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Cane River Creole National Historical Park
Natchitoches, Louisiana

494/D-433

Oakland Plantation Big House
Historic Structure Report

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June 15, 2004

Dear Colleague:

In accordance with the National Park Service "Guidelines for the Management of Cultural Resources," we are pleased to provide you with copies of three Historic Structure Reports for buildings at Cane River Creole National Historical Park: the Big House at Oakland Plantation, Prud'homme's Store, and the Gin Barn at Magnolia Plantation. These reports are part of our ongoing effort to provide comprehensive documentation and management guidelines for the cultural resources of National Park Service units in the Southeast Region.

These Historic Structure Reports were prepared by the Southeast Region's Division of Cultural Resources, Historic Architecture Branch, but reflect and incorporate the work of many others who have conducted critical historical research and building investigation on these buildings over the last decade. We hope this information will prove valuable to those interested in the historic architecture of Oakland and Magnolia plantations.

Sincerely,

J Anthony Paredes, Acting

Dan Scheidt
Chief, Cultural Resources Division

Enclosures

TAKE PRIDE IN AMERICA

CANE RIVER CREOLE NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

OAKLAND PLANTATION

~ BIG HOUSE ~

HISTORIC STRUCTURE REPORT

Cultural Resources, Southeast Region
National Park Service

2004

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Atlanta, GA 30303
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2004
Historic Structure Report
Big House at Oakland Plantation
Cane River Creole National Historical Park
Natchez, Louisiana
LCS#: 91620

Cover photograph: The Prud'hommes' Big House, c. 1930 (Prud'homme Family Collection)

The historic structure report presented here exists in two formats. A traditional, printed version is available for study at the park, the Southeastern Regional Office of the NPS (SERO), and at a variety of other repositories. For more widespread access, the historic structure report also exists in a web- based format through ParkNet, the website of the National Park Service. Please visit www.nps.gov for more information.

Oakland Plantation Big House

Historic Structure Report

Recommended by: J. Anthony Paredes 8-28-02
Acting Chief, Cultural Resources Stewardship, Southeast Regional Office — Date

Approved by: Laura Gates 9/5/02
Superintendent, Cane River National Historical Park — Date

Concurred by: Jerry Belson 10-15-02
Regional Director, Southeast Region — Date

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National Park Service
SERO

Foreword

We are pleased to make available this historic structure report, part of our ongoing effort to provide comprehensive documentation for the historic structures and landscapes of National Park Service units in the Southeast Region. Many individuals and institutions contributed to the successful completion of this work. We would particularly like to thank the staff at Cane River Creole National Historical Park, especially the park's superintendent Laura Soilliere and its facility manager Eric Z. Ford; Mary Lyn Warner at the Cammie G. Henry Research Center, Watson Memorial Library, Northwestern State University of Louisiana; and the staff at the Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC. We hope that this study will prove valuable to park management and others in understanding and interpreting the historical significance of the Big House at Oakland Plantation.

Dan Scheidt, Chief
Cultural Resources Division
Southeast Regional Office
National Park Service

Executive Summary

Historical Summary: Much of the historical information in this historic structure report is found in documents and photographs compiled by Cane River Creole National Historical Park since 1994. Especially important is the work of Dr. Ann Malone Rose and Carolyn Breedlove, whose research and interpretation of the data has informed the present study in many ways. The park has interviewed numerous family members, who have provided a wide range of details about the house's history, especially during the twentieth century. In addition, the Prud'homme family's papers in the Southern Historical Collection at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill were searched. These include a variety of documents and photographs pertaining to the Big House and are one of the best sources of information on the Prud'hommes and Oakland Plantation. Numerous documents, books, and other materials at the Cammie G. Henry Research Center of the Watson Memorial Library at Northwestern State University of Louisiana in Natchitoches have been essential to compilation of

this report. Continuation of research in all these sources is highly recommended.

The Prud'hommes were among the first families to establish themselves at Natchitoches in the first half of the eighteenth century and, by the nineteenth century, had become one of the parish's most prosperous and influential families. They were a large, sprawling clan, so much so that one early- twentieth- century visitor noted that knowing a person is named Prud'homme

> means nothing if you don't know which Prud'homme. If you chance to be in this section of the country, and you're not sure of a man's name, just call him Prud'homme, and the chances are that you will hit it.[1]

Emmanuel Prud'homme, whose grandparents helped settle Natchitoches in the second quarter of the eighteenth century, established a plantation along the Red River in the 1780s and began acquiring slaves around the same time. By the time Eli Whitney's cotton gin revolutionized Southern agriculture, he had the enslaved manpower necessary to be the first to grow cotton on a large scale west of the Mississippi. Educated and sophisticated, long a leader in the community, Emmanuel Prud'homme witnessed Louisiana's admission to the Union and was a member of the convention that framed the new state's first constitution in 1812.

1. Arthur Babb, "My Sketchbook," May 1, 1927, p. 211, Melrose Collection, Cammie G. Henry Research Center, Watson Memorial Library, Northwestern State University of Louisiana.

