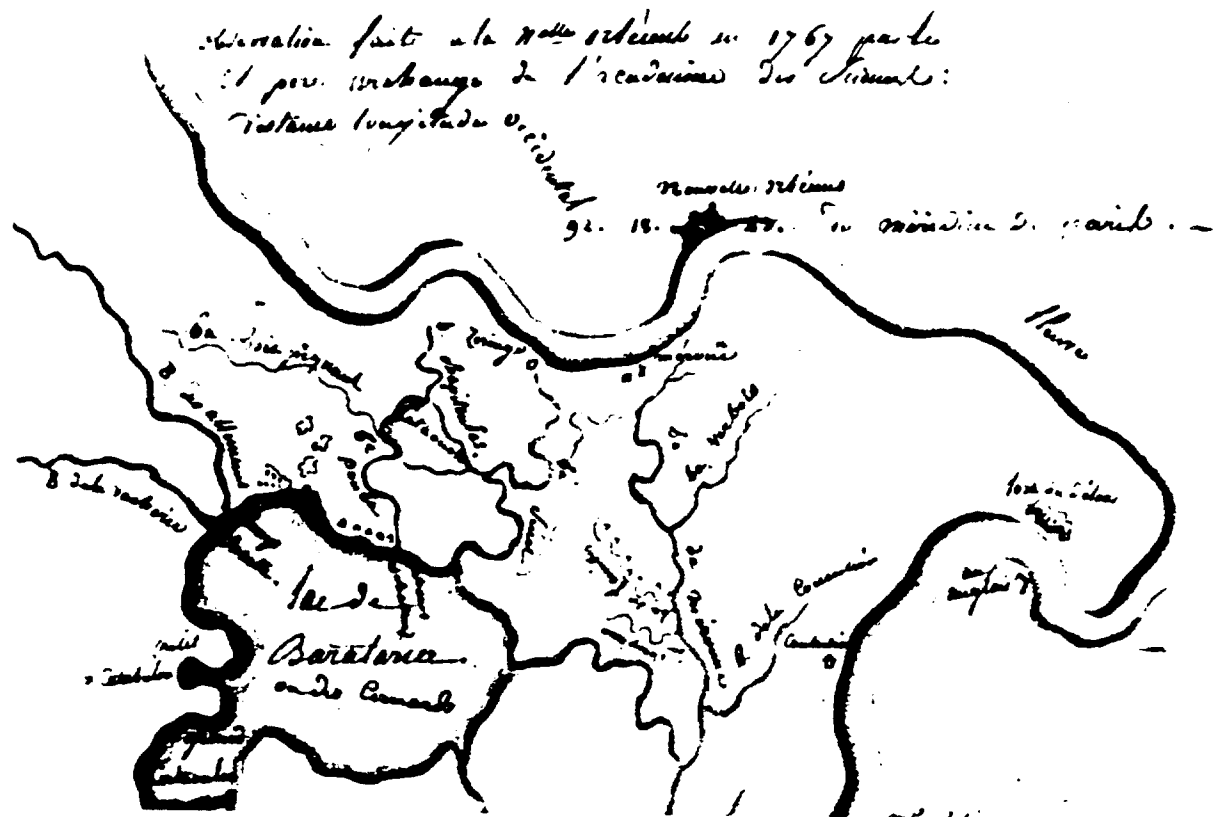
21. D'Hémécourt maps, Plan Book 107, folio 22 and Plan Book 66, folio 18; Inventory of the estate of Antoine Marigny Dauterive, filed June 22, 1827, Jefferson Parish Court of Probate Records, Gretna.

22. The United States v. Jean-Baptiste D'Auterive et al.; Case of Pedro Bonne v. The Succession of Pedro Chavert and Carlota Lalanda Dapremon, December 24, 1788, Document No. 1955, Box 52, file no. 139, Louisiana State Museum History Center, New Orleans; Will of Pedro Bonne, October 28, 1799, Carlos Ximenes, notary, NONA.

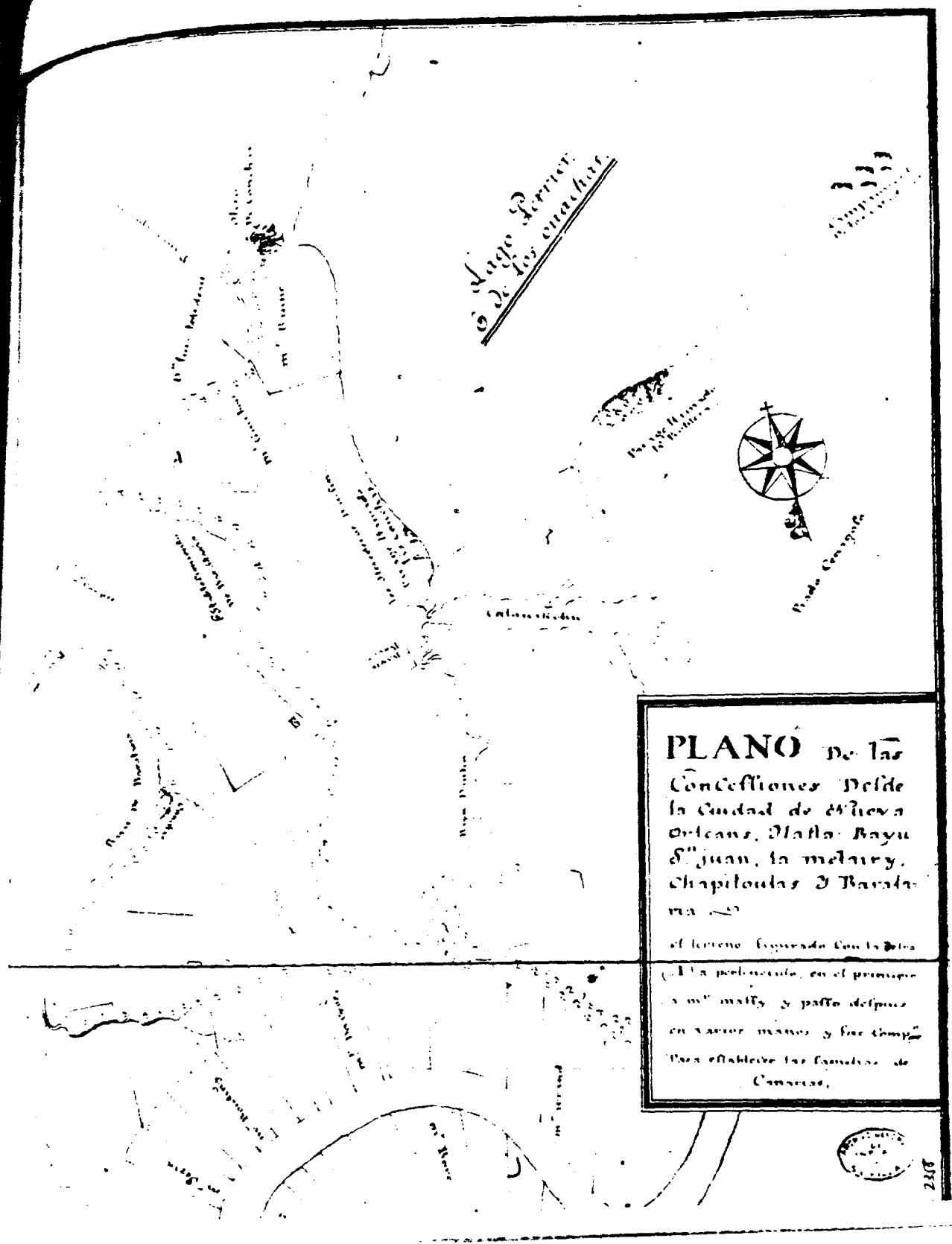
23. Will of Pedro Bonne; Sale of land from Jean-Baptiste Bonne to Louis and Michel Commagere, September 12, 1825, Christoval de Armas, notary, NONA; Bonne et al v. Power, Docket No. 1091, March, 1825, LSCC/UNO.

CHAPTER III

LA POBLACIÓN DE BARATARIA



Joseph Vinache, "Plan du Fleuve le Mississippi depuis son embouchure jusqu'a la Nolle Orleans et des Lacs du Barataria," 1803, Archives Nationales, Paris, copy courtesy Samuel Wilson, Jr. Detail showing New Orleans and Barataria area and settlement on Bayou des Familles.



Plan showing the "Establishment of Barataria" for the settlement of the Canary Islander families, about 1778. "Plano de las concesiones desde la ciudad de Nueva Orleans hasta Bayu San Juan, la Metairy, Chapitoulas y Barataria. Unsigned, undated. Found between documents dating from 1775 to 1778. Archivo General de Indias, Seville, Papeles de Cuba, Legajo 2358.

In 1779, the Spanish government established a settlement of immigrants from the Canary Islands along much of the length of both banks of Bayou des Familles and on Bayou Barataria near the confluence of the two bayous. The land for the new settlement was acquired by the government by purchase, through gift, and by repossession of unused lands.

A 10-arpent-front by 110-arpent-deep tract of land, fronting Bayou Barataria between Bayou de la Borne and Bayou des Familles, was purchased by the King of Spain from Pedro Alberto Bonne prior to May 14, 1779. On that date, Bonne sold another 10-by-110-arpent strip bordering the King's on the west to Luis Pellerin. Two months later, Pellerin sold this strip to Andrès Jung. Jung, who had been made Commandant of the Barataria Canary Islander settlement, donated the 10-arpent strip to the King of Spain on July 12, 1779. By this time, houses had been erected for the Isleños, and they were established on the property. The buildings were constructed by Joseph Chalon.<sup>1</sup>

Both Andrès Jung and Joseph Chalon were plantation owners on Bayou St. John. Jung (also spelled Juen), was a ship chandler and ship builder. He also owned a house in the city and another plantation on the north side of Lake Pontchartrain. As commandant of the Barataria settlement, he probably did not live in Barataria but helped to furnish the needs of the settlers. Joseph Chalon was a wealthy and

socially prominent lawyer who owned vast land holdings. He probably directed his slaves or a building contractor in the construction of the houses.<sup>2</sup>

Considering that much of their depth consisted of cypress swamp, the two 10-arpent strips acquired by the King of Spain were not large enough for a población. Therefore, the government repossessed lands that were vacant or disused for distribution to the Isleños. These lands adjoined the 20-arpent tract acquired by the Crown which gave important access to Bayou Barataria. Records indicate that the back lands of the Boudousquié, Guerbois and Dauterive properties were not occupied or used in the 1770s. The Spanish government reclaimed these and other lands along the bayou to a distance of 80 arpents from the river, which was the limit of the double concessions measuring 40 arpents each of the plantation properties fronting the river. The Canary Islander tracts formed one continuous settlement that stretched for seven aerial miles northward of Bayou Barataria along both sides of Bayou des Familles. This waterway had previously been known as Bayou Barataria and was renamed for the Spanish families that were settled along it.<sup>3</sup>

The Canary Island immigrants were settled in Barataria as part of a Spanish program to populate remote areas of Louisiana with farmer-soldiers and their families, both for purposes of defense and to establish Spain's presence throughout the territory. This settlement program was

developed as an outgrowth of revisions made by the Spanish government in the presidial concept of frontier defense. Because presidios were usually remotely located from sources of supply, they were frequently unable to sustain themselves without a supporting civilian population of farmers and ranchers, even at great cost to the royal treasury. Across New Spain's northern frontier, isolated presidios were pulled back and consolidated in the 1760s and 1770s. New regulations encouraged the colonization of new towns together with local militia companies. New presidios were laid out to include towns, cultivated fields, pasture, and woodland.<sup>4</sup>

As early as 1693, Field Marshal José Francisco Marín, following an inspection of the garrisons of Nueva Vizcaya, recommended that the presidios be replaced with towns defended by civilian militia as soon as Indian hostilities decreased. He proposed that the sites of abandoned presidios remain occupied by the disbanded companies and their families and that they be allotted land to cultivate. He suggested that they be provisioned at government expense with oxen, plows, seed, arms, and horses, and that they be assisted in the construction of their houses. Marín recommended that the populations of strategic towns be increased with people from the Canary Islands. By the 1760s, many of Marín's proposals were being adopted.<sup>5</sup>

In 1762, the Treaty of Fontainebleau ceded Louisiana from France to Spain. In 1763, the Treaty of Paris ceded Florida from Spain to England. With the exception of the



Isle of Orleans, the eastern boundary of New Spain now lay on the westbank of the Mississippi River. The vast territory of Louisiana was the new Spanish frontier, and it entirely adjoined English territory. To help guard against encroachment by the English, Spain sought to people her new frontier with self-sustaining soldier-farmers loyal to Spain. The government-subsidized immigration of several thousand Canary Islanders was a part of this program. The program was not entirely successful and was a continuous drain on the royal treasury. The principal reason for lack of success was that the government selected settlement sites for their strategic defense value, rather than for their suitability for residence and agriculture. Many of the settlements failed after there were years of suffering and many deaths.<sup>6</sup>

As a route from the sea to New Orleans, it was important to guard Barataria against invasion. Fifty-seven Canary Islander families, consisting of about 250 persons, were settled there in 1779. They had sailed from Santa Cruz de Tenerife late in 1778 and early in 1779, in several ships. The government built houses for them and provided them with utensils, implements, firearms, a few animals, clothing, money, and rations. Each family was to receive at least five arpents of land fronting the bayou for farming and stock raising.<sup>7</sup>

The Barataria Isleño settlement was devastated by hurricanes in 1779, 1780, 1793 and 1794, and by major floods

1796 and 1802-4. Bayou des Familles was still partially open from the Mississippi River at present-day Marrero, and there were frequent crevasses and floods. The Isleños' crops were repeatedly destroyed. Their animals were killed and their buildings were ruined. The government relocated some of the families and reestablished others in Barataria in successively fewer numbers. The población was still being heavily provisioned by the government upon the death of Commandant Jung in 1784. A census of 1788 listed the "Pueblo" of Barataria as having a population of 40, 25 of whom were white. Five Barataria Isleño families, numbering 27 people, lost all their crops and animals in the 1796 crevasse. The crevasse of 1802 was not closed for two years, and most of the remaining Canary Islander families were relocated on Bayou Terres aux Boeufs.<sup>8</sup>

There are two principal sources that recount the names of the individual Canary Islanders settled in Barataria. The first is the "Libro Maestro P.[ara] sentar el cargo del dano.[tivos] de la nueva Pob.[lación] Barataria", or the "Master Book in order to estimate the recording of the donations to the new Settlement of Barataria". This is a worm-eaten and difficult to read manuscript numbered Legajo 548 in the Cuban Papers in the Archivo General de Indias in Seville. It contains 57 folios, one for each of the households established at Barataria.

The second source giving the names of the individual settlers is the series of ship lists compiled by the Spanish

Government upon embarkation from the Canary Islands. These are in the Santo Domingo Papers, Legajos 2661 and 2662, in the Archivo General de Indias in Seville. The ship lists have been published as an appendix to an article by Miguel Molina Martínez entitled "La Participacion Canaria en la Formacion y Reclutamiento del Batallon de Luisiana", in IV Coloquio de Historia Canario-Americana (1980), Tome II, edited by Francisco Morales Padron, and published by the Cabildo Insular de Gran Canaria, Ediciones del Excelentisimo, in 1982.

For the present study, the names on the worm-eaten "Libro" were compared with those on the published ship lists, and a list thus derived of the Barataria settlers follows below. The preparation of this list was a collaborate effort with Dr. Barbara Holmes of Albuquerque, New Mexico, and Paul Newfield, III of Metairie, Louisiana.

The Canary Islanders who were settled in Barataria were among the passengers transported on five of the ships that sailed from the islands. The packetboat Santisimo Sacramento was the first ship to depart the port of Santa Cruz de Tenerife on Tenerife Island for Louisiana. It departed on July 10, 1778 with 125 infantry recruits, of whom 53 had families. The ship had a total of 264 passengers. It arrived at Havana, Cuba in September 1778, and stopped there because of much illness aboard. Six recruits had died on the voyage, and others were too sick to travel further. In October 1778, the ship departed for Louisiana, leaving 14 recruits

and their families in Havana. The ship arrived in New Orleans on November 1, 1778. Most of the passengers appear to have been settled at Galveztown. The "Libro Maestro" shows that one family comprised of six people was settled at Barataria.<sup>9</sup>

The poleacre La Victoria sailed from Santa Cruz de Tenerife on October 22, 1778 with 292 passengers and 18 nursing babies. Among the passengers were 88 recruits. The ship sailed directly to New Orleans and arrived on January 14, 1779. The "Libro Maestro" shows that 11 of the families that sailed on the ship, totaling 52 people, were settled at Barataria.<sup>10</sup>

The frigate San Ignacio de Loyola sailed from Santa Cruz de Tenerife on October 29, 1778 with 423 passengers and 37 nursing babies. Among the passengers were 125 recruits. The ship entered the Mississippi River on January 9, 1779. By January 15, 1779, it appears to have docked at New Orleans. The "Libro Maestro" shows that 34 of the families that sailed on this ship, totaling 144 people, were settled at Barataria.<sup>11</sup>

The packetboat San Juan Nepomuceno sailed from Santa Cruz de Tenerife on December 9, 1778 with 202 passengers and 19 nursing babies. Among the passengers were 53 recruits. The "Libro Maestro" shows that the ship had reached Louisiana by March 1779. According to the "Libro", 10 of the families that sailed on the ship, totaling 46 people, were settled at Barataria by that time.<sup>12</sup>

The frigate La Santa Faz sailed from Santa Cruz de Tenerife on February 14, 1779 with 406 passengers, including 28 nursing babies. Among the passengers were 102 recruits. By early July, the ship was in Louisiana. The "Libro Maestro" shows that one family that sailed on the ship, consisting of four people, was settled at Barataria.<sup>13</sup>

The "Libro Maestro" lists 57 families that were settled in Barataria by July 20, 1779. The ship lists compiled upon embarkation from the port of Santa Cruz de Tenerife show that these families then totaled 252 individuals.

The following list of Canary Islanders settled in Barataria is presented in the order that the families appear on the folios of the "Libro Maestro". The folio number of each family is listed in the first column. The abbreviation for the name of the ship that carried each family is listed in the second column. The names of the family members, which are listed in the third column, are presented as they are listed in the published embarkation lists. Additional notations compare variations between the "Libro" and ship entries and give additional information derived from the "Libro" and other sources.

The "Libro" lists appear to have been prepared from the ship lists because the ages of the individuals, notably the infants, are the same. However, there are spelling variations in the names. For example, José is rendered as Josef in the "Libro", Ximénez is substituted for Jiménez, and de Orta is given as de Horta. Occasionally, the name of a wife

child differs. Some family members given in the ship lists are absent from the "Libro" lists. The missing names appear to represent deaths that occurred prior to the beginning of the "Libro" lists on July 20, 1779. Two recruits had acquired new families between the time that they embarked from the Canary Islands and the time of the recording of the "Libro".

The same order is followed in listing family members in both the "Libro" and the ship lists. Presumably, it is the order of the importance of the individuals. The male head of the family is listed first, and his name is followed by the name of his wife. The male children are listed next, in order of their ages with the oldest first. The female children are next listed in the same order. In some cases, second sets of children are listed.

The order in which the families are listed in the "Libro" may have some meaning in regard to their settlement in Barataria. The order may reflect the sequence in which the families were sent to settle in their new homes. It may also reflect the sequence in which their tracts of land lined the bayou. Families that sailed on the same ship are frequently listed in close sequence. Occasional repetition of family names in these sequences suggests that relations may have been given tracts of land near each other.

THE CANARY ISLANDERS SETTLED IN BARATARIA - 1779-1783

## CODES FOR SHIP NAMES

SS - Santisimo Sacramento  
 FZ - La Santa Faz  
 VT - La Victoria  
 IL - San Ignacio de Loyola  
 JN - San Juan Nupomuceno

"Libro  
 Maestro"  
 Folio No.

Ship

Household

1	VT	Melchor Jiménez Catalina Perdomo, his wife Juan, 8 Diego, 6 Josefa, 7 Francisco, 13 months
---	----	---

The daughter Josefa is not listed in the "Libro," therefore she probably had died.

2	VT	José Herrera Lucía González, his wife Ignacio, 8
---	----	--

3	IL	Juan Jiménez Juana, 20 María, 14
---	----	--

The relationships of the individuals in this household are not specified in the ship list or in the "Libro." The "Libro" notes that these people were moved to Valenzuela in 1782.

4	IL	José Hidalgo Isabel Zambrana, his wife Gregoria, 10 Francisca, 9 Juan, 10 months
---	----	--

The "Libro" notes that this family was moved to Valenzuela in 1782. The tract of land granted to this family at Valenzuela is shown on copies of maps from the Archivo General de Indias in the Louisiana Collection of the Tulane University Library. Isabel died at the age of 55 and was buried under





9 IL Juan Alvarado  
 María Suárez, his wife  
 Tomás, 4  
 Isabel, 2  
 Francisca Antonia, sister-  
 in-law

The "Libro" lists the age of the sister-in-law as 20 years. It also notes that "one died," and that the family was moved to Valenzuela in 1782.

10 IL José Antonio Ventura  
 Antonia Pesos, his wife  
 José, 2  
 Lorenza, 7  
 María, 2

The "Libro" appears to spell the wife's name as Pérez.

11 IL Lorenzo Rodríguez de León  
 María Espino, his wife  
 Luis, 12  
 Antonio, 8  
 Sebastiana, 6

Antonio is not listed in the "Libro," therefore he probably died. Sebastiana was living in Ascension Parish when she married Vincent Mora on November 1, 1790 (Diocese of Baton Rouge Catholic Church Records, vol. 2 (1770-1803), Baton Rouge: Diocese of Baton Rouge, Department of Archives, 1980, p. 499, p. 554).

12 IL Vicente Delgado  
 Felipa Jiménez, his wife  
 Isabel, 3  
 Sebastiana, 3 months

13 IL José Dominguez  
 María Francisca, his wife  
 Felipa Dominguez, his mother  
 Fernando, 8  
 Tomasa, 7

The "Libro" does not list the mother and the two children and notes that there were deaths in the family.

14 IL Juan Alemán  
 Juana Ramírez, his wife  
 Antonio, 14  
 Baltasar, 5  
 Pedro, 2  
 Josefa, 9  
 Sebastiana, 7

The "Libro" notes that this family was moved to Valenzuela in 1782. The tract of land granted to this family at Valenzuela is shown on copies of maps from the Archivo General de Indias in the Louisiana Collection of the Tulane University Library.

15            IL            Francisco Ramírez  
                                  Ana Pérez, his wife  
                                  Francisco, 4  
                                  Antonia, 5 months

The children are not listed in the "Libro," and they probably had died. The "Libro" also notes that the family was moved to Valenzuela in 1782.

16            VT            Domingo López  
                                  Francisca, sister, 26

The "Libro" names the sister as Catalina, aged 26.

17            VT            Antonio Martel  
                                  Francisca Antonia, his wife  
                                  Antonio, 6  
                                  Domingo, 2  
                                  Blasina, 11

This family was still living in Barataria in October 1796 when the flood waters of a crevasse destroyed all their crops and animals. The daughter Blasina, or Blasa, was by then the widow of Pedro Herrero, and she was living on a separate tract of land with her four children. (Archivo General de Indias, Papeles de Santo Domingo, Legajo 2613, folio 575, letter from Juan Ventura Morales to Diego de Guardoqui, number 48, October 26, 1796.)

18            IL            Juan Espino  
                                  Joaquina Soler, his wife  
                                  Miguel, 1

19            VT            Pedro Guedes  
                                  Isabel de Sosa, his wife  
                                  Sebastiana, 22  
                                  José, 7

This family, which also went by the name of Ramírez, has been identified as later residing in St. Bernard Parish (Shirley Chaisson Bourquard, Early Settlers on the Delta, in press).

20            IL            Manuel Ojeda  
                                  Francisca Medina, his wife  
                                  Juan, 8 months  
                                  María, 3





31 IL Felipe Francisco  
 Bernarda Francisca, his wife  
 Domingo, 18  
 Felipe, 12  
 José, 9  
 Lorenzo, 4  
 María, 23  
 Rosalía, 14  
 Andrea, 12

José is missing from the "Libro" list, and he probably had died.

32 IL Gaspar Ortiz López  
 María Sánchez, his wife  
 Juan, 3  
 María, 1

33 IL Agustín Romero  
 Polonia Rodríguez, his wife  
 José, 12  
 Domingo, 10  
 Juan, 7  
 Agustín, 4

34 IL Matías Francisco  
 The "Libro" notes that Francisco lived in Barataria with two unnamed family members.

35 VT Antonio González  
 Rosalía Ortega, his wife  
 José, 8  
 Francisco, 4  
 María, 12 months  
 Josefa Ortega, sister-in-law

Francisco and María are not listed in the "Libro," and they probably had died. The "Libro" lists the sister-in-law as being 20 years old. Members of the family have been identified as later residing at English Turn; Rosalía Ortega also used the last name "de Campos;" Josefa Ortga de Campos married Carlos Suárez on April 5, 1779 in New Orleans (Shirley Chaisson Bourquard, Early Settlers on the Delta, in press).

36 JN Bernardo Nieves  
 María Rodríguez, his wife  
 Juan, 2  
 Brígida, 1 month  
 Isabel, sister-in-law, 17

37 IL Domingo Vicente Morales  
Gegoria Hidalgo, his wife

38 VT Francisco López Machado  
Margarita Ramírez, his wife  
María, 3 months

The "Libro" lists "daughter María, 19 years." On January 20, 1789, Margarita Ramírez was buried in Ascension Parish at Donaldsonville; on July 2, 1789, the widower remarried to María González, widow of Pedro Caballero who was also formerly the head of a Barataria household, see folio 56 of the "Libro" (Diocese of Baton Rouge Catholic Church Records, vol. 2 (1770-1803), Baton Rouge: Diocese of Baton Rouge, Department of Archives, 1980, p. 614, p. 329, p. 506).

39 IL Francisco Sánchez.  
María Caballero, his wife  
Juan, 2  
Francisco, 1

Francisco Sánchez, widower, was still living in Barataria with his seven children when the flood waters of a crevasse destroyed all of his crops and animals in October 1796. (Archivo General de Indias, Papeles de Santo Domingo, Legajo 2613, folio, 575, letter from Juan Ventura Morales to Diego de Gardoqui, number 48, October 26, 1796.) In the late eighteenth century, the farm of Francisco Sánchez was located on the Camino Real de Barataria, on the east bank of Bayou des Familles, opposite or near the confluence of Bayou Coquilles. (McDonogh v. De Gruys et al., Docket No. 1007, June 2, 1845, and Police Jury of the Parish of Jefferson v. Allon D'Hemecourt and John McDonogh, May 1844, Docket No. 5209, LSCC/UNO.)

40 IL Gabriel Hernández  
Bárbara Melián, his wife  
Vicente, 17  
Félix, 15

41 IL Antonio Ramírez  
Ana Santana, his wife

This family has been identified as later living in St. Bernard Parish; the wife also used the surname Pena (Shirley Chaisson Bourquard, Early Settlers on the Delta, in press).

42 IL Agustín Sánchez  
Francisca Ortiz, his wife

- 43            JN            Antonio Pérez  
                         Catalina Pérez, his wife  
                         Nicolás, 8  
                         María, 5
- 44            JN            Fernando Morales  
                         Bernarda González, his wife  
                         Isidro, 1 month  
                         Fernando, 2
- 45            JN            Antonio José de Armas  
                         María Delgado, his wife  
                         Domingo, 2 months

Domingo is not listed in the "Libro," therefore he probably had died.

- 46            JN            Pedro Caniles  
                         Sebastiana Moreno, his wife  
                         Antonia, 10  
                         Juan, 7  
                         María, 4  
                         Catalina, 8 months

Catalina is not listed in the "Libro," therefore she probably had died. Members of this family have been identified as later living in New Orleans and subsequently in St. Bernard Parish (Shirley Chaisson Bourquard, Early Settlers on the Delta, in press).

- 47            JN            Bartolomé Caballero  
                         María Artiles, his wife  
                         Diego, 17  
                         Antonio, 6  
                         Bartolomé, 2  
                         María, 12  
                         Agustina, 3  
                         Andrea, 1 month

The "Libro" appears to list Diego as being 7 years old. Members of this family have been identified as later residing in St. Bernard Parish (Shirley Chaisson Bourquard, Early Settlers on the Delta, in press).

- 48            JN            José Suárez  
                         Francisca Rodríguez, his wife  
                         María, 5
- 49            IL            Felipe Artiles  
                         Juana Jiménez, his wife  
                         Juan, 11  
                         Antonio, 7  
                         María, 2  
                         Juan Cazorla, brother, 15

Members of this family have been identified as later residing in St. Bernard Parish (Shirley Chaisson Bourquard, Early Settlers on the Delta, in press).

50	IL	Juan Melián María Ortiz, his wife
51	IL	Simón Casimiro Catalina González, his wife
52	VT	Juan Alonso Romero María José, his wife Juan, 13 Francisco, 4 Antonio, 2 Rosalía, 7 Andrea, 5 María, 7 months

The "Libro" appears to list the wife's last name as Jorge.

53	FZ	Mateo Henríquez Josefa Vélez, his wife Felipe, 15 María, 2 months
----	----	--

The "Libro" lists Mateo Henríquez as living in Barataria with "two other persons." One member of his family apparently had died.

54	JN	Miguel Suárez María de la Cruz, his wife Domingo, 11 Sebastián, 7 Miguel, 1 month
----	----	---

The "Libro" lists Miguel Suárez as living alone in Barataria. All the members of his family appear to have died. On December 5, 1779 Miguel Suárez, widower of María del Pino and a resident of Barataria, married Francisca Antonia Mata, daughter of Juan Mata and Ysabel Suárez, natives of Aguimes on Gran Canaria (Alice D. Forsyth, "Notes on Some of the Canary Islanders Who Settled in Louisiana," L'Heritage, vol. 1, no. 4, September, 1978, p. 271.)

55	IL	Domingo Hiedra
----	----	----------------

In the "Libro," the spelling of the last name of this recruit is difficult to read and could begin with a "Y".



56

VT

Pedro José Caballero  
 Ana González, his wife  
 Andrea, 7  
 Juana, 5  
 Asunción, 4  
 Miguel, 9 months  
 Josefa, mother-in-law

The "Libro" lists a son named Domingo, aged 4 years, but does not list a child named Asunción. The wife's name is given as María González in the "Libro." Copies of maps from the Archivo General de Indias in the Louisiana Collection of the Tulane University Library, of land grants at Valenzuela, dating from about 1782, show that this family was granted a tract of land on Bayou Lafourche. By July 2, 1789, Pedro Cavallero was deceased as his wife, María González, remarried on that date to Francisco López Machado who was also formerly the head of a Barataria household, see folio 38 of the "Libro" (Diocese of Baton Rouge Catholic Church Records, vol. 2 (1770-1803), Baton Rouge: Diocese of Baton Rouge, Department of Archives, 1980, p. 329, p. 506).

57

JN

José Suárez

The "Libro" lists this recruit as "now with family and before was grouped with that of Gregorio Ojeda," as of January 8, 1782. (see folio 25 of the "Libro".)

The purpose of the "Libro Maestro" was to record the goods and sums of money dispursed to the families by the Spanish government. The "Libro" may not be the first nor the only record book that was kept for the Barataria settlers. The recording stops in 1783, and documentation on the settlement after that date must be obtained from other sources.

The entries of goods and money given to each family are largely repetitious, with variations in quantity according to the size of each family. The first entry for each family, on July 20, 1779, lists yards of linen, cotton, printed calico, and other types of cloth; spools of thread; twine; shawls; blankets; shoes; hats; handkerchiefs; cauldrons or kettles; and money "to buy shoes and other things". These are personal and household items which were issued subsequent to an initial dispursement of farming tools and other basic supplies not listed in the "Libro".

The second entry for each family in the "Libro", written in a different pen, notes the expenses of rations dispursed according to orders issued on March 14 and November 30, 1779.

The third entry for each family, also written in a different pen, was made following an order of January 8, 1782 to distribute supplies. These supplies included axes and hatchets, hoes, sickles, breeches or pants, rifles, mosquito nets, knives with two handles (probably draw knives), iron shovels, shirts, woolen cloaks, petticoats, and shawls. This dispursement appears to represent a reissuing of

essential items, probably following a storm or flood.

A final entry lists in yet another pen additional sums of money spent by the government on the families in 1779, 1780, 1781, 1782, and 1783. Many of these expenditures were undoubtedly also made after storms and floods. This final entry sometimes mentions deaths in a family or the relocation of a family to Valenzuela on Bayou Lafourche. According to these last notations, eight of the Barataria families were moved to Valenzuela in 1782.

Initial supplies, equipment, household goods, animals, and seeds were supplied to the settlers prior to the first recording in the "Libro." Among these items were four pirogues and twenty four mill stones. The mill stones would have been used to grind either corn or wheat which the settlers were expected to grow. The inventory of the succession of Commandant Andrès Jung lists a receipt "on account, for rations for the families of Barataria, dated January 9, 1779." Some families may have been settled in Barataria late in 1778.<sup>14</sup>

The terms of their settlement and the amount of land to be granted them was decreed by Governor Bernardo de Gálvez on February 19, 1778.<sup>15</sup>

Decree as to immigration, which is to be observed by the commandants of the posts in this province to which families shall immigrate, to the end that they may be settled in accordance with the pious and humane intentions of His Majesty.

Upon the arrival of the persons whom I shall propose to settle, the commandant shall take pains to locate them in the most suitable place, as near

as possible to each other, that distance may not make impossible the aid which they must render to one another. The commandant shall assign to each family a frontage of five arpents [arpanes], with the customary depth.

For their living there shall be supplied during the first year at the charge of the royal treasury, to each family, which is to be understood to mean a husband and wife, a barrel of maize in the ear a head, for each one of the age of twelve [en cada uno de los doze de él] and for the children if they have any, from the age of six to that of twelve, a half barrel for each one, for those who exceed this age shall enjoy the aforesaid ration complete.

In addition to the aforesaid aid, the royal treasury will buy for each of the families referred to an axe [haza], a hoe, a scythe or sickle [volante ú hoz], a spade, two hens, a cock, and a pig of two months, with which they may easily found and establish a household which will provide them with a living, or may even make their fortune.

If there should be any among the children whose age and strength fit them for farm labor, there shall be added a hoe only for each one, since the other tools are to be provided only for a family, in which the children are included.

The kindness and gentleness with which the new colonists especially are to be treated will be shown in the same degree as the favorable intentions of the sovereign; and any commandant who shall deviate from this precept will expose himself to censure, while those who carry out these provisions with energy, and who give aid and succor to those who need them will manifest their zeal in His Majesty's service, and will obtain His Majesty's gratitude.

The source and origin of all empires has been the refuge and kind usage which men find in the gentleness of the laws. The good or evil administration of them [apparent omission in the transcript] is the greatest impediment to the building up of a government, for not only are those who are present and who are exposed to them exasperated, but others are prevented from coming. Hence as our laws are extremely mild they ought not to be obscured by ambition and self-interest, as has been the case with some settlements formed for the king.

In all cases in which the commandant discovers the lack of effort of a settler, and in which his sloth or abandonment should prevent him from being entitled to these benefits, the commandant, after

giving warning, should inform me, that I may take measures in the case.

Since I have received no warrant from His Majesty for the said supplies, and have taken upon me to provide them, the commandants shall notify the immigrants that I am in doubt whether the assistance is provided at the expense of the royal treasury, or they will be obliged to reimburse the cost of it, when their means will permit. I have reported on this point to the king, asking for his royal decision.

The commandants shall be under obligations to send every six months an exact and detailed report of the increase or diminution of the families, with the circumstances of their progress, and the obstacles to it, in order that remedies may be promptly provided, if the case require them. In case of death or abandonment of a settler, the commandant shall take care to recover the tools which have been given.

For payment of the disbursements made for the supply of provisions and for the importation of the fowls and pigs, the commandant shall send, every three or every six months, as may be convenient, a certificate of the amount, that a corresponding order for payment may be sent by me.

Nueva Orleans, February 19, 1778.

Bernardo de Gálvez

Since the sixteenth century, town planning and land use in the Spanish New World had been regulated by a series of royal laws. In 1681, these and other laws were codified into the monumental Recopilación de leyes de los Reynos de las Indias. Among the listings were numerous ordinances containing detailed instructions for the laying out of new settlements. The concepts expressed in the ordinances were based upon Greek and Roman principals of town planning and land use. Royal rules and regulations for establishing a new community included selection of a healthful, pleasant,

and defensible location; fertile lands for farming and pasture; availability of water, fuel and building materials; good roads and access to rivers and seaports; orderly streets, lots, and buildings; and a large plaza with designated locations for commercial and municipal buildings and a church.<sup>16</sup>

The Recopilación provided for the fondo legal or four-square league townsite as the town's land grant for buildings and commons, plus an additional common pasture area of about a league in length. (A league is about three miles.) The law required that municipal planning follow a grid-system; that the surrounding arable land, pasture, and woodland be carefully designated and allotted; and that water use be regulated.<sup>17</sup>

The Spanish municipalidad was derived from the Roman municipium. As such, it constituted a local geographical area and its government rather than a political entity. The Spanish municipality used in New World colonization included the fields, streams, forests, and meadows that surrounded the town. Colonial municipalities were ranked according to their size, type, and importance: ciudades (large cities), villas (cities), pueblos (towns), plazas (villages), lugars (small villages), and poblaciones (loosely-grouped ranches and farms).<sup>18</sup>

Villas, pueblos, and plazas usually originated as walled towns, their fortification made necessary by the dangers of their locations. The población was the preferred

form of settlement in locations where the dispersal of houses amid the fields and pastures was possible. This arrangement allowed the settlers easy access to their fields and animals, and it allowed them to guard their farms and ranches against marauders and wild animals. Nevertheless, a población may have had a church, a public building, stores, or a fortification as a focal point of the settlement.<sup>19</sup>

As previously noted, the Louisiana settlements established for the Canary Islander immigrants incorporated both military and civil functions, and they combined aspects of presidial and civil town planning. The Villa de Gálvez on Bayou Manchac (Iberville River) was laid out as a fortified grid-pattern town with outlying farm plots for each family. This was the system of partitioning land provided for in the Recopilación, that families should receive town lots (solares) and arable fields (suertes) according to their merits and needs, as well as the use of common pasture and woodland. A similar village with similar division and apportionment of land was laid out by order of Charles-Philippe Aubry, French acting governor of Louisiana, for the first Acadian settlement at the Attakapas Post in 1765.<sup>20</sup>

The Villa de Valenzuela on Bayou Lafourche was likewise planned to house the Isleños in a village separate from their farm lands. However, the Isleño communities on Bayou Terre aux Boeufs and Bayou des Familles appear to

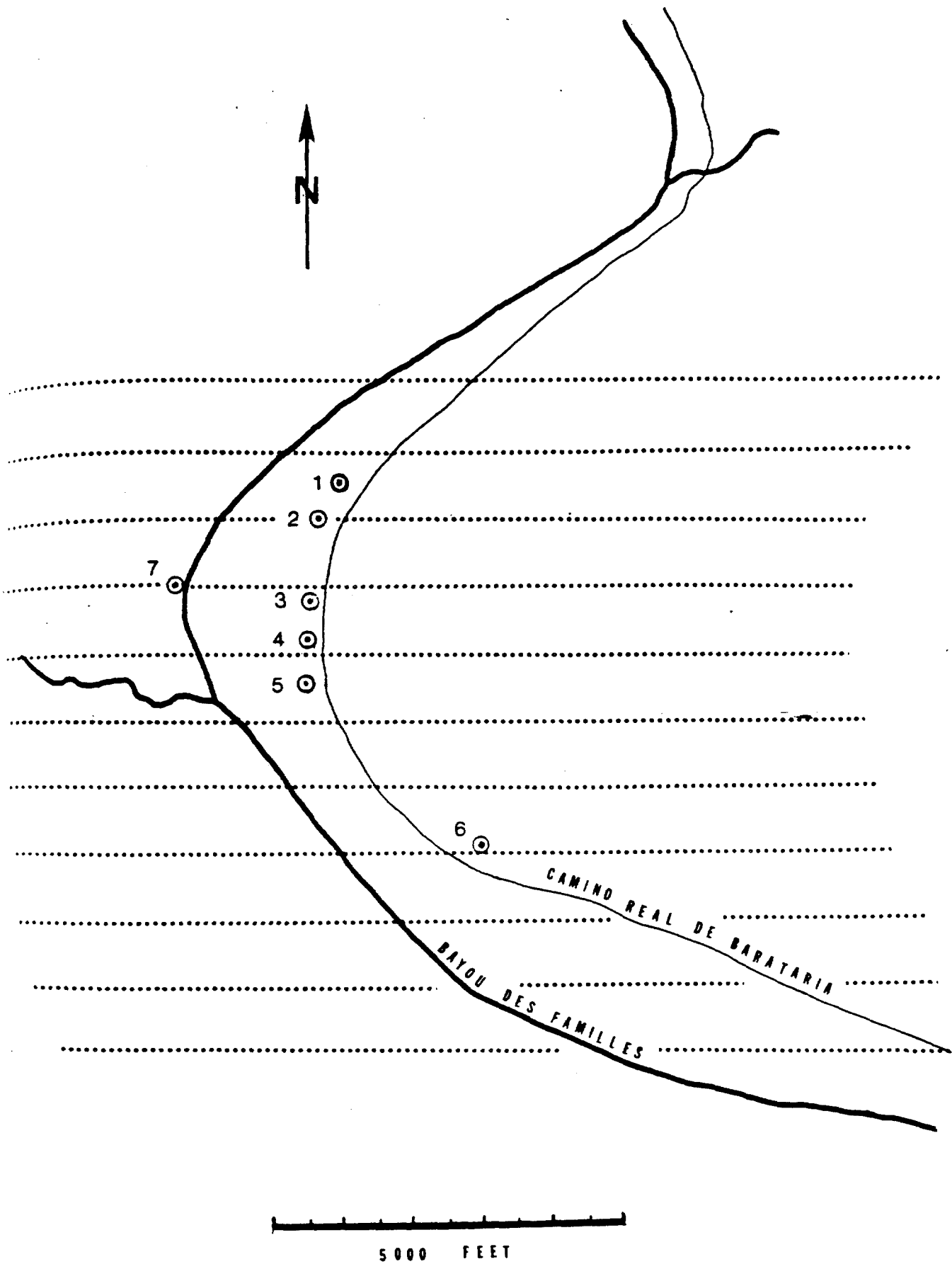
have been established as linear settlements strung out along the bayous. In the pattern established by the French in Louisiana which partitioned strips of land fronting on waterways, these *Isleños* apparently received five or six arpents of land fronting the bayous and extending in depth to the French profondeur ordinaire of 40 arpents. Much of the depth of their lands consisted of swamp, and it was undoubtedly the narrow width of arable land along the bayous that necessitated long linear settlements.<sup>21</sup>

Additional research in the Spanish archives may discover the plan for the *Población de Barataria*. Numerous floods and hurricanes undoubtedly altered original plans for the community and a somewhat haphazard settlement may have resulted. However, documentary evidence and sites located in the study area indicate that the población was laid out and the buildings erected in an orderly manner.

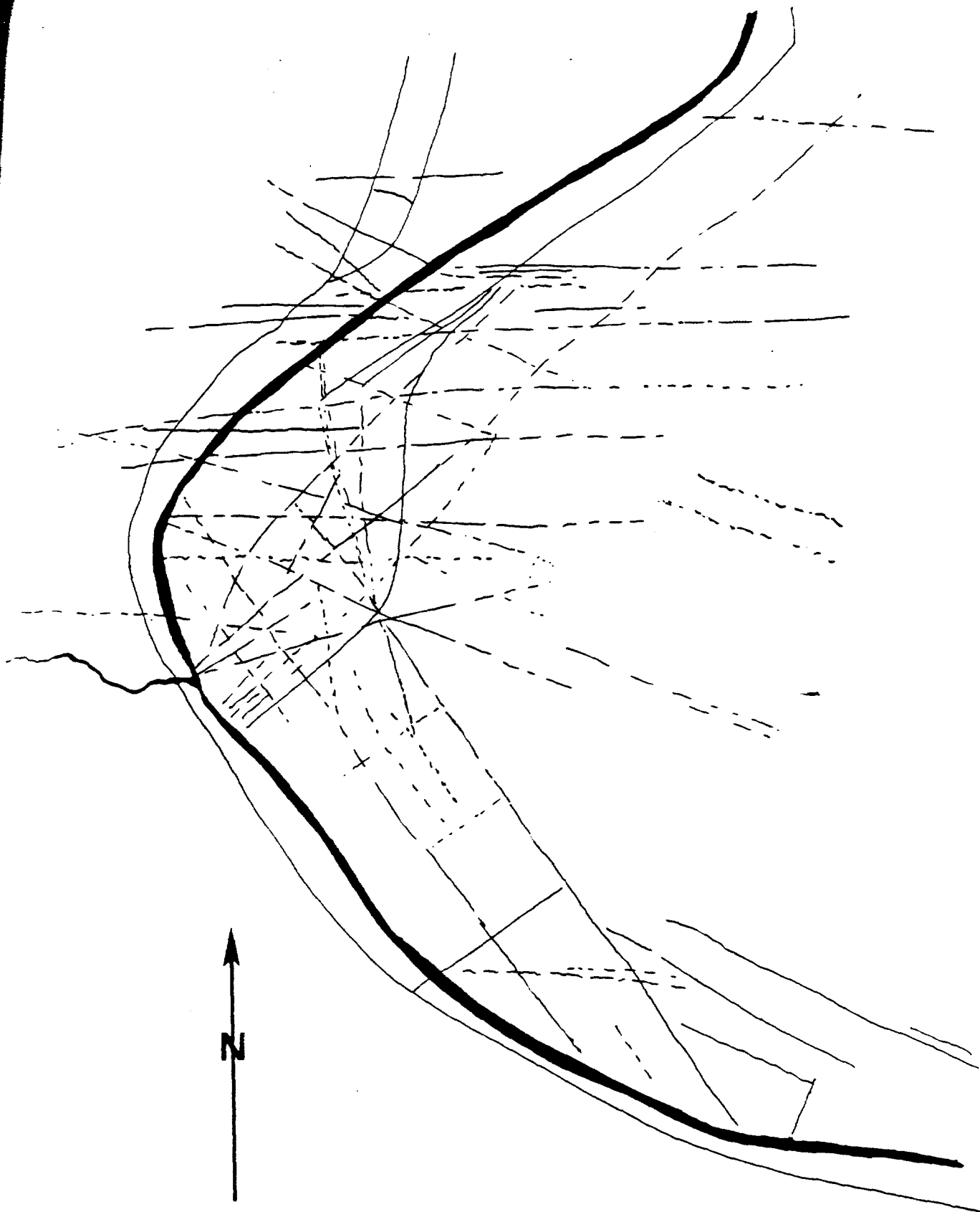
An 1830 cadastral survey map by Deputy Surveyors William H. Cobb and John Maxwell of the township lying immediately above the study area shows numerous, largely unclaimed, five-and-six-arpent tracts facing both sides of Bayou des Familles. These are probably tracts abandoned by the Canary Islanders. The tracts run approximately east-west in direction. It may be assumed that they continued down the bayou, and aerial photographs appear to show a number of east-west linear tree lines in the study area.<sup>22</sup>

Six building sites probably dating from the Spanish





Possible Spanish colonial building sites and projected five-  
 arpent tracts of the 1779 Canary Islander settlement.



Conspicuous linear tree lines in aerial photographs of 1945 and 1958 (R-76-37-126, 4 Nov. 1945; R-76-37-125, 4 Nov. 1945; 5-58-171, 15 Dec. 1958; Approx. scale 1:20,000. U. S. Army Engineer District, New Orleans, Corps of Engineers).

Colonial Period have been found in the study area on the east side of Bayou des Familles. They are located on the natural levee that follows the course of the bayou at distances measuring between 1,000 and 2,000 feet back from the bayou and near the semi-circular route of the old Barataria Road. The sites are located at an equi-distant spacing of about 580 feet from each other and at about 200 feet toward the bayou from the old road.

Those sites which are undisturbed consist of elevations about two feet high and about thirty-five feet square. Surface artifacts found on these mounds include ceramics of the Spanish Period, gun flints, brick fragments, clumps of baked clay, square nails and other pieces of rusted metal, glass, and sawn animal bones. In many cases it can be seen that the objects have been thrown out of the mounds by armadillos and other animals that have been digging in the mounds. A large, roughly circular depression, frequently filled with water, is often located near the sites. These depressions or ponds could represent associated cultural features. They were perhaps created to water farm animals, or perhaps as a borrow pit from which soil was taken to elevate the house site. The depressions could also represent sites used for making bousillage, the mud-and-moss mixture that was used to fill timber-framed walls. Lauren C. Post, in his Cajun Sketches, describes the continuance of this traditional Louisiana building technique in the Acadian country:

When a house was ready to be daubed, a big hole was dug in the yard. Into it went mud, moss, and water. These were tramped and stirred until the consistency was right, and then the mixture was daubed into the spaces between the studs.<sup>23</sup>

The houses probably took the form of the "Creole Cottage" then popular for lower class housing in Louisiana. Many of these buildings remain standing in the State. They are typically one-storied and rectangular in plan with two or four rooms. Many have a gallery across the front. The roof is either hipped or gabled. The cottages are usually raised on low brick piers with weatherboard covering walls of bousillage-entre-poteaux (mud-and-moss-between-posts) or brique-entre-poteaux (brick-between-posts). They usually contain a central brick chimney and have four shuttered French doors across the front.<sup>24</sup>

Each Canary Islander tract in Baratavia probably also contained ancillary buildings. These may have included barns, chicken houses, and privies.

PROBABLE BUILDING SITES OF THE SPANISH COLONIAL PERIOD  
LOCATED IN THE STUDY AREA

Site No. 1

Location and Description of Site: The site is located on the east natural levee of Bayou des Familles. It is positioned on the lower line of Section 38 and the upper line of Section 57, T15S-R23E. This section line was drawn by the United States Surveyor General's Office in the early nineteenth century between the Spanish land grants of

Nicholas Domé (Daumé) and Pablo Suárez Ruiz. On the lower (southern) side of the line was the Dome tract. It contained 12 arpent front on the bayou by 40 arpents of depth and was granted on August 21, 1794 by Governor Carondelet. On the upper (northern) side of the line was the Suárez tract. It contained about seven arpents fronting both sides of Bayou des Familles by forty arpents in depth and was granted on April 2, 1800 by Governor Casa Calvo.<sup>25</sup>

A granite boundary marker, which probably dates from the early nineteenth century, is located on this property line on the bayou side of the old Barataria Road. The site is located about 220 feet from the road in the direction of the bayou. It consists of a rise in the ground measuring about one foot in height, about 50 feet NW-SE, and about 250 NE-SW. The site straddles the grant line and may therefore predate the 1794 grant. A circular depression or pond is located a few feet NW of the site.

Surface Artifacts: creamware sherds, brick fragments, baked clay fragments, glass, Rangia shell.<sup>26</sup>

#### Site No. 2

Location and Description of Site: The site is located on the east natural levee of Bayou des Familles, about 580 feet SW of Site No. 1, 185 feet W of the old Barataria Road, and about 225 feet NE of a pipeline right-of-way. The site measures about two feet high by about 35 feet square. Several circular depressions or ponds are located

a few feet away from the mound. A brick structural remnant measuring 40 by 22 inches is located under one portion of the mound. A linear clearing that appears to be an old road leads from the site to the Barataria road.

Surface Artifacts: The following artifacts were analyzed by Charles Pearson, George Castille, and David Kelley, Archaeologists of Coastal Environments, Inc., Baton Rouge, and were estimated by them to date from the eighteenth century.

Creamware sherds with Royal Pattern edge, date range 1760-1820.

Brownish-green blown glass fragment of the side or base of a square whiskey bottle.

Thick, crude, light brown pottery sherds, poorly made and poorly fired, crumbly and brittle. Too poor to be Indian-made. Not comparable to any known sherds ever recovered; could represent pottery locally made by the settlers themselves. This pottery would have served as kitchen ware.

Crockery sherd, tan in color.

Square, rusted, wrought-iron nail fragments. Square heads measuring 1.3 cm.

Musket flint, black, probably a British Dover flint. 2.5 cm x 2.1 cm. The flint is whole and has been used.

Musket flint fragment, black.

Small clumps of fired clay.

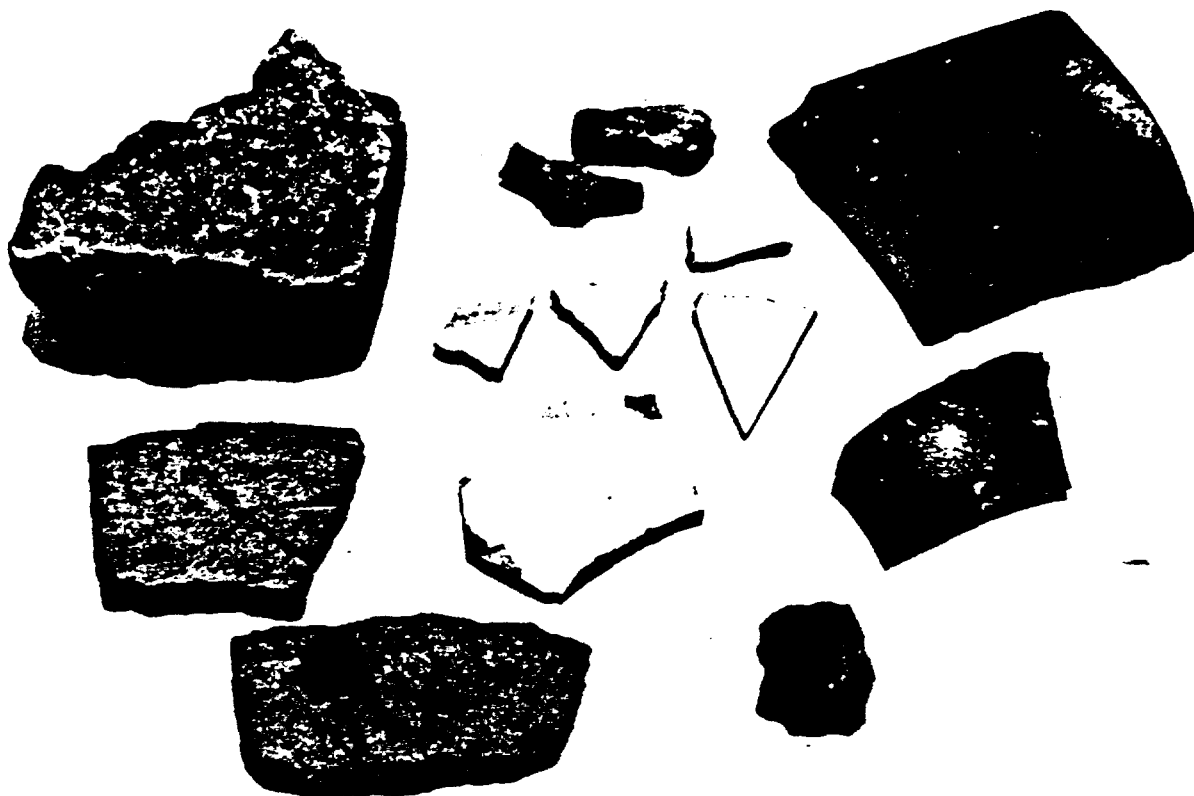
Small clumps of lime mortar.



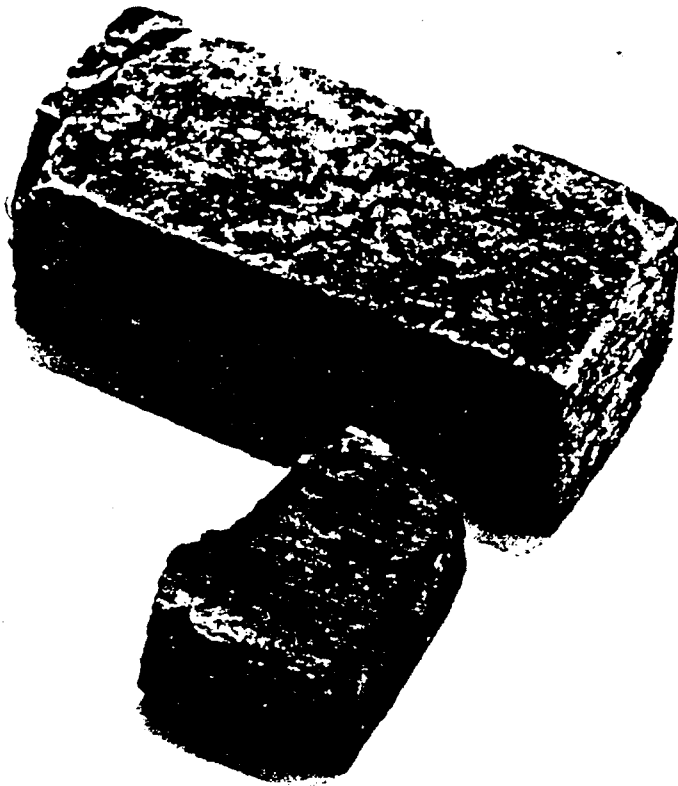
Possible Spanish colonial building site No. 2, looking SE.  
Ranger David Lambert demonstrates elevation of site. 3/28/86.



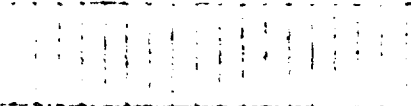
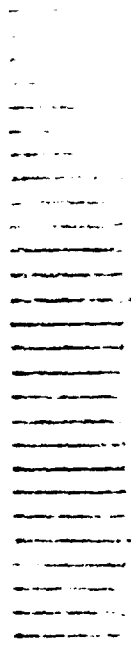




Artifacts from probable Spanish Colonial Period building site No. 2. Center: 5 creamware sherds with Royal pattern at edge. Clockwise from top: probable wrought-iron nail fragments; side or base of a square whiskey bottle, brownish-green blown glass; glass sherd of the rounded upper part of a wine bottle, being that part of the bottle that curves to meet the neck, yellowish-brown blown glass with bubbles on the surface of the interior; black musket flint, whole and used; 3 pottery sherds, thick, crude, light-brown ware, poorly made and poorly fired, perhaps home-made by settlers; brick fragment.



imprinted with an "H" typically found on building sites associated with the Christmas Plantation, from the Gomez House site; compared with small bricks typically found on probable Spanish colonial building sites, from site No. 2.





spanish bldg site no. 3 - creamware, lime mortar, sewn bone.



Probable Spanish Colonial Period building site No. 6, looking E.  
Mike Comardelle stands in the main ditch of the Christmas Plantation  
that appears to cut through the site. 3/5/86.



Crockery lip, probably from a "Spanish olive jar," found on probable Spanish colonial building site No. 6. 3/5/86.



1  
Main ditch of the Christmas Plantation at the location of probable Spanish Colonial Period building site No. 6, looking NW. 3/86.

Brick fragments, hand made and crumbly, orange-red and gray-blue-brown in color. The bricks measure about 4.5 cm in thickness and are much thinner than nineteenth century bricks.

### Site No. 3

Location and Description of Site: The site is located on the east natural levee of Bayou des Familles, about 1,160 feet south of Site No. 2, and 180 feet from the point where the old Baratavia Road forked at the grant line dividing Sections 11 and 57 (the old Guerbois-Boudousquie' property line). The site is about one foot high and about 35 feet square. A depression or pond measuring 10 by 40 feet is located 35 feet NW of the rise in the ground.

### Surface Artifacts:

Creamware sherds with Beaded Edge pattern and Flat Rim pattern.

Square, rusted, wrought-iron nail fragment.

Piece of baked clay.

Small clump of lime mortar.

Brick fragment.

Two sawn animal bones.

### Site No. 4

Location and Description of Site: The site is located on the east levee of Bayou des Familles, about 580 feet south of Site No. 3, and about 180 feet west of the old Baratavia Road that follows a semi-circular route around the meander bend. The site is a raised area about one or two feet

high, measuring about 20 feet E-W by 30 feet N-S. It is located along the main irrigation ditch that passes through the Christmas Plantation and follows a semi-circular route around the meander bend. The site could have been disturbed in the digging of the ditch. Near the site is a small circular depression. There are no apparent signs of cultivation in the area.

Surface Artifacts:

Two large, heavy, rusted, square wrought-iron nail fragments.

Iron fragments, rusted, one curved-like part of a pot.

Brick fragments matching the color and consistency of those of the previous sites.

Site No. 5

Location and Description of Site: The site is located on the east natural levee of Bayou des Familles, about 650 feet SSE of Site No. 4 and about 200 feet W of the main ditch. It consists of a mound one or two feet high and about 20 feet wide by 30 feet long. There are nearby depressions in the ground. The nature of this site may be questionable because only one brick fragment was found on the site, but the brick is of the same color and consistency as that found on the previous sites, and the appearance of the site is similar to the other sites. There are no apparent signs of cultivation nearby.

Site No. 6

Location and Description of Site: The site is located on



the east natural levee of Bayou des Familles, about 250 feet SW of the old Baratavia Road that follows the Guerbois-Boudousquie' property line, and about 650 feet NW of the Shell Road. The site is located in the old sugarcane fields of the Christmas Plantation and on the main ditch that circles with the meander. Plowing has disturbed the site, but much artifact material is scattered over several hundred feet of the old fields. The actual position of the house site is presumed to be at the heaviest concentration of artifact material, at the location noted above. Sub-surface material may remain beneath the furrows.

Surface Artifacts:

Creamware sherds, Royal Edge pattern.

Thick earthenware sherds, probably of a "Spanish olive jar," or Iberian olive oil storage jar, buff colored, unglazed on the exterior, yellow glaze on interior.

Redish-brown earthenware sherd with a circular hole under the lip for hanging by a thong or twine.

Hand-blown glass fragments, blue, green and white, including window glass.

Brick fragments, same consistency, color and size as previous sites.

Site No. 7

Location and Description of Site: The site is located on the west natural levee of Bayou des Familles, between Highway 45 and the bayou, 1,700 feet north of the confluence of Bayous des Familles and Coquilles. This site was located

by Richard C. Beavers and Associates in their 1982 archeological site inventory of the park unit. The site was designated Site No. UNO 7 in Beavers' report and was described as:

Earth and shell midden cut by two ditches running northwest by southeast. Site is squarish, measuring about 20m N-S by 35m E-W. It is multi-component with a historic site (brick, square nail, Spanish olive jar) overlaying a prehistoric component that is probably of the Marksville Period.<sup>27</sup>

The site lies upon the north side of the lower line of the 1794 Domé grant. Immediately across the highway, the Domé line meets the lower Guerbois property line. The rectangular site is located in a water-filled swale which continues on either side of the site. The site may be, at least in part, historic fill removed from a shell midden and deposited to the level of the two ridges on either side of the swale. A shallow ditch on the south side of the site runs in the same direction as the Domé grant line. The historic artifacts recovered from the site suggested that it was a domestic site, possibly dating from the Spanish Colonial period. The rectangular site leads to the bayou and could also have been a bridge crossing approach.

Other building sites of the Spanish Colonial period may exist in the study area. Most of the east bank sites fall into an equi-distant spacing of about 580 feet, or three arpents. Archaeological investigation may determine if this is indicative of the size of the tracts of land

originally granted the Isleños, or if the spacing has some other meaning. Sites No. 1 through No. 5 are located just below the crest of the natural levee, in the filled river bed. Their semi-circular arrangement suggests the continuance of a pattern. Site No. 6 is located on the crest of the natural levee. It may indicate the projection of the line of sites, however, one or more of the sites may post-date the initial Canary Islander settlement of 1779. The size and distribution of the Isleño plots and the placement of their buildings could have been altered following their reestablishment after many hurricanes and floods. Some of the sites could date from late Spanish Period regranting of abandoned Isleño lands, or Isleño buildings could have been reused at this period.

The Canary Islanders had been settled on their Barataria lands for less than a year when the first hurricane struck, on August 18, 1779, as Spanish Governor Bernardo de Gálvez was preparing to lead an attack against the British forts at Baton Rouge and Bayou Manchac. Isleño recruits, along with Spanish and Mexican infantry; militia from New Orleans, the German coast and other outlying settlements; free-men-of-color; Choctaw Indians; and Americans, rose immediately from the devastation of the storm and followed Gálvez into victorious battles. In messages to Diego Joseph Navarro, Governor Gálvez described the destruction of the hurricanes.<sup>28</sup>

I am very sorry to inform Your Lordship that the very day of the departure of this officer to carry my despatch, we have been hit by a terrific hurricane, the like of which there is no recollection in the annals of this colony. Although the wind and the rain began on the night of the 17th, it was not until three o'clock in the morning that it attained its full violence, keeping its strength continually until ten o'clock in the morning, then it began to lose its force a little, but not until all the houses, barges, boats and pirogues were demolished, some with many people from these settlements, . . . Others have gone aground, half destroyed and useless, stranded in the woods and finally, there are others of whose fate we are still ignorant. To aggravate the situation, the schooners and gunboats have also sunk.

The village presents the most pitiful sight. There are but few houses which have not been destroyed, and there are so many wrecked to pieces; the fields have been leveled; the houses of the near villages, which are the only ones from which I have heard to this time, are all on the ground, in one word, crops, stock, provisions, are all lost.

Your Lordship might imagine what is my situation, finding myself all at once without any of the help upon which I counted to put my plans into execution, because even if I would dare to go on with them, I could not even take the first step, due to the absolute lack of boats and pirogues, are lost in the storm and because the army men, on whom I counted, have, together with their families taken shelter among the wreckage of their homes, even under the wagons, and I believe that they would rather be killed than to be separated from their unfortunate parents, wives, children and brothers, in this hour of despair and grief, leaving them without a shelter completely exposed to the inclemency of the weather . . .

(extract from Despatch No. 202, August 19, 1779)

I cannot count at all on any provisions; all to the contrary, I am afraid that there will be hunger in this colony and for this reason I have instructed all the commanders of

my jurisdiction to force their respective subjects to plant immediately a certain amount of potatoes and peas, believing this to be a measure of great importance. . . .

(extract from Despatch No. 204, August 28, 1779)

Whatever the Barataria Isleños initially planted, potatoes and peas may have been their first crop. Archaeological investigation may reveal various cultural features remaining in the land that date from the Isleño settlement. Old roads, about 15 or 20 feet wide, that lead from some of the building sites to the main road still seem to be visible as less densely vegetated linear passages through the forest. Aerial photographs appear to show these linear changes in vegetation. Irrigation and drainage ditches may have also been associated with the Canary Islander settlement pattern.

Sophisticated irrigation systems had long been in use in the Canary Islands. The technology and public institutions involved in these systems derived from Roman and Islamic practices introduced into Spain. The codified instructions for the founding of new settlements given in the Recopilación included detailed regulations on the construction and use of community irrigation systems. These were also based on Roman and Islamic practices. All irrigation communities in the Spanish New World reflect these origins in layout and in water distribution customs and laws.<sup>29</sup>

In the Mississippi River Delta, water-control is

usually concerned with over-abundance and most communal efforts are directed at maintenance of levees and drainage systems. Properties located along the river were able to individually obtain irrigation needs by cutting canals through the natural levee and allowing water to drain from the river down the levee backslope. However, the land along Bayou des Familles slopes down to the bayou which is in the old river bed. A ditch circling with the meander at the crest of the natural levee and drawing water from a point upstream would be necessary to irrigate the old river bed. This system is commonly used in river valleys. In Spanish New World communities, the main encircling ditch, from which lateral ditches drain by gravity, is called the acequia madre, or mother ditch. The communal maintenance of the acequia madre is the basis of the political, legal, and social institutions of the Spanish irrigation communities.<sup>30</sup>

The main ditch of the Christmas Plantation that follows the crest of the natural levee may have originally been dug for the purpose of irrigating from an upstream source and could date back to the Isleño settlement. Infra-red aerial photographs show other linear features, unrelated to the natural topography, which emanate from the bend of the bayou above the point bar of the meander.

## ENDNOTES

## LA POBLACIÓN DE BARATARIA

1. Sale of land by Pedro Alberto Bonne to Luis Pellerin, May 14, 1779, Andrés Almonaster y Roxas, notary, NONA; Sale of land by Luis Pellerin to Andrés Jung, July 3, 1779, Almonaster y Roxas, notary, NONA; Donation of land by Andrés Jung to the King of Spain, July 12, 1779, Almonaster y Roxas, notary, copy in McDonogh v. De Gruys, Docket No. 1007; D'Hémécourt maps, Plan Book 107, folio 22 and Plan Book 66, folio 18; Laura L. Porteous, "Index to Spanish Records of Louisiana," Succession of Andrés Juen, September 14, 1784, Louisiana Historical Quarterly, vol. 24, no. 4 (October 1941), p. 1268.
2. Porteous, Succession of Andrés Juen, pp. 1258 - 74, Roulhac Toledano and Mary Louise Christovich, New Orleans Architecture, Vol. VI: Faubourg Tremé and the Bayou Road (Gretna, Louisiana: Pelican Publishing Company, 1980), pp. 12-13, p. 19, p. 22, p. 54, p. 93, p. 145, p. 205; Mary Louise Christovich, Sally Kittredge Evans, and Roulhac Toledano, New Orleans Architecture, Vol. V: The Esplanade Ridge (Gretna, Louisiana: Pelican Publishing Company, 1977), p. 124, p. 127, p. 136.
3. Ibid.; "Plano de las Concesiones . . . ;" the legal boundary description of the Alexander Guerbois tract in the act of sale of the Guerbois estate to Soniat Dufossat, May 5, 1808, describes the depth of the tract as "where the Spanish families were established," Quinones, notary, NONA. John McDonogh's explanation of the original name of Bayou des Familles is quoted in Barbara Holmes, Historic Resources Study, The Baratavia Unit of Jean Lafitte National Historical Park, Southwest Cultural Resources Center, Professional Papers No. 5 (Santa Fe: Division of History, Southwest Region, National Park Service, Department of the Interior, 1986), p. 57. See also the surveys of 1797 by Carlos Trudeau certifying grants of abandoned land on Bayou des Familles to Carlos Juan Bautista Fleurian and to Joseph Enoul Dugue Livaudais, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge; and Trudeau surveys for Antonio Vart, 1794, and Josef Montegut, 1796, SCD/TUL.
4. Max L. Moorhead, The Presidio: Bastion of the Spanish Borderlands (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1975), p. 76, pp. 222-42.
5. Ibid., pp. 222-24

For fuller treatment of the history of the settlement of Canary Islanders in Louisiana see Pablo Tornero Tinajero, trans. and ed. by Paul E. Hoffman, "Canarian Immigration to America: the Civil-Military Expedition to Louisiana of 1777-1779," Louisiana History, vol. 21, no. 4 (Fall, 1980), pp. 377-86; Gilbert Din, "Early Spanish Colonization Efforts in Louisiana," Louisiana Studies, vol. 11, no. 1 (Spring, 1972), pp. 31-49; Gilbert Din, "Protecting the Barrera: Spain's Defenses in Louisiana, 1763-1779," Louisiana History, vol. 19, no. 2 (Spring, 1978), pp. 183-211; and Gilbert Din, "The Canary Islander Settlements of Spanish Louisiana: An Overview," Louisiana History, vol. 27, no. 4 (Fall, 1986), pp. 353-73.

7. "Libro Maestro P. sentar el cargo del dano. de la Pob. Barataria," Archivo General de Indias, Seville, Papeles de Cuba, Legajo 548, 84-44-L, Reel 92, Microfilm copy, HNOC; Miguel Molina Martínez, "La Participacion Canaria en la Formacion y Reclutamiento del Batallon de Luisiana," in Francisco Morales Padron, ed., IV Coloquio de Historia Canario-Americana (1980), Tome II (Cabildo Insular de Gran Canaria: Ediciones del Excelentísimo, 1982), pp. 133-224; a full translation of the February 19, 1778 decree of Governor Galvez providing for the settlement of immigrants is in Louis Houck, The Spanish Regime in Missouri, vol. 1 (Chicago: R. R. Donnelly & Sons, Co., 1909), pp. 155-57.

8. The dates and description of hurricanes and floods during the period of Canary Islander settlement in Louisiana can be found in Jack D. L. Holmes, A Guide to Spanish Louisiana, 1762-1806 (New Orleans: Privately printed, 1970), p. 10, p. 11, p. 22, p. 23, p. 27; Works Progress Administration of Louisiana, "Despatches of the Spanish Governors of Louisiana," Book 2, vol. 9, "Messages of Don Bernardo de Galvez, January 1779-October 1779," pp. 59-64, and Book 3, vol. 4, "Messages of Francisco Luis Hector, El Baron de Carondelet, 1792-1797," pp. 520-531, typescript, 1937-38, SCD/TUL; and in the text on J. A. d'Hemecourt's Map of J. M. Bell's Crevasse, December 20, 1858, lithograph by J. Tolti, New Orleans, HNOC. Porteous, Succession of Andrés Juen, p. 1270; Resumen General del Padron hecho en la Provinca de la Luisiana, Distrito de la Movila y Panzacola 1788, Kuntz Collection, SCD/TUL; Letter from Juan Ventura Morales to Diego de Guardoqui, number 48, October 26, 1796, Archivo General de Indias, Seville, Papeles de Santo Domingo, Legajo 2613, folio 575.

9. Gilbert C. Din, "A History of the Isleños in Southern Louisiana to 1945," Typescript deposited with the Jean Lafitte National Historical Park (1985), pp. 24-25, p. 28; Molina Martínez, "La Participacion Canaria," p. 152, appendix pp. 159-166.



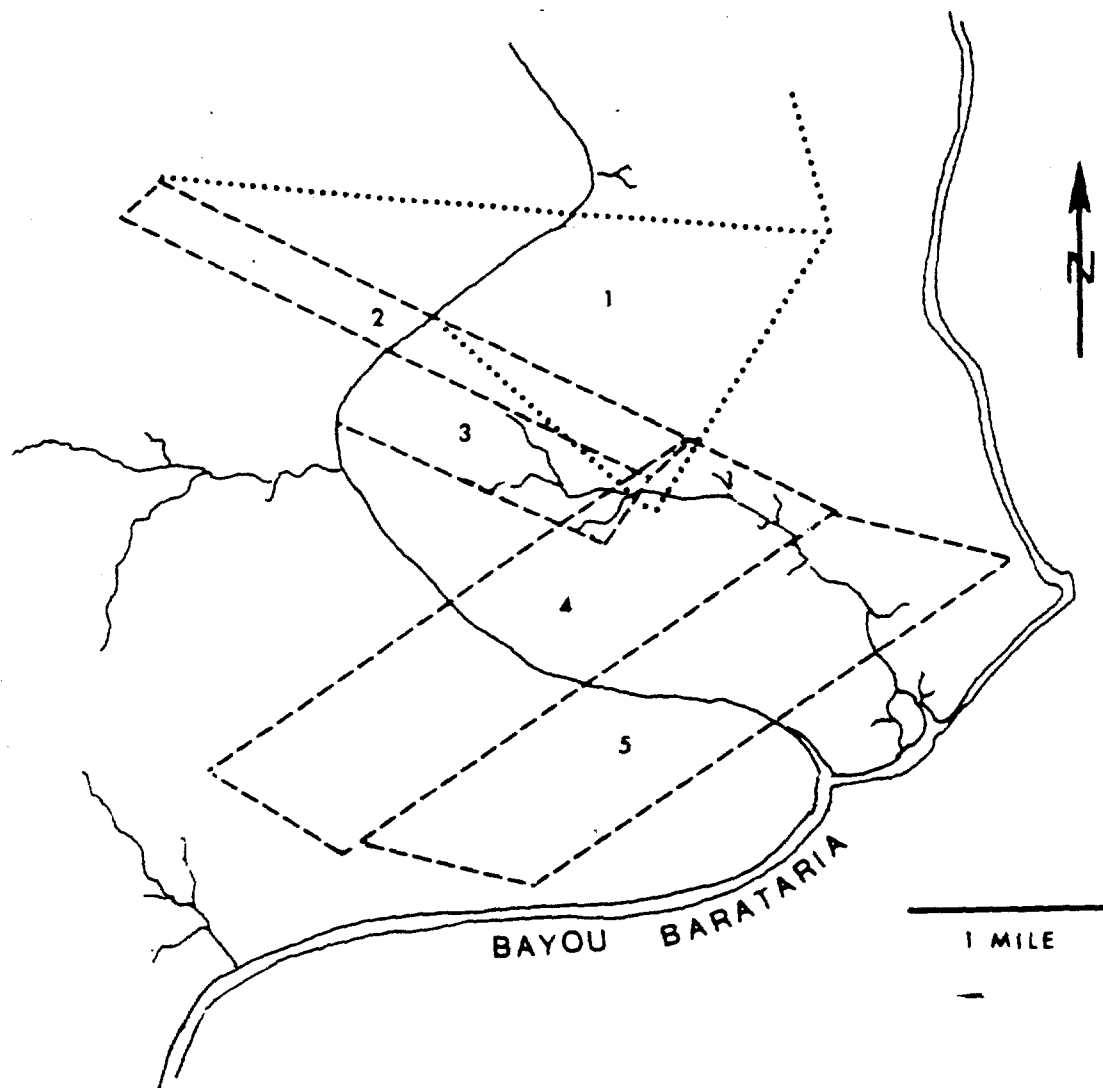
10. Din, "A History of the Isleños," p. 28; Molina Martínez, "La Participacion Canaria," p. 152, appendix pp. 167-74.
11. Din, "A History of the Isleños," p. 25, p. 28; Molina Martínez, "La Participacion Canaria," p. 152, appendix pp. 175-85
12. Din, "A History of the Isleños," p. 29; Molina Martínez, "La Participacion Canaria," p. 152, appendix pp. 186-90.
13. Din, "A History of the Isleños," p. 25, p. 29; Molina Martínez, "La Participacion Canaria," p. 152, appendix pp. 191-200.
14. Letter of Juan Ventura Morales to Martin Navarro, January 12, 1786, Archivo General de Indias, Seville, Papeles de Cuba, Luisiana 119, Legajo 606, folio 271; Porteous, Succession of Andrés Juen, p. 1270.
15. Houck, The Spanish Regime in Missouri, p. 155-57.
16. O. Garfield Jones, "Local Government in the Spanish Colonies as Provided by the Recopilación de leyes de los Reynos de las Indias," The Southwestern Historical Quarterly, vol. 19, no. 1 (July, 1915), pp. 66-69; Dan Stanislawski, "Early Spanish Town Planning in the New World," The Geographical Review, vol. 37, no. 1 (January, 1947), pp. 94-105; "Royal Ordinances Concerning the Laying Out of New Towns," The Hispanic American Historical Review, vol. 5, no. 2 (May, 1922), pp. 249-54; Richard E. Greenleaf, "Land and Water in Mexico and New Mexico 1700-1821," New Mexico Historical Review, vol. 47, no. 2 (April, 1972), pp. 85-107.
17. Ibid.
18. Marc Simmons, "Settlement Patterns and Village Plans in Colonial New Mexico," Journal of the West, vol. 8 (1969), pp. 7-21; Ralph E. Twitchell, "Spanish Colonization in New Mexico in the Oñate and De Vargas Periods," Historical Society of New Mexico, no. 22 (August, 1919), pp. 4-5.
19. Simmons, "Settlement Patterns."
20. Din, "A History of the Isleños in Southern Louisiana to 1945," pp. 33-52; Jones, "Local Government in the Spanish Colonies," pp. 68-69; Jacqueline K. Voorhies, "The Attakapas Post: The First Acadian Settlement," Louisiana History, vol. 27, no. 1 (Winter, 1976), pp. 91-96.

21. Din, "A History of the Isleños in Southern Louisiana to 1945," P. 58, p. 78.
22. William H. Cobb and John Maxwell, Deputy Surveyors, cadastral survey map of T14S-R23E, 1830, State Land Office, Baton Rouge.
23. Lauren C. Post, Cajun Sketches from the Prairies of Southwest Louisiana (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1962), p. 85.
24. See Sally Kittredge Evans, Frederick Stielow, and Betsy Swanson, Grand Isle on the Gulf - An Early History. (Metairie, Louisiana: Jefferson Parish Historical Commission, 1979), frontispiece, p. 25, p. 55, p. 59, pp. 62-66, pp. 68-69; and Swanson, Historic Jefferson Parish, p. 143, pp. 161-63, for descriptions and illustrations of later Creole cottage types in the Baratara region.
25. American State Papers. Public Lands (Washington: Gales and Seaton, 1832-1861), vol. 2, p. 333, vol. 3, p. 509, and vol. 4, p. 675.
26. Creamware was perfected in the 1760s by Josiah Wedgwood in England. It became a very popular ware and was copied by other potters. The molded relief border decorations on creamware were most common between 1765 and 1820. Several molded border types have been found at the building sites in the study area. See Ivor Noël-Hume, "The what, who, and when of English creamware plate design," Antiques, vol. 101, no. 2 (February, 1972), pp. 350-54, and Edward R. Chatelain, "Historic Ceramic," Louisiana Archaeological Society Newsletter, vol. 6, no. 2 (April, 1979), pp. 9-10.
27. Beavers, et al., "Archaeological Site Inventory," Appendix D.
28. Jack D. L. Holmes, The 1779 "Marcha de Gálvez": Louisiana's Giant Step Forward in the American Revolution (Baton Rouge: Baton Rouge Bicentennial Corporation, 1976); Works Progress Administration of Louisiana, "Despatches of the Spanish Governors of Louisiana," Book 2, vol. 9, "Messages of Don Bernardo de Galvez," pp. 59-64.
29. Thomas F. Glick, The Old World Background of the Irrigation System of San Antonio, Texas, Southwestern Studies, Monograph No. 35 (El Paso: The University of Texas at El Paso); Thomas F. Glick, Irrigation and Society in Medieval Valencia (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1970).

30. Wells A. Hutchins, "The Community Acequia: Its Origin and Development," Southwestern Historical Quarterly, vol. 31, no. 3 (January, 1928), pp. 261-84; Marc Simmons, "Spanish Irrigation Practices in New Mexico," New Mexico Historical Review, vol. 47, no. 2 (1972), pp. 135-50.

CHAPTER IV

SETTLEMENT OF THE LATE SPANISH PERIOD



#### LAND GRANTS OF THE LATE SPANISH PERIOD

1. Antonio Vart from Governor Carondelet, October 15, 1794, for 15 arpents on the upstream side; and Nicolas Domé (or Daumé or Daumais) from Governor Carondelet, August 21, 1794, for 12 arpents on the downstream side.
2. Pablo Suárez Ruiz from Governor Casa Calvo, April 2, 1800, for 7 arpents and 8 toises in front, by 40 in depth, on both sides of Bayou des Familles.
3. Domé grant in location later claimed by John McDonogh.
4. Louis Pelteau from Governor Carondelet, September 3, 1794, for 20 arpents in front, by 40 in depth, on both sides of Bayou des Familles.
5. Juan or Jean Normand from Governor Carondelet, March 20, 1794, for 20 arpents in front, by 40 in depth, on both sides of Bayou des Familles.

The Spanish government regranted the abandoned lands of the Población de Barataria in the last decade of the eighteenth century. Most of the new grants were large, comprising 20 or 40 arpents of front by 40 of depth on both sides of Bayou des Familles. The large grants were made to induce settlers to remain on the land although it contained only narrow widths of arable and grazing land that were above the level of frequent floods.

A complete record of the grants of the Spanish Period on Bayou des Familles has not been located. The chain of title breaks after many of the grants because floods again drove many grantees from their tracts and these grants were nullified by the Spanish government. Vacated lands were then granted again or were left unoccupied for years.

By the mid-nineteenth century, ownership of the tracts that had composed Spanish grants was in litigation with ownership of the crossing 10-arpent tracts subdivided from the Dauterive property in 1768. According to the court proceedings and the judgments rendered, both record and memory had been lost of the position and relationships of all the Spanish tracts. Survey records identify the positions of some of the properties. Records are unclear on the position of the tract belonging to Francisco Sánchez, a Canary Islander (see "Libro" list No. 39), and a 20-arpent tract fronting both sides of Bayou des Familles granted in 1795 by Governor Carondelet to Juan Baptista Seisan (or Saison), alias Austible. These tracts were apparently

located somewhere in the vicinity of the confluence of Bayous des Familles and Coquilles.<sup>1</sup>

Saison requested his tract for the "purpose of supporting his numerous family." He asked for 20 arpents on both sides of the bayou because the lands had "in greatest width only two arpents that are cultivatable," the rest being "continuously flooded." Saison's petition was certified by Royal Surveyor Carlos Trudeau as being part of lands vacated for 12 years by Canary Islanders who had been moved to English Turn. The record does not show if Saison actually occupied the land. He also had a plantation on the river opposite New Orleans.<sup>2</sup>

Grant tracts of the late Spanish Period that are identifiable as to position in the study area are those of Louis Pelteau, Nicolas Domé, and Pablo Suárez Ruiz. Their positions were surveyed and certified by the United States Surveyor General's Office.

#### THE LOUIS PELTEAU TRACT

Louis Pelteau received a grant of 20 arpents front by 40 arpents in depth on both sides of Bayou des Familles from Governor Carondelet in 1794. The tract lay across the southern part of the study area. The lower line is today followed by a powerline. The upper line was located about 250 feet above the Shell Road. Pelteau lived on the east bank tract and farmed the land for many years. The frame of his house was said to be still standing in 1830, but its

site has not been located.<sup>3</sup>

In his petition for the grant of the land, Pelteau said that he had been an inhabitant of Barataria for many years, and he knew two people who previously inhabited the tract of land. They had by obligation ceded the tract to him, and he had acquired their power of attorney. He therefore requested that the land be granted to him. He noted that he asked for 20 arpents of frontage "in the place which had been inhabited by the Spanish families, which has been recognized as having only two arpents that are cultivatable; the rest continuing to be inundated during part of the year and not cultivatable nor usable by animals."<sup>4</sup>

Royal Surveyor Carlos Trudeau certified that Pelteau was requesting vacant land that was "part of the lands which were abandoned about 12 years ago by the families that came from the Canary Islands. These families immigrated to the settlement of St. Bernard at English Turn where they were given land which was much more conducive to their mode of life." Governor Carondelet signed the grant with the conditions that public use of the Barataria Road continue unencumbered and that the land be developed within one year.<sup>5</sup>

The heirs of Louis Pelteau, who spelled their name Peltot, sold the tract to John McDonogh in 1829. That portion of the east bank Pelteau tract located between the natural levee and the bayou later became part of the Christmas Plantation sugarcane fields. A part of the area subsequently was planted with pecan orchard. The portion of the

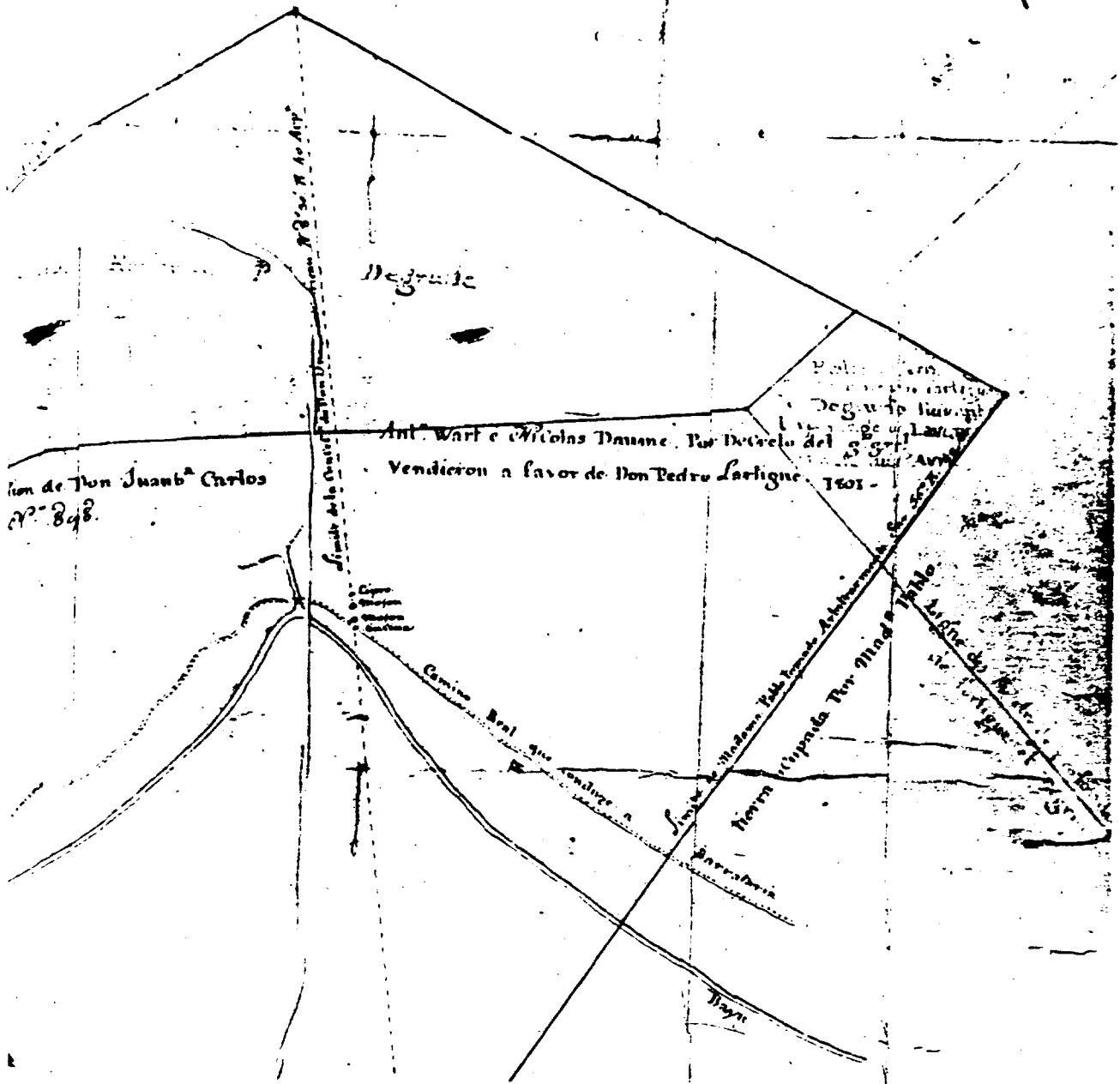


tract that lies on the east side of the former Christmas property is relatively undisturbed and may contain artifacts and sites associated with Pelteau's occupation. The area most likely to contain cultural material and building sites from Pelteau's ownership would be a two-arpent width at the crest of the natural levee, since this was the area stated by Pelteau to be above flood level.<sup>6</sup>

#### THE NICOLAS DOMÉ (DAUMÉ) TRACT

On August 21, 1794, Governor Carondelet granted Nicolas Domé a tract of land measuring 12 arpents front on the east bank of Bayou des Familles by 40 arpents in depth. Noël Jourdan purchased the tract from Domé, and Jourdan sold it to John McDonogh on May 30, 1833 by private act of sale in St. James Parish. The United States Surveyor General's Office certified McDonogh's claim based on the acquisitions from Jourdan and Domé as located between the Pelteau and Suárez tracts. The tract became part of McDonogh's holding in Section 57 of T15S-R23E.<sup>7</sup>

There is, however, confusion as to the location of the Domé tract in the public records. It may have been located in a more northerly position along the bayou and outside of the study area. The 12-arpent-front by 40-arpent-deep Domé tract was also certified by the Surveyor General's Office as part of the claims of Dominique Bouligny and Marie Joseph Rochejean. The claim of Marie Dauberville, widow Bouligny, for the former Suárez tract locates the Domé, or



Carlos Trudeau, "Plano Figurativo de las tierras de Don Pedro Lartigue," November 29, 1802, copy by Barthelemy Lafon, January 16, 1806, Plan Book 106, folio 28, NONA. Detail showing the overlapping claims of Lartigue and Jean-Baptiste De Gruys (Degruise), and the "land occupied by" the widow of Pablo Suarez.



Daumé, tract on the north side of the Suárez tract. The land of Nicolas Daumé is shown on the north side of the Suárez tract on the Barthélemy Lafon copy of Carlos Trudeau's "Plano Figurativo de las Tierras de Don Pedro Lartique" of November 29, 1802.<sup>8</sup>

Four possible Spanish colonial building sites have been located on the Domé tract certified to John McDonogh. These are Sites No. 1 through No. 4. One of these is on the Domé-Suárez property line. Another site is located on the west bank of the bayou opposite a projection of the lower Domé grant line and immediately above it. This site could have been an approach to a bridge crossing.

There are few signs of cultivation in the Domé tract. It is one of the least disturbed parts of the study area and may contain much archaeological material.

#### THE PABLO SUÁREZ RUIZ TRACT

Pablo Suárez Ruiz, a Canary Islander, received a land grant consisting of seven arpents fronting both sides of Bayou des Familles by forty arpents in depth, from Spanish Governor Casa Calvo on April 2, 1800. Located in T15S-R23E, the Suárez tract consisted of Sections 3 and 38, and part of Section 1 which lies outside of the park boundaries. Records suggest that the grant confirmed an earlier grant and that Suárez had been occupying the land since he arrived in Louisiana with his wife, María Olivares, and four-year-old son Juan, in 1779.<sup>9</sup>

Both Suárez and his son died, but his widow continued to live on the property until her death in 1807. Records of the early American Period indicate that, of the several hundred Canary Islanders originally settled in Barataria by the Spanish, María Olivares represented the sole Isleño inhabitant remaining in Barataria.<sup>10</sup>

Army recruit Pablo Suárez Ruiz, his wife Maria Olivares, and their son, Juan, aged four years, sailed from Santa Cruz de Tenerife on the frigate San Ignacio de Loyola on October 29, 1778. They were established in Barataria by March 1779, and they were repeatedly reestablished there after hurricanes and floods.<sup>11</sup>

Among the supplies given to them by the Spanish government between 1779 and 1782 were bolts of cloth and spools of thread, shawls and blankets, a cauldron or kettle, two axes, four spades or hoes, a scythe or sickle (un calabozo), a rifle, "a knife with two handles," an iron shovel, a mosquito net, eight shirts, five pairs of breeches, a woolen cloak, seven pesos "to buy shoes and other things," and barrels of rice and corn.<sup>12</sup>

Pablo Suárez Ruiz and his son Juan both died. His widow María Olivares remarried José Gálvez, a native of Cartagena. He also died, in 1802. María Olivares, or Madame Pablo as she sometimes continued to be called in official documents, remained on her Barataria property until her death in 1807.<sup>13</sup>

In her will, María Olivares left her property to Marie

Dauberville, widow of Francisco Bouligny, and their son, Luis Bouligny. The rear of a large plantation owned by another son, Domingo, that fronted on the Mississippi River adjoined the upper side of the Suárez tract. In fact, the position of these property lines was in dispute in the early 19th century, and when the dispute was settled, the Bouligny line was drawn across the eastern Suárez tract. The protection levee and the northern park boundary line follow the Bouligny property line as it crosses the former property and creates the upper boundary of Section 38.<sup>14</sup>

In the early 1800s, Luis Bouligny operated a dairy farm on the rear portions of Domingo's plantation, adjacent to the Suárez tract. Luis Bouligny did not live in Barataria, but visited the dairy every week. To reach the dairy, he traveled by means of the canal that had been dug by Dubreuil to Bayou Barataria and then followed the old Barataria Road on the east side of Bayou des Familles. Following this route, he passed on the road through the property of widow Suárez each week. He and his mother apparently befriended the lone surviving woman of the Canary Islander settlement, in the last years of her life.<sup>15</sup>

The will of María Olivares and the subsequent inventory of her estate describe her valuables. On her property were a "principal cabin" and three little Negro cabins, a dairy creamery, and a chicken house. Equipment on the property included six cauldrons (chaudieres), a cross-cut saw, one large iron grate and two smaller ones, an evaporating pan

or a wide deep pan (une bassine), two candle moulds, an implement or object used for wheat (illegible, perhaps a flour mill), and other items illegibly written. All the equipment was said to be in bad condition and was evaluated together at 30 piastres.<sup>16</sup>

Domestic articles included a cypress armoire, and old wooden chest, a bed furnished with three mattresses and a mosquito net, five spoons, ten plates, a dish, a coffee pot, a water pot, a soup tureen, five shallow bowls, two barrels of maiz (shelled corn), one barrel of rice, one barrel of wheat, and one Dame Jeanne de tafia (demijohn of rum).<sup>17</sup>

María Olivares had two slaves, a 55 year old Negro man named Bautista, and a 35 year old Negro woman named María. Since three Negro cabins were inventoried as standing on the property, there must have formerly been more slaves attached to the property. In her will, María Olivares gave her slave María her freedom.<sup>18</sup>

The farm animals consisted of 48 cows, 6 horses, 28 goats, 4 pigs and 25 chickens. The entire estate of María Olivares was evaluated at 2,014 piastres.<sup>19</sup>

Soon after the property of María Olivares was willed to them, Luis Bouligny and his mother, Marie Dauberville Bouligny, partitioned it. Luis became owner of the land of the left (east) side of the bayou "with the establishments found there," and his mother became owner of the right (west) bank land with some moveable objects and the slave Bautista. Thus, the Suárez buildings seem to have been

located on the east side of the bayou. The only building site located in the Suárez tract is Site No. 1 which straddles the lower Suárez boundary line. Other sites undoubtedly exist.<sup>20</sup>

Signs of cultivation have not been noticed on the east side of the bayou. Much of the arable land on the east bank Suárez property is located in the filled channel of the old des Familles-Barataria river distributary which was washed by frequent floods. Agricultural features may have been obliterated. By the time of María Olivares' death, it appears that the east bank tract was used largely for the pasture of numerous animals. At that time, the back levee lands on the east bank Suárez tract were forested. An 1816 survey plan of the property by Barthélemy Lafon labels the land east of the Barataria Road as "high wooded land." Inundated cypress swamp covers this land today.<sup>21</sup>

A notable feature of the east bank Suárez tract is a great quantity of slag, with some pieces of unburnt coal, at the edge of the swamp near the bayou. Thousands of pieces of slag are scattered over an area about 200 feet wide, about 350 feet southwest of the protection levee. The slag deposits are about two feet deep. In some places they cover Indian shell middens. Large oak trees grow on the slag deposits.

The Lafon map shows the rear half of the west bank Suárez property as cypress swamp and marsh. Since this side of the bayou was a cut bank of the river, the elevated



natural levee is situated near the bayou. On the natural levee are agricultural features that conform with the compass directions of the Suárez property lines, running south 64 degrees east. These features consist of ditches, furrows, a canal, and a road bed. The first feature encountered to the south of the protection levee, near the levee and angling toward the levee at the bayou, is the ditch that formerly marked the upper Suárez boundary. It is silted-in, and is less than one foot deep and six feet wide. Large oak trees grow on the sides of this ditch, and partially within the ditch. At about every hundred feet are smaller ditches, running in the same direction. Between them are the slight remnants of numerous parallel furrows.<sup>22</sup>

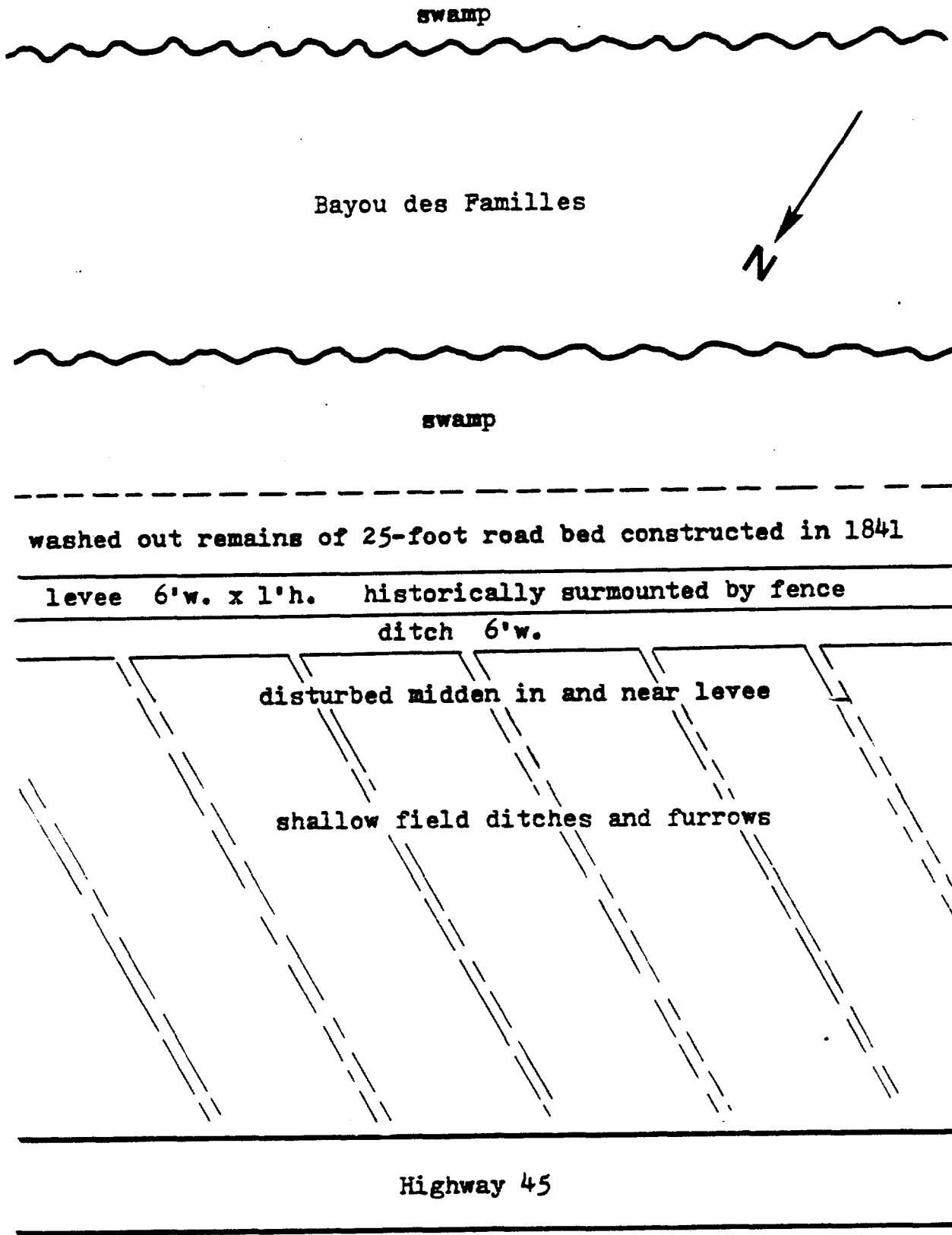
At about 790 feet southwest of the National Park Service boundary line at the termination of the protection levee and Highway 45 is a large and deep canal which also runs in the same direction as the Suárez property lines. The canal is about 15 feet wide and runs into Bayou des Familles. It has levees on either side that are about 10 feet wide at the base and rise about 4 feet above the level of the water in the canal. The canal comes to a sudden end about 200 feet eastward of Highway 45. What appears to be a road bed runs westward from the termination of the canal, in the same direction as the Suárez property lines. It is about 15 feet wide and is bordered by small ditches and bermes. This road bed and a bordering ditch continue

westward through the Suárez tract on the west side of Highway 45. The pattern of ditches and furrows also continues on the west side of the highway.

About 30 feet southeast of the end of the canal, at the base of an oak tree, is a scattering of coal, slag and clam shell. It may be notable that this site containing coal and slag is located on the opposite side of the bayou from the large slag and coal deposit described above.

At the edge of the swamp bordering Bayou des Familles is a ditch/levee/road system that parallels the bayou and runs perpendicular to the other agricultural features. Beside the swamp is a 10-foot-wide, slightly elevated strip which is washed out in places. This is the remains of a 25-foot-wide road bed built in 1841 by Louis Chauvin Delery de Boisclair under contract for the Jefferson Parish Police Jury. Adjacent to the possible road bed is a levee measuring about six feet wide at the base and about one foot high. Between the levee and the ditches and furrows of the field is a shallow ditch about six feet wide. The ditches of the field empty into this ditch. The levee, which originally would have been much higher, served to prevent overflow from the bayou into the field in times of high water. The ditch that delineates the 1768 property division, previously described, is incorporated into the field ditch system even though it runs at a different angle.<sup>23</sup>

Also running perpendicular to the other agricultural features are two small levees or bermes, about nine feet



Schematic of the road/levee/ditch system on the west bank Suarez tract. Not to scale.

wide at the base and about two feet high, running in a northeast-southwest direction between Highway 45 and the canal. One of these nears the highway 355 feet southward along the east side of the curve of the highway from the National Park Service boundary marker at the projection levee. The bermes are spaced about 40 feet apart and may represent the edges of a road bed. However, the bermes may be agricultural features, such as rice irrigation levees; they may have been raised against overflow of the bayou; or they may have served some other purpose.

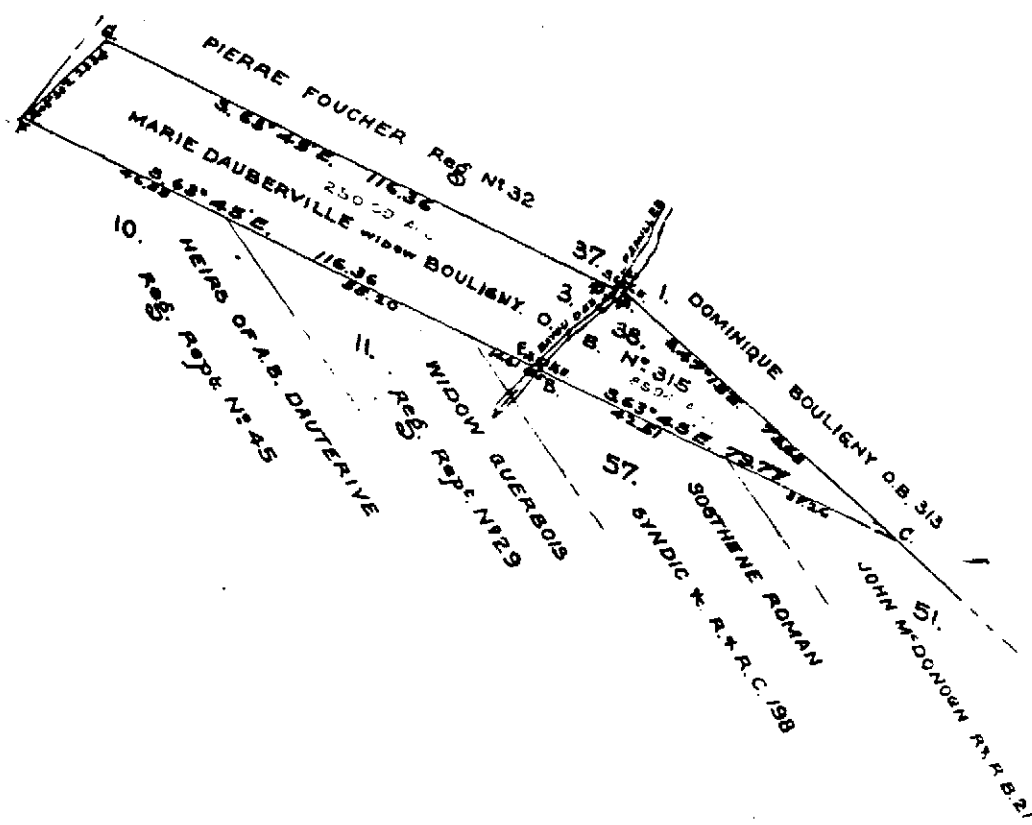
If the west bank of the Suárez tract was used again for agriculture at a later date, after the tract was absorbed into larger properties, the Canary Islander's field system may have been reused because the ditches and furrows follow the compass direction of the Suárez boundary lines. However, these boundary lines may not run in the same direction as those of the original Canary Islander tracts.

The 1855 field notes of United States Deputy Surveyor Maurice Hauké describe a fenced field on the west bank tract. The notes do not specify if the field was in cultivation or if it was an old fallow field.<sup>24</sup>

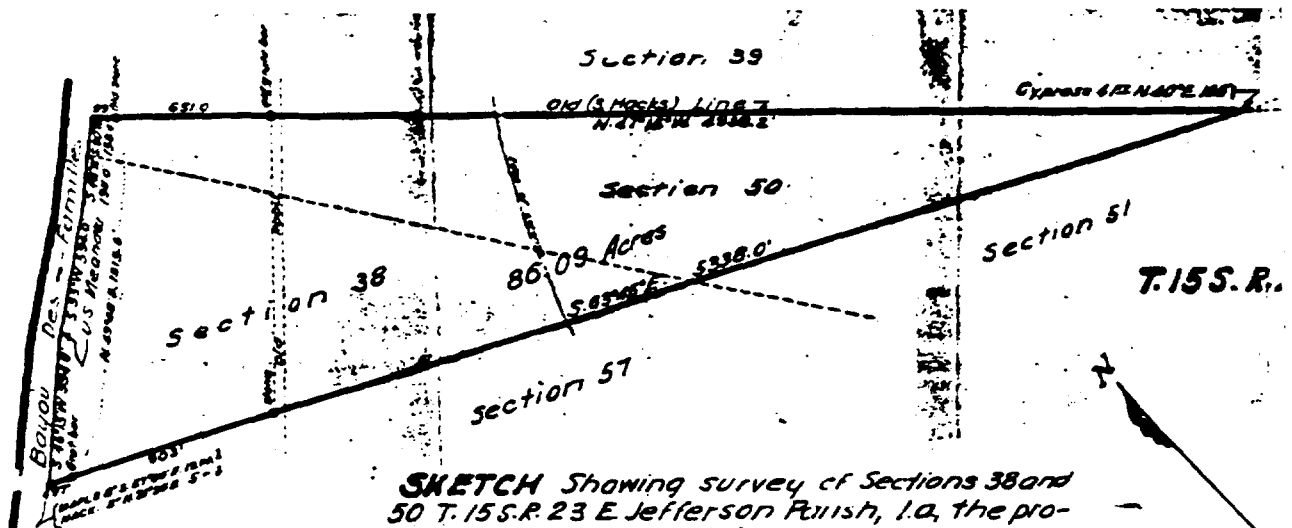
The 1855 survey also recorded the position of a bridge crossing Bayou des Familles on the Suárez tract. According to the survey field notes, the bridge was located 356 feet down the bayou from the upper corner of the left bank Suárez tract. At this position, a spit of mushy ground projects into the bayou, and a similar spit exists on the

opposite bank. Cypress trees grow on these spits and also in a line across the bayou between the spits. The spits appear to align with the compass direction of the upper and lower Suárez property lines. A probe located a brick bridge support at the end of the left bank spit. The foundation is submerged about one foot beneath the muck at the edge of the water. It measures about four feet by about fifteen feet. What appears to be the end of an old cypress board projects from the ground about 20 feet back from the brick foundation. Traces of roadways leading to the bridge have not been noticed, but these may exist.<sup>25</sup>

Archival documentation has yet to specify that the Suárez property was inhabited or farmed following Suárez ownership. The record shows that the land was used for logging and cattle grazing until acquisition by the National Park Service.



Survey plat of the private land claim of Marie Dauberville,  
 widow Bouigny, field survey by Maurice Hauke, 1855. Bureau  
 of Land Management, Eastern States Office, Reston, Virginia.



**SKETCH** Showing survey of Sections 38 and 50 T. 15 S. R. 23 E. Jefferson Parish, La., the property of Crescent Bed Company Inc. New Orleans, La. Dec. 11<sup>th</sup> 1941

*H. E. Landry*  
 H. E. Landry  
 U.S. MEADOW 1930 1937

Scale 1" = 400'

H. E. Landry, "Sketch Showing Survey of Sections 38 and 50 T. 15 S. R. 23 E. Jefferson Parish, La., the property of Crescent Bed Company Inc., New Orleans, December 11, 1941, copy in Land Acquisition Office, Southwest Regional Office, National Park Service, Santa Fe.





## ENDNOTES

## SETTLEMENT OF THE LATE SPANISH PERIOD

1. McDonogh v. De Gruys et al., Docket No. 1007, June 2, 1845, LSCC/UNO.
2. Ibid., pp. 108-09; Porteous, "Succession of Andrès Juen," P. 1267.
3. American State Papers. Public Lands, vol. 6, p. 675; McDonogh v. De Gruys et al., Docket No. 1007, pp. 95-97; Letter to William H. Cobb from John McDonogh, July 3, 1830, John McDonogh Collection, Box 8, folder 5, SCD/TUL.
4. A copy of the Pelteau grant is attached to Thomas Durnford vs. Marigny D'Auterive and Sosthene Roman, Syndic of Jean-Baptiste Degruy, filed March 23, 1819, 1st Judicial District Court, Docket No. 2266, Jefferson Parish Old Judicial Records, Gretna.
5. Ibid.
6. Sale of land, Heirs of Louis Pelteau to John McDonogh, May 5, 1829, L. T. Caire, notary, NONA.
7. American State Papers. Public Lands, vol. 6, p. 675.
8. Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 335-36; Fern Ainsworth, Private Land Claims, Louisiana (Natchitoches, Louisiana: Privately printed, n.d.), p. 61, p. 63; Carlos Trudeau, "Plano Figurativo de las tierras de don Pedro Lartigue," November 29, 1802, copy by Barthelemy Lafon, January 16, 1806, Plan Book 106, folio 28, NONA.
9. American State Papers. Public Lands, vol. 3, p. 509, and vol. 2, p. 333; see also the list of Canary Islanders settled in Barataria taken from the "Libro Maestro," folio 8.
10. Will of María Olivares, February 5, 1806, N. Broutin, notary, Book 12, NONA; Inventory of the Estate of María Olivares, May 11, 1807, Louisiana Court of Probate, Orleans Parish, Succession and probate records: 1805-1848, Louisiana Division, New Orleans Public Library; testimony of Louis Bouligny in McDonogh v. De Gruys et al., Docket No. 1007, June 2, 1845, LSCC/UNO.

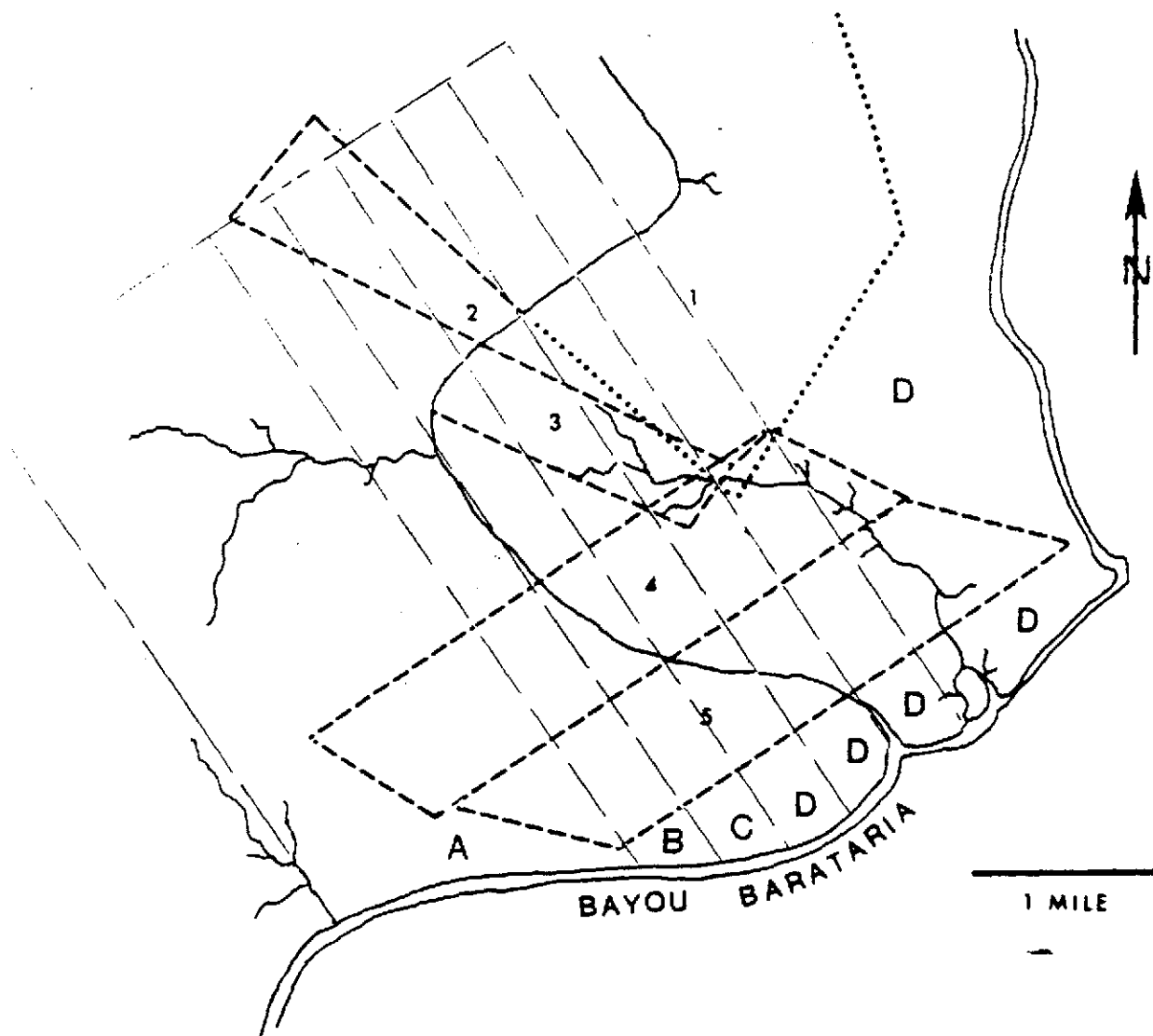
11. "Libro Maestro," folio 8.
12. Ibid.
13. Will of María Olivares; Will of José Gálvez, November 4, 1802, N. Broutin, notary, NONA.
14. Will of María Olivares; Carlos Trudeau, "Plano Figurativo de las tierras de Don Pedro Lartigue," November 29, 1802, copy by Barthelemy Lafon, January 16, 1806, Plan Book 106, folio 28, NONA; United States Surveyor General's Office's Cadastral survey map of T15S-R23E, resurveyed by Maurice Hauké, Deputy Surveyor, in the second quarter of 1855, Bureau of Land Management, Eastern States Office, Reston, Virginia; American State Papers. Public Lands, Claim of Dominique Bouligny, vol 2, pp. 335-36, and vol. 3, p. 512.
15. McDonogh v. De Gruys et al., Docket No. 1007, testimony of Louis Bouligny.
16. Will of María Olivares; Inventory of the estate of María Olivares.
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid.
20. Acknowledgment by Louis Bouligny of sale of land to Leon Dauphin, T. Seghers, notary, June 30, 1834, NONA.
21. Ibid., the Lafon survey map of 1816 is attached to this act.
22. Ibid.
23. The field notes of Maurice Hauké, Deputy Surveyor, 1855, precisely identify the placement of the 1841 road bed, Private Land Claim of Marie Dauberville, widow Bouligny, Bureau of Land Management, Eastern States Office, Reston, Virginia.
24. Ibid.
25. Ibid.

CHAPTER V

TERRE HAUTE DE BARATARIA - THE EARLY AMERICAN PERIOD



"Plan Del Local De las tierras que Rodean la Ciudad de Nueva Orleans," June 1, 1803, traced from original in Howard Library (now in Historic New Orleans Collection) for Works Progress Administration Soil and Foundation Survey, F. S. Porter, draughtsman, June, 1936, State Land Office, Baton Rouge. Detail showing study area and environs.



LAND OWNERSHIP AT THE BEGINNING OF THE AMERICAN PERIOD

1. Domingo Bouligny and Luis Bouligny.
  2. María Olivares, widow of both Pablo Suárez Ruiz and José Gálvez.
  3. Noël Jourdan (according to a later land claim by John McDonogh).
  4. Louis Pelteau.
  5. Jean Joseph Jourdan.
- 
- A. Heirs of Jean Antoine Bernard Dauterive.
  - B. Antoine Marigny Dauterive.
  - C. Alexandre Guerbois.
  - D. Jean-Baptiste Degruy.

By the early nineteenth century, the area bordering Bayou des Familles near its confluence with Bayou Barataria was known by the name of Terre Haute de Barataria (High Land of Barataria). It had become so-called despite the frequent flooding of Bayou des Familles which drove most settlers from the land. Most of the area was wilderness, but a few farms and ranches were located on the bayous.<sup>1</sup>

Several of the Spanish land grantees discussed in the preceding chapter continued to reside on their lands in the early American Period. The family of Canary Islander Franciso Sánchez remained on the bayou, as did the twice-widowed María Olivares and her slaves. The location of the Sánchez grant has yet to be documented, but the property of María Olivares, which was the Pablo Suárez Ruiz grant, included Sections 3 and 38 in T15S R23E and lay at the north end of the study area.<sup>2</sup>

As previously noted, María Olivares willed her property to Luis Bouligny and his mother, Marie Dauberville Bouligny in 1807. Luis acquired the east bank portion of the tract (Section 38) which adjoined the south side of a dairy farm he operated at the lower end of his brother Domingo's plantation. Madame Bouligny, wife of Francisco Bouligny, acquired the west bank tract (Section 3).

Luis Bouligny probably used the east bank parcel to enlarge his adjacent dairy farm. In 1813 or 1814, he sold

this parcel to Léon Dauphin, a free-man-of-color. Dauphin sold the tract in 1815 to Pierre Foucher, who also acquired the west bank tract that had belonged to Marie Dauberville, Widow Bouligny, and had passed to her son Luis. However, the property that Foucher acquired did not entirely cover the same area as the Canary Islander tract. The lower Foucher property line conformed with the lower Suárez line, but the upper Foucher line closed at a point on the east bank and opened in a fan-shape on the west bank, as shown on a Lafon survey map of 1816. The Foucher tract included Sections 38, 3 and 37, in T15S R23E and Section 101 in T14S R23E. The change in the shape of the property resulted from the adjustment of the Bouligny-Suárez boundary line upon which the protection levee runs today.<sup>3</sup>

Pierre Foucher owned another larger tract of land further up Bayou des Familles on the right bank, and he also owned other properties. His principal plantation was located on the east bank of the Mississippi River, in what is now Audubon Park in uptown New Orleans. He did not live in Barataria but may have had his Barataria property under cultivation or put it to other use. Foucher was the last proprietor to own both the east and west bank Suárez tracts who was likely to have used the land for agriculture or erected buildings on it. The previously described bridge crossing that connects the two tracts is not likely to post-date Foucher ownership. For the same reason, the slag

and coal previously described as lying on both sides of the bayou may not post-date Foucher ownership. Foucher's heirs sold the west bank tract to John McDonogh in 1835, and the east bank tract to John Hutchinson who purchased the property for John McDonogh in 1837. Records indicate that McDonogh did not use the land, although he could have leased it or had a caretaker there.<sup>4</sup>

Documentation also indicates that Louis Pelteau and his family were still living on their Spanish grant of 1794. As described in the preceding chapter, the tract lay across the southern part of the study area. In about 1807 or 1809, Pelteau was working on the adjoining plantation of Jean-Baptiste Degruy, making fences, carting shells for making lime, and taking care of the cattle.<sup>5</sup>

According to John McDonogh, Pelteau lived on his land grant "for many years" and the frame of his house was still standing in 1830. Louis Pelteau's children, Bernard, Marie Phrosine, (wife of Manuel Perrin), Jacques, and Charles, spelled their name Peltot, and only Bernard knew how to write. In 1829, they sold the tract of land that they had inherited from their father to John McDonogh who held the land for decades without using it.<sup>6</sup>

Adjoining the south side of the Pelteau land grant and the present-day park and study area boundary line, was the farm of Jean Joseph Jourdan. He had purchased the land in 1800 from Juan or Jean Normand who received the Spanish



grant of 20 by 40 arpents on both sides of Bayou des Familles in 1794.<sup>7</sup>

Jean Joseph Jourdan was a Master Baker who lived in New Orleans. According to Luis Bouligny, who often stayed at Jourdan's house when he visited his dairy in the early 1800s, Jourdan was a rich man "who liked the life of the woods and slept there often." Bouligny said he was "almost certain that Jourdan's wife never went to Barataria." Jourdan had "a cabin which had been built for some considerable time [in] a clearing which must have been made some time before" on the east bank of the bayou. He kept cattle on the land and had several Negroes there who cultivated corn and rice and raised poultry. Some years later, Jourdan had a man named Maurice living on the place, cultivating it and raising cattle.<sup>8</sup>

Jean Joseph Jourdan was also a receiver of the prizes of privateering ships that sailed under the same flag as that flown by Jean Lafitte, the flag of Cartagena. Jourdan's Barataria property may have been used for contraband operations. Jourdan sold the property to John McDonogh in 1829, by which time Jourdan had established a sugar plantation in St. James Parish.<sup>9</sup>

John McDonogh also purchased a tract of land in the study area owned by Jourdan's son, Noël, in 1833. The 12-by-40 arpent tract was situated on the east bank of Bayou des Familles below the Suárez tract. Noël Jourdan is supposed to have acquired it from the Spanish land grantee

Nicolas Daumé (also spelled Domé and Daumais) who received such a tract in 1794. However, as stated in the preceding chapter, most public records place the Daumé property on the north side of the Suárez tract adjoining the property of Antonio Vart. Nicolas Daumais' property was specified as lying on the south side of the 15-arpent tract which Governor Carondelet granted to Vart as a vaqueria, or cattle ranch, and farm in 1794. Thus, the Daumais tract would seem to have lain immediately north of the park boundary at the protection levee. Barthelemy Lafon's 1806 copy of Carlos Trudeau's map of 1802, "Plano Figurativo de las tierras de Don Pedro Lartigue," shows that Nicolas Daumé or Domé and Antonio Wart [sic] together had 1670 superficial arpents on the north side of Madame Pablo Suárez, but that the Wart-Daumé property had been purchased by Don Pedro Lartigue at public auction.<sup>10</sup>

The actual location of the Daumé tracts, Noël Jourdan's acquisition of the tract, and John McDonogh's land transaction with Noël Jourdan are, therefore, all questionable matters. However, the Nicholas Daumé-Noël Jourdan tract is well defined by linear tree lines in aerial photographs, precisely as drawn on nineteenth century cadastral survey maps of the United States Surveyor General's Office.

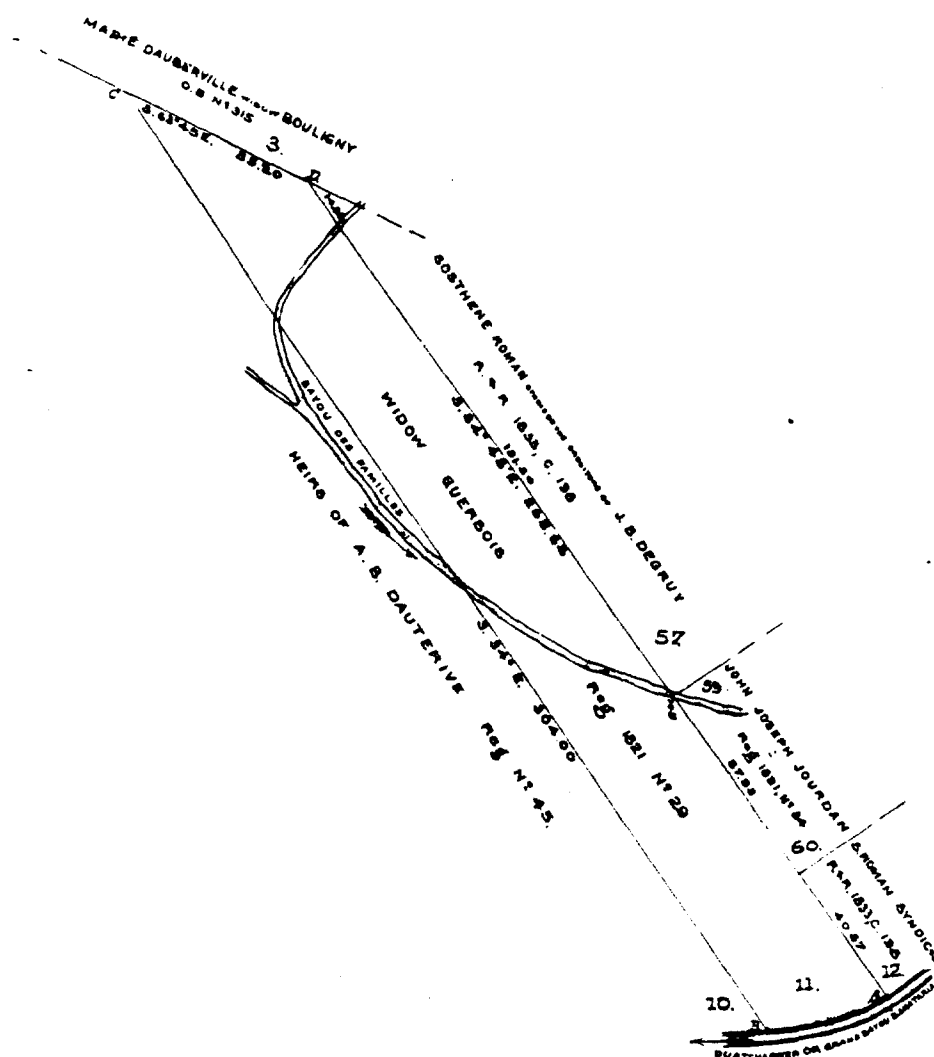
As explained in the previous chapter, four possible Spanish colonial building sites have been located on this property, and another site is located on the opposite side of the bayou near the lower Daumé grant line. There may

have been a bridge crossing at this site, and it is possible that the nearby "Pole Bridge" site was associated with this tract of land. (See Item B in Chapter VIII, "Roads of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century," see also description in section entitled "Cultural Features dating from the Post Plantation Period to World War II," Chapter X).

If Noël Jourdan did acquire and occupy the tract, he may have used it for cattle grazing and, like his father, for recreational purposes. There are few signs of agricultural activity on the tract, and many old live oaks are located there. Archeological investigations may help to clarify the history of occupation and use of this tract.

John McDonogh apparently did not use the land, and although the property lines are still shown on some modern land title maps, the tract ceased to exist as a separate legal land holding soon after McDonogh's acquisition. Most of the tract was absorbed by other, crossing tracts acquired by McDonogh and these were reassembled to form part of the sections shown as 57 and 51 on modern quadrangle maps. That portion of the tract near the bayou which crossed Section 11 was not certified to McDonogh by the federal government because it was superseded by the earlier land claim of the Widow Guerbois.

In the early 1800s, Alexandre Guerbois and his wife Elizabeth Trepagnier lived on their 10-arpent strip of land facing Bayou Barataria which was one of the property



Survey plat of the private land claim of Widow Guerbois, field survey by Maurice Hauké, 1855. Bureau of Land Management, Eastern States Office, Reston, Virginia.

divisions made by Jean Antoine Bernard Dauterive in 1768. As explained earlier, much of the 110-arpent depth of the Guerbois tract was repeatedly regranted during the Spanish Period as part of the crosswise tracts fronting Bayou des Familles. By 1808, Alexandre Guerbois had died, and his widow had inherited the property. By that time, she was living with her daughter Marie Elizabeth Eulalie Gerbois and her son-in-law Pierre Denis de la Ronde on their plantation on the Mississippi River below New Orleans. In that year, she employed Barthelemy Lafon to survey the Barataria property. According to the survey, most of the land was wooded, and none of it was still in cultivation.<sup>11</sup>

The widow Guerbois and her daughter and son-in-law attempted to sell the land for more than a quarter of a century. During that time, the land was sold many times, but it was always returned to the original owners, probably because the title was clouded by crossing properties. The following sales transpired before the family was able to divest itself of the property:

May 5, 1808 - Pierre Denis de la Ronde, representing his wife, Eulalia Guerbois, to Joseph Soniat Dufossat, (Stephen de Quinones, notary, NONA).

June 4, 1808 - Joseph Soniat Dufossat to Elizabeth Trepagnier, widow Guerbois, (Stephen de Quinones, notary, NONA).

October 13, 1809 - Widow Guerbois to Jean-Baptiste De Gruy, (Stephen de Quinones, notary, NONA).

October 11, 1813 - above sale cancelled as result of bankruptcy of De Gruy, (First Judicial District Court, Case No. 263).

October 20, 1821 - Widow Guerbois to Pierre Denis de la Ronde, (Christoval de Armas, notary, NONA).

July 30, 1835 - Pierre Denis de la Ronde to Allou d'Hémécourt, (Octave de Armos, notary, NONA).

Allou d'Hémécourt, a surveyor who lived in New Orleans, had two months earlier acquired the 10-by-110 arpent tract adjoining the west side of the Guerbois tract. With d'Hémécourt's acquisitions in 1835, the two tracts became joined and remained so throughout subsequent title exchanges. D'Hémécourt sold the combined tracts to François Valcour Volant Labarre and his brother Joseph Nelson Volant Labarre in 1846.<sup>12</sup>

The Labarre brothers were pioneers in the development of the town of Gretna, which had been laid out on the west bank of the river opposite New Orleans in 1835 and 1838. They owned a large brickyard and a steam sawmill in the vicinity of the new village, and they exported lumber and brick to Gulf Coast cities. They may have used the Barataria property for its timber resources. The property had been acquired with right-of-way on the Gardere Canal, which joined the river near Gretna, and timber could be transported on the canal.<sup>13</sup>

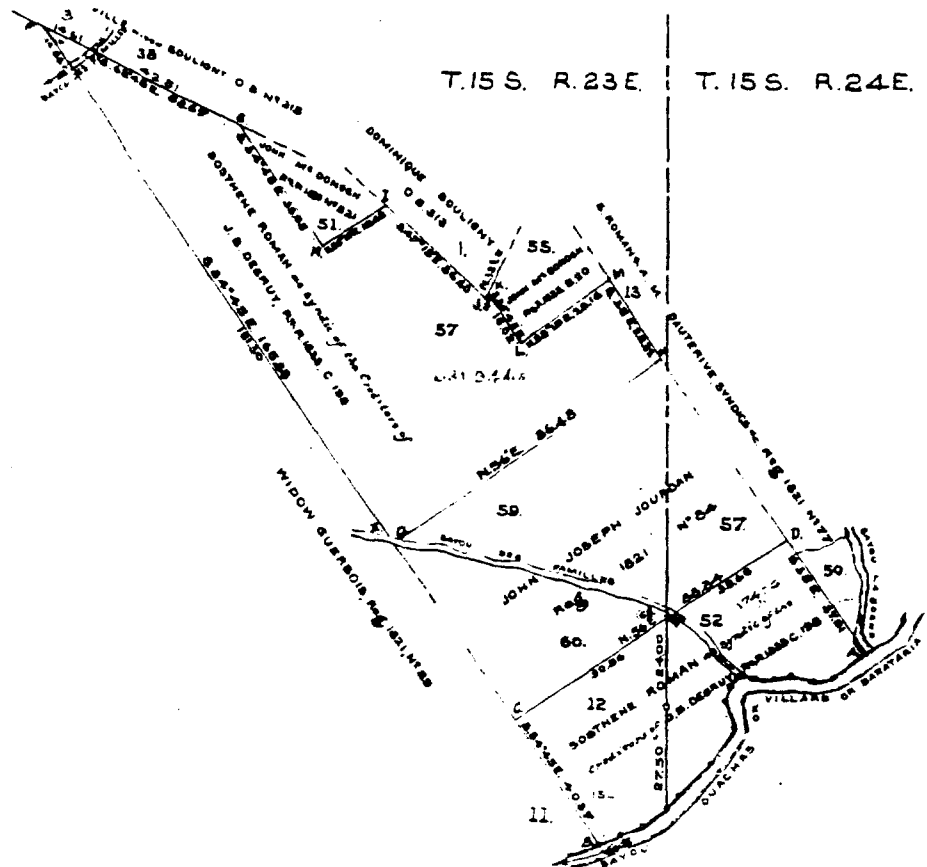
According to a court deposition made by Nelson Labarre and Francois Volant Labarre in 1848, the Barataria property contained "improvements" valued at \$10,000. Most buildings and other improvements were probably located on the 20-arpent frontage facing Bayou Barataria.<sup>14</sup>

The title to the property was in litigation because of the claims of owners of crossing Spanish land grants. In 1854, the d'Hémécourt-Labarre sale was annulled. In 1860, Allou d'Hémécourt sold the tract to Valerie Vicknair.<sup>15</sup>

Vicknair lived on the property, cultivated a small crop, and cut firewood for sale. He probably occupied the Bayou Barataria frontage but may have logged much of the tract. According to a mortgage agreement of 1865, Vicknair had 800 cords of wood stacked on the property. In that year, he sold the property to Marie Julie Gabrielle Lemoine, widow of Pierre Rochefort. As discussed in the following chapter, Mrs. Rochefort subdivided the property and sold that part of the tract that lies within the study area to Pierre Ernest Beauvais and Rufus King Cutler who established upon it the Christmas Plantation.<sup>16</sup>

Parts of the three eastern 10-by-110-arpent strips divided by Bernard Dauterive in 1768 were acquired in the late Spanish Period by Jean-Baptiste Degruy (variously spelled De Gruys, De Gruy, Degruise, Degruis; he signed his name Degruy). In 1800, he purchased the 10-arpent strip acquired in 1774 by Antoine Boudousquié by an act of partition with Alexandre Guerbois. The property was sold with a depth of only 100 feet so as to exclude the Spanish grant to Pablo Suárez Ruiz which crossed the back end of the Boudousquié tract."<sup>17</sup>

Degruy claimed the two 10-arpent Dauterive strips that lay most easternly and straddled the mouth of Bayou des



Survey plat of the private land claim of Sosthene Roman, syndic of the creditors of Jean-Baptiste Degruy, field survey by Maurice Hauke, 1855. Bureau of Land Management, Eastern States Office, Reston, Virginia.



Familles, as descending to him from two concessions, that of Bernard Dauterive and that of Franciso Bouligny. In 1792, Degruy, in partnership with François Mayronne, purchased from Bouligny a plantation situated on the west bank of the Mississippi River that had originally belonged to Claude Joseph Villars Dubreuil and upon which was located the canal that Dubreuil had dug to Barataria. In 1789, Bouligny had obtained from Spanish Governor Estevan Miro an "order of survey" granting him the lands behind his plantation that bordered the canal and Bayou Barataria for several leagues. The acquisition of the plantation by Degruy and Mayronne included all the lands and rights given to Bouligny.<sup>18</sup>

It is possible that Francisco Bouligny, who was a notable figure of the Spanish Period, used the lands fronting Bayou Barataria at the confluence of Bayou des Familles, because the lands had by this time been abandoned by most of the Canary Islander settlers. However, archival documentation has yet to show any use to which Bouligny might have put the land. It is documented that Degruy and Mayronne had a dairy or cattle ranch at this location by the early 1800s. In 1807, Degruy and Mayronne partitioned their plantation. Mayronne retained the 20-arpent-front by 80-arpent-deep plantation on the river. Degruy received a small portion of the river front plantation and the lands extending down to Barataria. By 1810, Degruy had acquired the river front plantation from Mayronne and sold it to Jean

Jacques Bonne and Honoré Mourlot. By then, he had moved with his slaves to the property at the confluence of Bayous des Familles and Barataria to cultivate sugarcane. He retained a piece of land 100 feet wide bordering the canal at the river, as well as right-of-way on the canal.<sup>19</sup>

Bonne and Mourlot were unable to pay for the plantation, and they surrendered it back to Degruy. By 1812, Degruy was in bankruptcy, and he gave the river plantation to his creditors. The plantation had two "superb" sawmills, a "beautiful" brickyard with two brick kilns and three drying sheds, a master house of 15 rooms, an overseer's house, a kitchen, a hospital, and cabins for the 33 Negro slaves attached to the property. Most of the slaves were lumbermen, carpenters, loggers, wheelwrights, and masons, and one was "one of the best forgers in the colony." Degruy was a Master Carpenter, or building contractor, as well as a sugar planter. The round sugarcane grinding mill on his river plantation was a famed architectural landmark of the period.<sup>20</sup>

In 1809, Jean-Baptiste Degruy relocated to the Barataria property with his family and slaves. His headquarters was on the site of Bernard Dauterive's headquarters, at the east side of the confluence of Bayous Barataria and des Familles, and he probably used some of Dauterive's buildings. In 1812 the improvements consisted of a five-room house, a blacksmith forge, a warehouse, a chickenhouse, a dovecote with a room underneath, and several Negro cabins.

The land was described in his bankruptcy proceedings as "entirely cultivable in sugarcane." The slaves were named Jean-Baptiste, Noël, Alexis, Jean, Gregoirie, Jean Pierre, Antoine, Jacob, Joseph, Augustin, Malbroug, Antoine Treba, Coffee, Chicana, Magloire, Thelemaque, Scessant, Scypion, Scypion Jardinier (gardener), Nanette, Nina, Nicolle, Jean-Baptiste, Modette, Josephine, Jeanne and her nursing infant, Therese, Dhorotee, Salie, Magdelaine, Gennevieve, and Lindor.<sup>21</sup>

According to a later court testimony by Louis Bouligny, "in 1809, Degruy sold his plantation on the river [and] he came to this land with his Negroes and planted cane, all the left [east] bank of the Bayou des Familles was cleared sundry years before; the right [west] bank was cleared only when Degruy commenced planting canes." It is possible that both banks of Bayou des Familles were cultivated by the early French land grantees, however, the record that describes Degruy's sugarcane fields on both sides of the bayou documents an important change in land use in Barataria. It is the first record of the planting in Barataria of sugarcane which was to become the prosperous crop of nineteenth century Louisiana plantations. Some years later, the sugarcane fields of large plantations would stretch for miles along both banks of Bayou Barataria and Bayou des Familles. Until Degruy laid out his fields on both sides of Bayou des Familles, the Spanish land grantees

had used one side of the bayou for cultivation and the other side for grazing animals.<sup>22</sup>

As stated above, Jean-Baptiste Degruy purchased the 10-arpent strip originally belonging to Alexandre Guerbois from Guerbois' widow in 1809, and the sale was cancelled in 1813 after Degruy's bankruptcy. Thus, for this time, Degruy possessed 40 arpents of frontage on Bayou Barataria of the former Dauterive property. The depth of the land bordered Bayou des Familles, however documentation indicates that Degruy did not plant sugarcane on the Guerbois tract nor within the study area. According to later court testimony by Louis Bouligny and Zenon Trudeau, the Guerbois tract remained wooded; clearings made earlier had grown over. An exception would seem to have been the farm of Louis Pelteau whose tract crossed the Guerbois tract and who is documented as being on the bayou in the early 1800s.<sup>23</sup>

The depth and extent of Degruy's ownership of the land bordering Bayou Barataria, which derived from Francisco Bouligny's grant, was not clearly defined. In 1800, Degruy petitioned Spanish Governor Casa Calvo for confirmation of his ownership of the Boudousquié tract and other lands upstream along Bayou Barataria "to the depth of the flooded prairies [marshes]." He asked for a title and survey "obliging to leave the two families that inhabit this land to stay there, so that the families can possess their pieces." These two families may have been those of Juan or

Jean Normand, Louis Pelteau, Francisco Sánchez, Juan Baptiste Seisan, Nicolas Domé, or Pablo Suárez Ruiz.<sup>24</sup>

However, Degruy later attempted to claim all the depth of his lands extending back along Bayou des Familles by virtue of the French title to Bernard Dauterive who had been the first husband of Degruy's wife, Elizabeth Sabine Joseph Monthault de Monberault. Degruy had married the Widow Dauterive in 1779 at the Parish Church of St. Landry des Opelousas, three years after the death of Bernard Dauterive. As recounted earlier, Dauterive had relocated his cattle ranch from Barataria to the prairies of southwest Louisiana in 1768, and he helped to establish the Acadians by supplying them with cattle.<sup>25</sup>

Bernard Dauterive had vast land grants in the Attakapas District, on the Vermilion Prairie, on Bayou Teche, and at the Bayougoulas on the Mississippi River, all stocked with cattle. After their marriage, Jean-Baptiste Degruy and the Widow Dauterive settled on the ranch at the Bayougoulas with the widow's three children: Antoine Bernard Dauterive, Louis Decomines Dauterive, and Antoine Marigny Dauterive, who were 14, 12, and 6 years old in 1779. A fourth child, Dubuclet, had died at a young age.<sup>26</sup>

In 1779, Madame Degruy donated a large part of the Bayougoula property to the Spanish government for the settlement of Canary Islanders, and, in return, Degruy was contracted by the government to build 200 cabins for the settlers at \$100 a cabin. However, when he had finished

only 20 cabins, he was required as an officer in the militia to march with the troops of Governor Gálvez in the conquest of Baton Rouge, Mobile, and Pensacola. Upon his return, the government decided not to settle Isleños at the Bayougoulas but retained the land and distributed it to Acadians.

Degrug was paid for only 20 cabins. A native of New Orleans, Degrug removed his family to the New Orleans area. Eventually, Madame Elizabeth de Monberault Degrug and her children were to return to the place where she and her first husband, Bernard Dauterive, made their home in Barataria.<sup>27</sup>

Degrug attempted to claim the entire 110-arpent depth of Bernard Dauterive's 10-arpent tracts when the occupants of the crossing Spanish grants vacated their properties. Even after Degrug's bankruptcy in 1812, his creditors continued the boundary dispute throughout the first half of the nineteenth century. As registered in the United States Surveyor General's Office, the claim made by Sosthene Roman, syndic of the creditors of Jean-Baptiste Degrug, was for 10 arpents with a depth of 103 arpents (the Boudousquié tract), 10 arpents with a depth of 60 arpents (adjoining to the east), and 20 arpents with a depth of 40 arpents (adjoining to the east). The claim to Degrug's land registered by John McDonogh was for 30 arpents fronting Bayou Barataria by 110 arpents in depth.<sup>28</sup>

At different times during his residency on Bayou Barataria, Degrug may have used unoccupied portions of his backlands along Bayou des Familles for various purposes. No

agricultural features within the study area can be definitely attributed to the period of Degruy's ownership. It may be speculated that the main outfall ditch of the Christmas Plantation, discussed later in this study, which crosses several of the 10-arpent Dauterive tracts and is not confined to the Christmas property, was originally dug during the Spanish Period or during the period of Degruy's common ownership of the several 10-arpent tracts.

Degruy grazed about 300 head of cattle on the back lands of his Barataria plantation. He pastured a larger number on an "island" called "Isla Gracia" which was bounded by Barataria Bay and Bayou St. Denis, and which measured two leagues long by one league wide and about five or six leagues in circumference. This land had been granted to Degruy in 1798 by Spanish governor Manuel Gayoso de Lemos.<sup>29</sup>

Degruy logged the Barataria plantation. He employed his slaves in making fence posts and pickets and in building carts. Several of his slaves were wheelwrights. In 1810, he was contracted by New Orleans Mayor James Mather to provide 28 oak butcher blocks for the new city slaughterhouse. The blocks were to be made of healthy live oak without any cracks, and they were to be between three and three-and-a-half feet long.<sup>30</sup>

Degruy also had a lime-making industry on his Barataria Plantation. The lime was made from the clam shells collected from prehistoric Indian mounds and carted to the kilns.

Degruy's stepson Antoine Marigny Dauterive supervised the lime-making operation.<sup>31</sup>

Historically, the simplest manner of making lime was to excavate a cone-shaped hole in a hillside, fill it with alternating layers of wood or coal and limestone or shell, cover the exposed exterior with sod, and set the fuel afire. When the fire had burned itself out and cooled, the contents were removed, and the process was repeated. In Baratavia, such lime kilns might have been made in earth and shell Indian mounds which were located near other large shell mounds and middens. Burning the shells on the sites of their deposits would have eliminated the necessity of transporting the shells to the kiln. However, this was a tedious and uneconomical method of producing lime. Degruy may have constructed lime kilns of brick on his Baratavia plantation. Such kilns were sometimes cylindrical, but they were more often square on the exterior and egg-shaped on the interior. Small apertures near the bottom of the structure permitted the circulation of air necessary for the fire and also permitted the drawing out of the lime. By adding additional fuel and shells through a hole in the top of the kiln, the production of lime could be kept in continuous operation.<sup>32</sup>

As mentioned earlier in this report, the buildings of Degruy's headquarters at the confluence of Bayous Baratavia and des Familles were located on large prehistoric shell mounds which have almost entirely been removed. Degruy may



have used the shells at this location for the making of lime, however, he may also have exploited numerous shell mounds and middens along the course of Bayou des Familles on the backlands of his plantation. Neighboring land owner Louis Pelteau worked for a time on Degruy's plantation carting shells for the making of lime.<sup>33</sup>

Jean-Baptiste Degruy and his stepson Marigny Dauterive were also engaged in the business of smuggling the contraband of privateers who sailed the Gulf of Mexico. They acted as sponsors and intermediary agents for the privateers, and Degruy's Barataria plantation may have served as a depot for stolen goods. The Barataria Road and the canal that he owned with Francisco Mayonne were routes by which smugglers could bring their goods to New Orleans. During the Spanish Period, Marigny Dauterive's father had engaged in the transport and sale of smuggled goods in Attakapas and on the Texas border.<sup>34</sup>

In 1819, the syndics of the creditors of Jean-Baptiste Degruy sold his plantation of 30 arpents fronting Bayou Barataria to Joseph Tricou and his sons and Dominique Bouligny. Before making payment, Tricou and Bouligny began logging the property and were sued by Jean Joseph Jourdan whose crossing tract was included in the sale. Tricou and Bouligny then refused to pay for the land because it did not have clear title, and the sale was nullified.<sup>35</sup>

In 1820, Thomas Durnford, to whom Degruy had mortgaged the plantation and slaves in 1809, petitioned for a seizure

and sale of the property and acquired the land at the public sale. However, the heirs of Louis Pelteau objected to the seizure of their tract which also crossed the land claimed by Degruy. The syndics of the creditors of Degruy enjoined the Durnford sale, and Durnford was never given title to the land. Nonetheless, Durnford sold the property to John McDonogh, to whom he was indebted, in 1823. Title to the land was disputed in numerous court cases for several decades.<sup>36</sup>

Jean-Baptiste Degruy's first wife died and he remarried late in life to Melanie Godin. He died in 1838 on a small plantation on the Mississippi River and left five children, Charles, Antoine Onezime, Melanie Augustin, Jean-Baptiste, and Julie Elodie. He had outlived his three Dauterive<sup>-</sup>stepsons.<sup>37</sup>

The Dauterive heirs had received from the estate of Jean Antoine Bernard Dauterive the five 10-by-110 arpent tracts lying west of the four 10-arpent tracts that the elder Dauterive had sold in 1768. The tract adjoining the west side of the Guerbois tract was inherited by Antoine Marigny Dauterive. A small portion of this tract lies within the study area.<sup>38</sup>

Marigny Dauterive inhabited the property intermittently. He lived much of his life on his stepfather's plantations where he helped oversee the work of the slaves. According to Louis Bouligny, Marigny Dauterive built a house on his land in 1808 or 1809. When Bouligny "passed by there

in 1826, Marigny Dauterive was then cultivating the land and had planted some arpents of cotton; Marigny Dauterive alone of the family occupied the 50 arpents of land; Marigny Dauterive had a guardian on the place when he did not reside there, named Antoine Bernard Dauterive, a nephew of his."<sup>39</sup>

When Antoine Marigny Dauterive died in 1827, he was living in a rented house at the corner of Tchoupitoulas and Market Streets in the New Orleans suburb called Faubourg Annunciation. He lived with Catherine Dauphin, a free-woman-of-color, and eight slaves. Several of the slaves had belonged to Jean-Baptiste Degruy and were now elderly, blind, and infirm.<sup>40</sup>

The inventory of the estate of Marigny Dauterive described his Barataria property as having 25 superficial arpents of cleared and partly enclosed land with "a dwelling house thirty feet long by thirty-five in width, made of bad materials and two wooden cabins, the said buildings in a very bad condition, the whole valued at \$2,000.00." These improvements were probably located at the front of the property on Bayou Barataria.<sup>41</sup>

Also on the property were two small anchors, two old ploughs, and "a lot of carpenter's tools in bad condition." The livestock were listed as twelve cows with their calves, twelve oxen, eight bulls of about two years, twenty-nine cows, seventeen heifers, three creole horses, and twenty-one sheep.<sup>42</sup>

A few months after Marigny Dauterive's death, his 10-arpent tract was sold at public auction "with the right of passage on the canal of Antoine Foucher, Jr." The property was purchased by Marigny's stepfather Jean-Baptiste Degruy, and his wife Melanie Godin. In 1835, Degruy and his wife exchanged this property and another 20-arpent tract of cypress swamp on the east bank of Bayou Barataria with New Orleans surveyor Jean Charles Allou d'Hémécourt for the two-arpent plantation on the west bank of the Mississippi River where Degruy died in 1838. The Barataria properties were exchanged to d'Hémécourt with all rights to exploit the wood and the shells. The large prehistoric shell mounds that once existed at the confluence of Bayous des Familles and Coquilles were located on the former Antoine Marigny Dauterive tract. Two months later, Allou d'Hémécourt acquired the adjacent Guerbois tract, and the two tracts became henceforth joined in their history, as recounted earlier in this chapter.<sup>43</sup>

Archival records shows that the land near the confluence of Bayous des Familles and Barataria, encompassing the study area and its environs, was largely wooded, uncultivated, and unoccupied by the mid-nineteenth century. The topography of this period has been reconstructed in the map entitled "Terre Haute de Barataria," and notes on the archival sources accompany the map. According to descriptions by surveyors of the 1840s and 1850s, the bayous were

bordered by thick cane brakes and hardwood forests with some old clearings.

The numerous crisscrossing colonial grants prevented the establishment of clear legal titles and discouraged land owners from making extensive improvements. Some owners used their lands for cattle grazing and for exploitation of natural resources. John McDonogh acquired a large number of the crossing tracts and held them for several decades, apparently without putting the land to any use. The properties were part of a fortune he amassed in real estate. When he died in 1850, he was known as the richest man and largest property owner in Louisiana. During his lifetime, he had a reputation as an eccentric recluse and miser, but upon his death, he left his wealth to the Cities of New Orleans and Baltimore for educational purposes. McDonogh's properties became encumbered in legal proceedings following his death, and were finally auctioned in 1859 to benefit the schools of the two cities.<sup>44</sup>

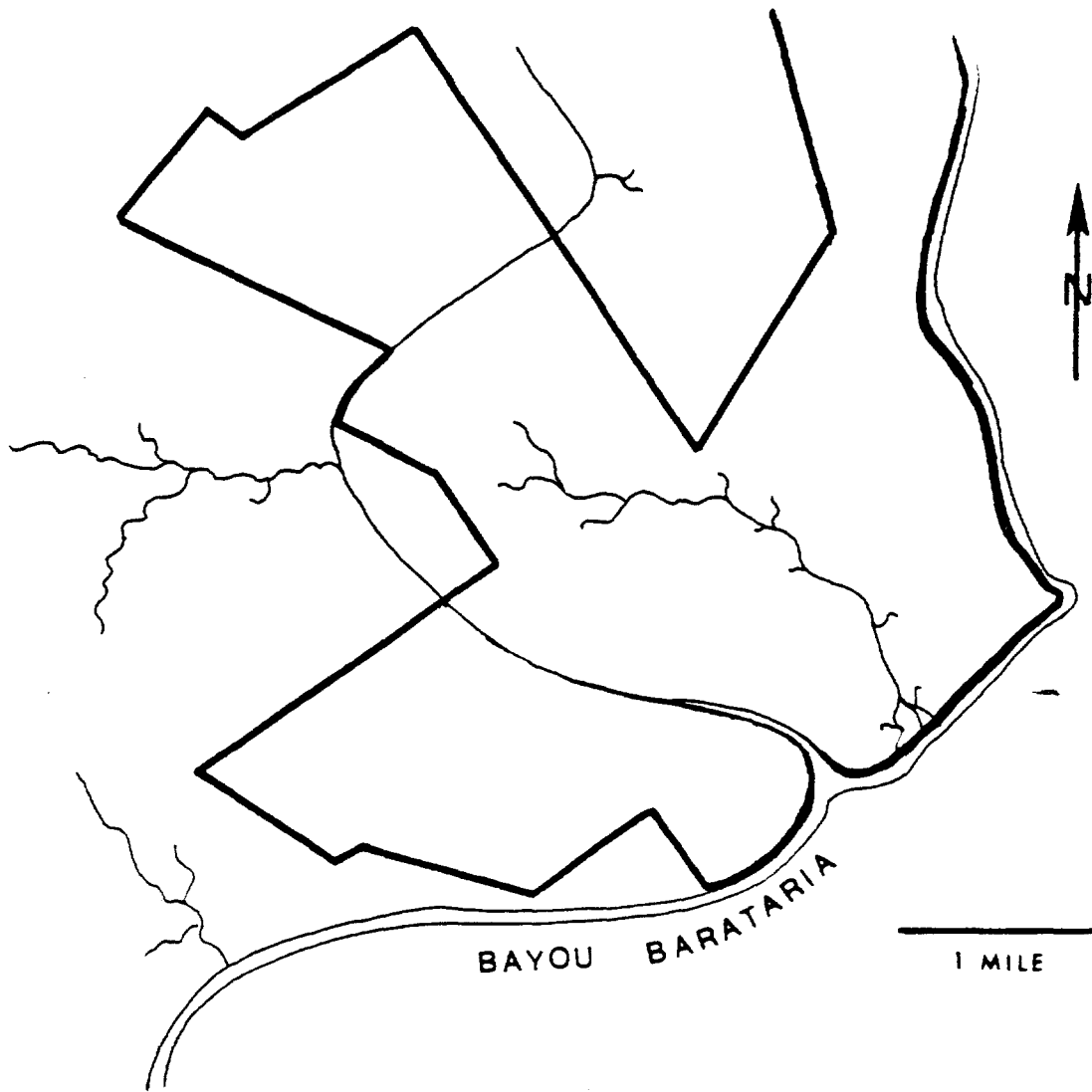
As previously noted, McDonogh purchased the Spanish land grants crossing Bayou des Familles that had been made to Pablo Suárez Ruiz, Nicolas Dome´, Louis Pelteau, and Juan Normand. Meanwhile, McDonogh purchased the three perpendicular 10-arpens tracts that Thomas Durnford had acquired from the bankruptcy of Jean-Baptiste Degruy. Durnford never received title to the property, therefore McDonogh purchased the land once again from Sosthene Roman, syndic of the

creditors of Degruy, in 1837. Upon this act of sale, McDonogh wrote the following memorandum.<sup>45</sup>

This tract lays contiguous to and forms part of 9 other tracts owned by me, but as the different tracts clash and run in and cross each other, there is not the quantity of land which appears to be, as I purchased several of them for the purpose of settling adverse claims and avoiding suits at law.

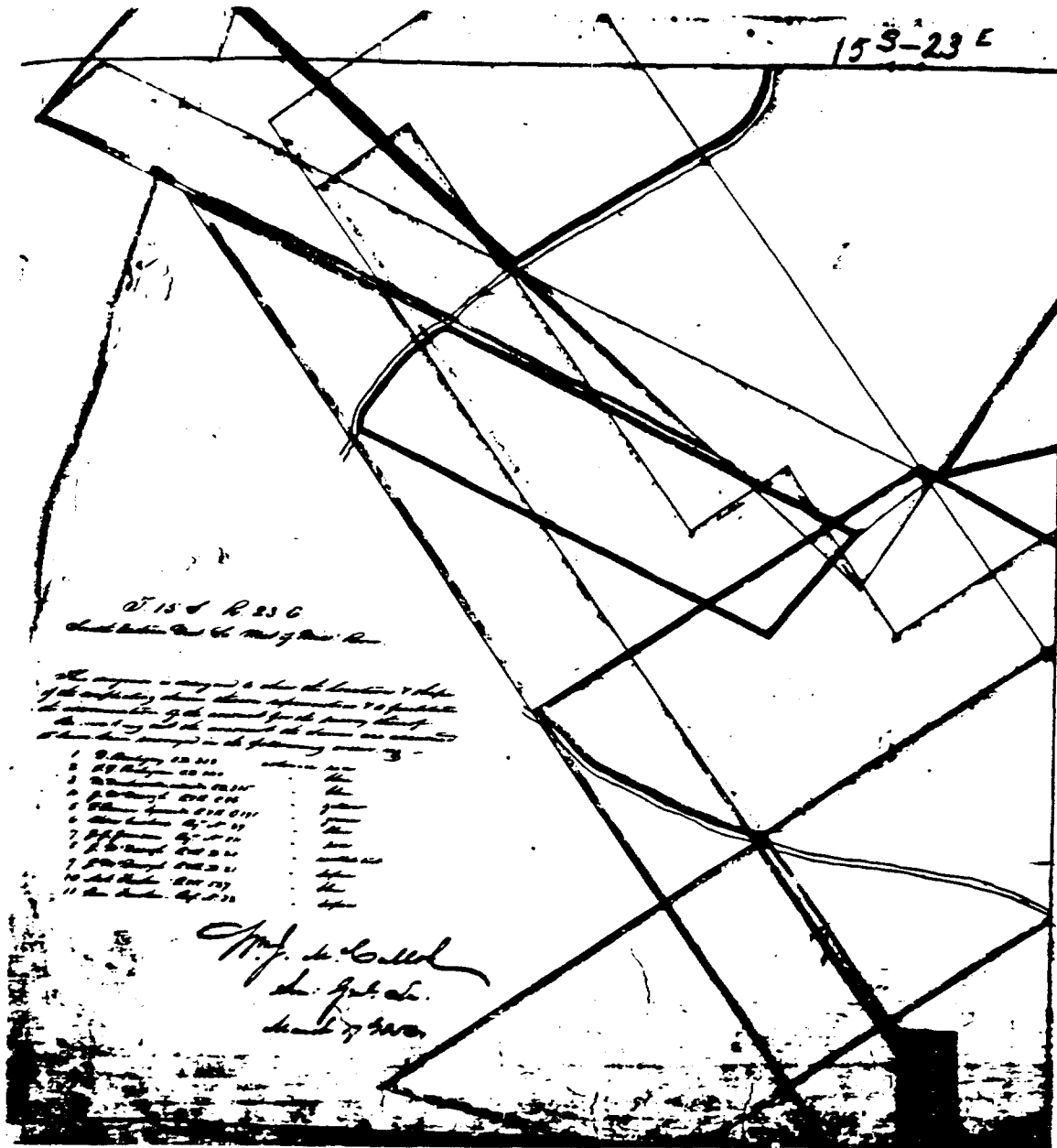
McDonogh fenced the property he had purchased in Barataria, closed off the roads, and destroyed a bridge that crossed Bayou des Familles. To guard against trespassers and squatters, he kept at least one Negro slave on the property as a caretaker. The Negro lived in what remained of the buildings that had been Degruy's headquarters at the east side of the confluence of Bayous des Familles and Barataria. When the Police Jury of Jefferson Parish — constructed a public road along the west bank of Bayou des Familles in 1841, the landowners, McDonogh and d'Hémécourt, brought suit against the Police Jury and had the road closed (see full discussion about this road in chapter on roads).<sup>46</sup>

By the time conflicting land titles were quited and litigation concerning John McDonogh's estate was settled, the Civil War precluded further agricultural development in Barataria. After the war, part of the study area was developed as a sugar plantation, but that part which had belonged to John McDonogh never received "improvements."



COMPOSITE LAND CLAIMS OF JOHN McDONOGH

153-23 E



Township 15 South, Range 23 East

The diagram is designed to show the location and shape of the conflicting claims thereon represented and to facilitate the examination of the account for the survey thereof. In making out the account the claims are assumed to have been surveyed in the following order, viz:

1. D. Bouigny
2. J. P. Rochejean
3. M. Dauberville, widow
4. J. McDonogh
5. S. Roman, Syndic
6. Widow Guerbois
7. J. J. Jourdan
8. J. McDonogh
9. J. McDonogh
10. Ant. Foucher
11. Pierre Foucher

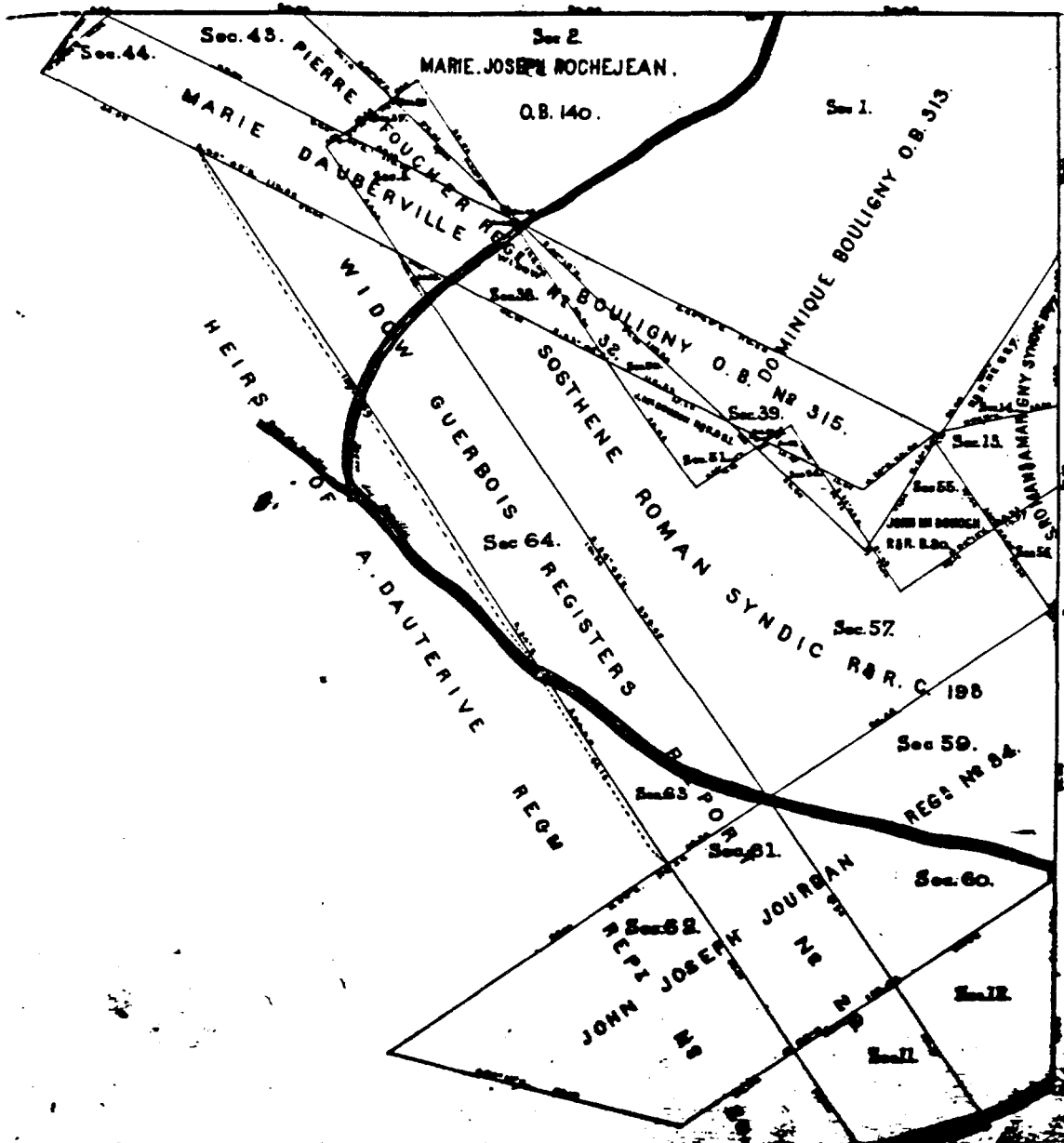
*Wm. J. Cullon*  
 Surveyor  
 March 17, 1856

Township 15 South, Range 23 East, signed by William J. Mc Cullon, Surveyor, Louisiana, March 17, 1856. Bureau of Land Management, Eastern States Office, Reston, Virginia.

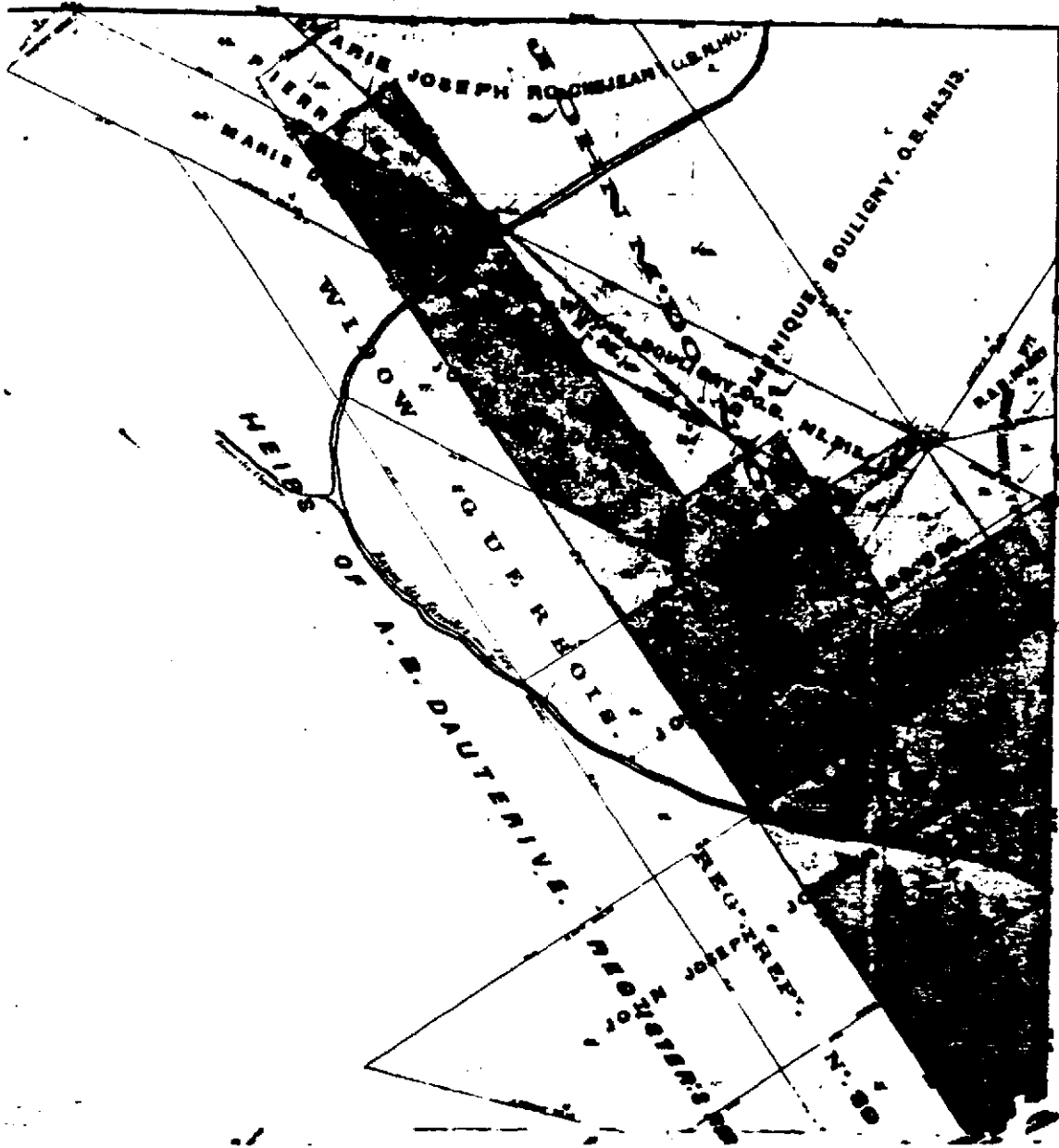
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7. J. J. Jourdan
8. J. McDonogh
9. J. McDonogh
10. Ant. Foucher
11. Pierre Foucher

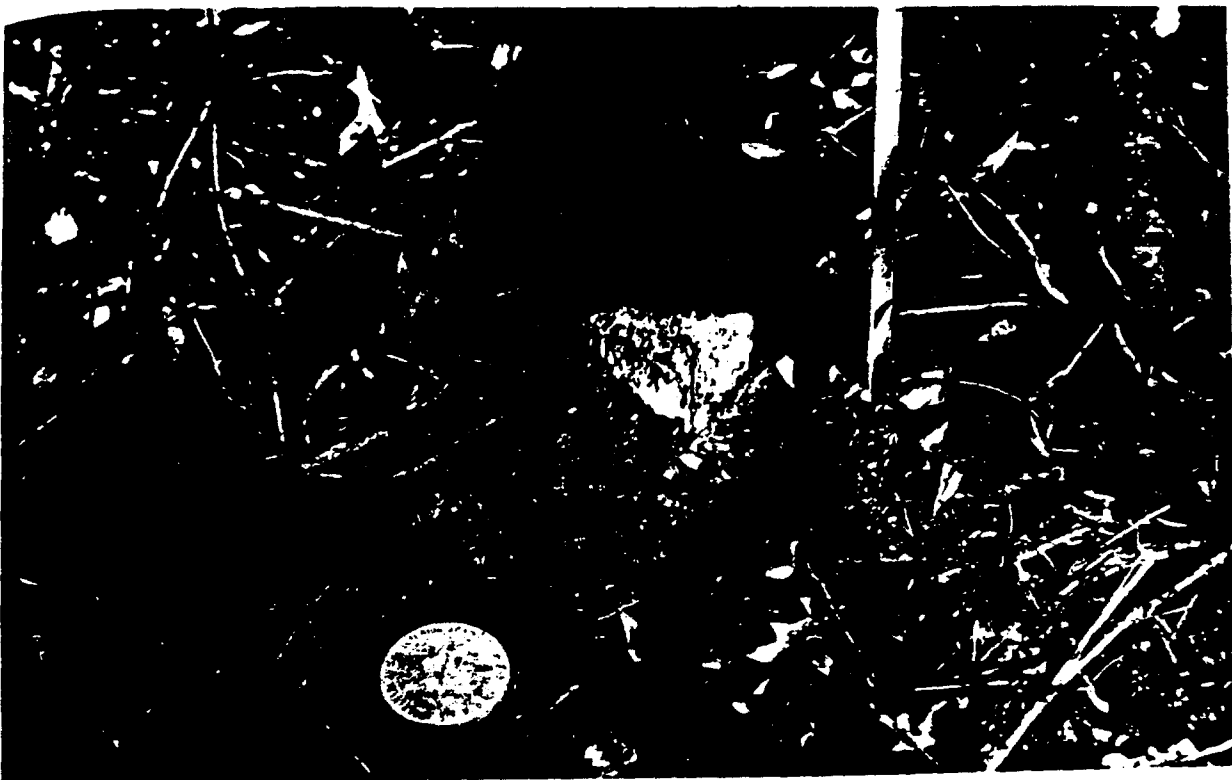




Cadastral Survey Map of Township 15 South, Range 23 East, Resurveyed by Maurice Hauke, Deputy Surveyor, in the second quarter of 1855, for the United States Surveyor General's Office. Bureau of Land Management, Eastern States Office, Reston, Virginia.



Cadastral Survey Map of Township 15 South, Range 23 East,  
United States Surveyor General's Office, New Orleans,  
September 15, 1884. Bureau of Land Management, Eastern  
States Office, Reston, Virginia.



Boundary markers, including the corner of an old granite marker, located at the upper front corner of the east bank Pablo Suárez Ruiz tract, near Bayou des Familles at the Protection levee. 3/86.



Granite boundary marker and a crawfish "house" on the east side of the Chemin de Barataria at the lower line of the Pablo Suárez Ruiz land grant and the upper line of the Nicolas Domé land grant (as later claimed by John McDonogh). 3/86.

## ENDNOTES

## TERRE HAUTE DE BARATARIA - THE EARLY AMERICAN PERIOD

1. Testimony of Zenon Trudeau in McDonogh v. Degruys et al., Docket No. 1007, June 2, 1845, LSCC/UNO.
2. Reference to the continuing occupation of the Francisco Sánchez family is found in the testimony of Jean-Baptiste Dubreuil Villars, Police Jury of the Parish of Jefferson v. Allou D'Hémécourt and John McDonogh, Docket No. 5209, May 1844, LSCC/UNO.
3. Acknowledgement by Louis Bouligny of sale of land to Léon Dauphin, T. Seghers, notary, June 30, 1834, NONA, the Barthelemy Lafon survey map is attached to this act; Sale of land by Louis Frederic Foucher and Madame Marie Antoine Foucher Delachaise to John Hutchinson, October 19, 1837, T. Seghers, notary, NONA; American State Papers, Public Lands, vol. III, Claim of Pierre Foucher, p. 509.
4. American State Papers, Public Lands, vol. III, Claim of Pierre Foucher, p. 509; Pierre Foucher's plantation on the site of Audubon Park is shown as inherited by his son Louis Frederic on Charles F. Zimpel's "Topographical Map of New Orleans and Its Vicinity," March, 1834, Historic New Orleans Collection; Inventory of the estate of John McDonogh, November 1, 1850, A. Mazureau, notary, NONA.
5. Roman v. Degruy et al., Marigny d'Auterive v. Degruy, A. B. d'Auterive et al. v. Degruy, L. d'Auterive v. Degruy, consolidated cases, Docket No. 740, February, 1823, LSCC/UNO, hereafter cited as Roman v. Degruy et al.
6. Letter to William H. Cobb from John McDonogh, July 3, 1830, John McDonogh Collection, Box 8, folder 5, SCD/TUL; Sale of land, Heirs of Louis Pelteau to John McDonogh, May 5, 1829, L. T. Caire, notary, NONA.
7. American State Papers, Public Lands, vol. 3, p. 512.
8. McDonogh v. De Gruys et al., Docket No. 1007.
9. Registration of Documents by Juan Jourdan, August 4 and 6, 1800, Narcisco Broutin, notary, NONA; Letter to Cobb from McDonogh; Sale of land, John Joseph Jourdan to John McDonogh, September 18, 1829, J. P. Fabre, notary, St. James Parish Court House.
10. Sale of land, Noël Jourdan to John McDonogh, May 30, 1833, private act, St. James Parish; Antonio Vart land grant

from Baron de Carondelet, October 13-15, 1794, SCD/TUL; Carlos Trudeau, "Plano Figurativo de las tierras de Don Pedro Lartigue," November 29, 1802, copy by Barthelemy Lafon, January 16, 1806, Plan Book 106, folio 28, NONA.

11. Sale of land, Pierre Denis de la Ronde, representing Eulalie Guerbois, his wife, to Joseph Soniat Dufossat, May 5, 1808, Stephen de Quinones, notary, NONA; Survey by Barthelemy Lafon, September 3, 1808, in McDonogh v. De Gruys et al., Docket No. 1007.

12. Exchange of land between Allou d'Hémécourt and Jean-Baptiste De Gruy and his wife, Melanie Godin, May 12, 1835, F. J. E. Dugue Livaudais, notary, JPCH; Sale of land, Allou d'Hémécourt to François Valcour Volant Labarre and Joseph Nelson Volant Labarre, February 19, 1846, T. Guyol, notary, NONA.

13. William D. Reeves, De La Barre, Life of a French Creole Family in Louisiana, Jefferson Parish Historical Series Monograph IV (New Orleans: Polyanthos, 1980), pp. 104-12.

14. McDonogh v. De Gruys et al., Docket No. 1007.

15. Ibid; Reeves, De La Barre, p. 104; Sale of land, Allou d'Hémécourt to Valerie Vicknair, February 28, 1860; J. Lisbony, notary, NONA.

16. Mortgage agreement between Valerie Vicknair and Allou d'Hémécourt, August 9, 1865, Adolphe Boudousquie, notary, NONA; Sale of land, Valerie Vicknair to Marie Julie Gabrielle Lemoine, widow of Pierre Rochefort, October 30, 1865, Edward G. Gottschalk, notary, NONA.

17. Sale of land, Antoine Boudousquie to Jean-Baptiste Degruy, April 4, 1800, Pedro Pedesclaux, notary, NONA.

18. Sale of land, Francisco Bouligny to Jean-Baptiste Degruy and Francisco Mayronne, March 8, 1792, Pedro Pedesclaux, notary, NONA.

19. McDonogh v. De Gruys et al., Docket No. 1007, testimony of Louis Bouligny, p. 20; Act of partition between François Mayronne and Jean-Baptiste Degruy, April 9, 1807, Pierre Pedesclaux, notary, NONA; Sale of plantation, Jean-Baptiste Degruy and his wife to Jean Jacques Bonne and Honoré Murlot, April 18, 1810, Pierre Pedesclaux, notary, NONA.

20. Bankruptcy of Jean-Baptiste Degruy, November 1, 1912, Pierre Pedesclaux, notary, NONA; Betsy Swanson, Historic Jefferson Parish (Gretna, Louisiana: Pelican Publishing Co.,

1975), pp. 75-76; for examples of Degruy's building contracts see acts of notary Pierre Pedesclaux, May 7, 1789, and November 15, 1790.

21. McDonogh v. Degruys et al., Docket No. 1007, testimony of Louis Bouligny, p. 20; Meeting of the creditors of Jean-Baptiste Degruy, November 5, 1812, Pierre Pedesclaux, notary, NONA.

22. McDonogh v. Degruys et al., Docket No. 1007, testimony of Louis Bouligny, p. 20, and grant of land by Governor Baron de Carondelet to Juan Normand, March 20, 1794, p. 4.

23. McDonogh v. Degruys et al., Docket No. 1007, testimony of Louis Bouligny, pp. 20-21, and testimony of Zenon Trudeau, p. 66.

24. McDonogh v. Degruys et al., Docket No. 1007, Petition of Jean-Baptiste Degruy for a title and survey, September 15, 1800, p. 89, and grant of land to Juan Normand, March 20, 1794, p. 4.

25. Roman v. Degruy et al., Docket No. 740, Marriage contract of Degruy with Madame de Monberault.

26. United States Senate, 25th Congress, 2nd Session, Document No. 196, "Report from the Secretary of the Treasury, Transmitting a report from the register and receiver of the land at Ouachita, with a statement of the claims presented to them, together with the opinion of the Commissioner of the General Land Office on the validity of the said claims," February 14, 1838 (Washington, D.C.: Blair and Rives, 1838), pp. 20-28; United States House of Representatives, 27th Congress, 3rd session, Document No. 21, Treasury Department, "Land Claims in Louisiana," December 17, 1842 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1842), pp. 126-50.

27. Ibid.

28. Allou d'Hémécourt, "Plan presentant les pretentions de Mr. Degruise," April 13, 1835, Plan Book 66, folio 18, NONA; American State Papers, Public Lands, vol. 6, p. 687 and p. 696, vol. 8, pp. 370-71 and pp. 376-77.

29. Roman v. Degruy et al., Docket No. 740, testimony of Verloin Degruy, p. 69; Bankruptcy of Jean-Baptiste Degruy, June 9, 1837, T. Seghers, notary, NONA.

30. Ibid; Contract between Mayor James Mather, New Orleans, and Jean-Baptiste Degruy to provide wood blocks for the slaughterhouse, April 14, 1810, The Rosemonde E. and Emile Kuntz Collection, SCD/TUL.

31. Roman v. Degruy et al., Docket No. 740, testimonies of Dubreuil Villars and Louis Pelteau, p. 69.
32. Abraham Rees, ed., The Cyclopaedia or Universal Dictionary of Arts, Sciences and Literature, vol. 20, "Kiln" (London: A Strahan, Printer; Longman, Hurst, Reis, Orme and Brown, Publishers, 1819).
33. Roman v. Degruy et al., Docket No. 740, testimony of Louis Pelteau, p. 69.
34. Stanley Faye, "Privateersmen of the Gulf and Their Prizes," Louisiana Historical Quarterly, vol. 22, no. 4 (October, 1939), pp. 1024-25.
35. Thomas Durnford v. the Syndics of Jean-Baptiste Degruy et al., Docket No. 456, June, 1820, LSCC/UNO; Record of suit of Jean Joseph Jourdan v. Joseph Tricou and son, filed November 29, 1819, in McDonogh v. DeGruys et al., Docket No. 1007.
36. John McDonogh v. Dominique Seghers, Docket No. 1504-2, 1828, LSCC/UNO; Durnford v. the Syndics of Jean-Baptiste Degruy et al., Docket No. 456; Roman v. Degruy et al., Docket No. 740; McDonogh v. Degruy et al., Docket No. 1007; Thomas Durnford v. Marigny Dauterive and Sosthene Roman, Syndics of Jean-Baptiste Degruy, Docket No. 2266, March 1819, LSCC/UNO; Sosthene Roman, Syndic of the Creditors of Jean-Baptiste Degruy v. Alfred Hennen, Docket No. 22087, July 1831, LSCC/UNO.
37. Succession of Jean-Baptiste Degruy, Case No. 30, First Judicial District Court, Court of Probates, April 28, 1838, Jefferson Parish Old Judicial Records Building.
38. American State Papers, Public Lands, vol. 3, p. 510; Public auction sale of land, estate of Antoine Marigny Dauterive to Jean-Baptiste Degruy and his wife Melanie Godin, October 24, 1827, Felix de Armas, notary, NONA.
39. McDonogh v. Degruy et al., Docket No. 1007, testimony of Louis Bouligny, p. 21.
40. Inventory of the estate of Antoine Marigny Dauterive, June 18-19, 1827, Old Inventories, Orleans Parish, vol. D, 1827-1833, New Orleans Public Library.
41. Ibid; Inventory of the estate of Antoine Marigny Dauterive, filed June 22, 1827, Jefferson Parish Court of Probates, Jefferson Parish Old Judicial Records, Gretna.
42. Ibid.

43. Public sale of land, estate of Antoine Marigny Dauterive to Jean-Baptiste Degruy and his wife, Melanie Godin; Promise of exchange between Jean-Baptiste Degruy and his wife, Melanie Godin, and Jean Charles Allou d'Hémécourt, May 12, 1835, F. J. E. Dugue Livaudais, notary, JPCH.

44. Inventory of the estate of John McDonogh, November 1, 1850, A. Mazureau, notary, NONA; Swanson, Historic Jefferson Parish, pp. 109-12; Sale of the estate of John McDonogh, March 28, 1859, in the Rotunda of the St. Louis Hotel, New Orleans, Edward Barnett, notary, April 5, 1859, NONA.

45. Sale of land, Sosthene Roman, Syndic of the Creditors of Jean-Baptiste Degruy to John Hutchinson, June 9, 1837, T. Seghers, notary, NONA; Sale of land, John Hutchinson to John McDonogh, August 17, 1837, W. Y. Lewis, notary, NONA; Inventory of the estate of John McDonogh, November 1, 1850, see also the description of McDonogh's real estate purchases in Baratavia in Barbara Holmes, Historic Resources Study, The Baratavia Unit of Jean Lafitte National Historical Park, Southwest Cultural Resources Center, Professional Papers No. 5 (Sante Fe: Division of History, Southwest Region, National Park Service, Department of the Interior, 1986), pp. 67-74.

46. Jefferson Parish Police Jury v. D'Hémécourt and McDonogh, Docket No. 5209; J. J. Williams, Field Survey Notes, 1842, R677, Series 161, Cupboard 13, Shelf 1, No. 14 and 15, Box 125, Book 1, pp. 69-70, National Archives, Washington, D.C.