In 1818, the Prud'hommes began construction of a new house a few hundred feet west of their original residence on the banks of what is now Cane River. The new house, which forms the core of the present Big House at Oakland, was completed in 1821, the same year that they journeyed to France, where they bought furniture and had their portraits painted.

The youngest of the Prud'hommes' six children, Phanor, was born in 1807; and, after being educated in France, he returned to Natchitoches where he married Lise Metoyer and, eventually, assumed control of the plantation the family called Bermuda. Before Lise's untimely death in 1852, they had five children including their eldest son, Jacques Alphonse Prud'homme, born in 1838.

Bermuda Plantation was ravaged during the Federal campaign up the Red River in the spring of 1864, but the Big House escaped virtually unscathed. With Phanor Prud'homme's death in 1865, it was left to his sons Alphonse and Emmanuel to restore the family's plantation. Around 1870, they divided it into two parts, with Alphonse taking the west bank property, which he rechristened Oakland, and Emmanuel taking the east bank, which he named Atahoe.

Like his father and grandfather, Alphonse Prud'homme was a leader in Natchitoches while maintaining one of the region's most prosperous cotton plantations. In the 1870s, he also established a store at Oakland and brought the community its first post office, named Bermuda after his father's old antebellum planta-

tion. Like the rest of the South, Oakland's cotton production suffered from the boll weevil in the early 1900s. In spite of that, Prud'homme cotton won gold medals at world's fairs at St. Louis in 1904 and at Jamestown in 1907. The collapse of the cotton economy after World War I, followed by the Great Depression, taxed the resources of the next generation of Prud'hommes; but, as they had done in the 1860s, they adapted, "made do," and brought Oakland into the modern era.

In the years after World War II, a sixth generation of Prud'hommes took over operation of Oakland Plantation. They oversaw the demise of the old plantation system of cotton production as they replaced tenant labor with modern tractors and, ultimately, mechanical cotton pickers. The last of the Prud'hommes' tenant farmers moved away from Oakland around 1960, but even modern equipment and agricultural methods were not enough to keep the plantation profitable by the 1980s. In 1984, the Prud'hommes made the decision to quit farming and auctioned their equipment, bringing an end to almost two centuries of agricultural production by the Prud'hommes on Red River.

Architectural Summary: Physical investigation of the building has revealed much about the evolution of Emmanuel Prud'homme's modest five- room house into the sprawling structure we see today. Ms. Barbara A. Yokum, architectural conservator with the Building Conservation Branch, Northeast Cultural Resources Center, National Park Service (NPS), conducted an extensive analysis of the painted finishes and other materials in the Big House in 1998. Her investigation along with further investigation by Randy Conrad, historical architect at the NPS' Denver Service Center, helped establish the general chronology of the house's historical evolution. Also in 1998, Ali A. Miri, historical architect with the Southeast Regional Office (SERO), NPS, developed a historic structure assessment report on the physical condition of the house. Additional building investigation during the course of the present study has provided new information. This HSR synthesizes the information found in all of these studies.

Long- standing family tradition dates original construction of the Big House to 1818- 1821 and no historical documentation or physical evidence has been found to contradict this tradition. There are also family traditions relating to the subsequent evolution of the building, most of which have been substantially corroborated by further research and/or building investigation. As might be expected with a house of its age and complexity, much remains to be learned, especially about changes in its appearance and use through the antebellum period. What is clear, however, is that each generation of the Prud'homme family has left its mark on the Big House. Now, some 180 years after its original construction, the building's history is richly layered and full of interpretive possibilities that reflect the entire continuum of the Prud'hommes' occupation from 1821 until the last descendants moved out in 1998.

Recommendations: Issues of use have been central to the development of recommendations for treatment, since it is changes in use

that generally dictate most rehabilitative treatment. If the house were used as a place for assembly or for offices, for instance, those uses would require extensive changes and alterations to the building. The proposed use of the house as a museum house is, technically, a change in use; but the impact of that change will be minimal and will not require extensive rehabilitation or the inevitable diminishment of its historic character and integrity.

Site

- Investigate effectiveness of dry wells or restored cisterns in dealing with rainwater runoff from the roof.
- Re- establish positive grade away from house by selective re- grading of the site, especially around the west and northwest sides.

Foundation

- Reconstruct missing pier under Room 214A, tilting pier under Room 212, pier at northeast corner of house, and piers under south gallery of kitchen and elsewhere if necessary.
- Repoint remainder of masonry, avoiding any treatment of north wall of Room 106.
- Repaint paling enclosure around foundation and exposed brick piers; unpainted brickwork on the gallery stairs and on the south, west, and north sides of the foundation should not be painted.

Framing

- Repair framing as necessary, avoiding full replacement of framing members wherever possible.
- Design and install footers, termite shields, and moisture barriers for posts for floor support beams beneath 201, 205, 206, and 210.
- Install clear protective covering over *bousillage* wall along north side of attic stairwell.
- Protect and interpret closet beneath attic stairs.

Roof, gutters, downspouts

- Monitor effectiveness of current roof repairs and how frequently the coating requires renewal.
- If suitable replacements can be found, replace missing ridge shingles.
- Repair metal roofing and flashing; properly prepare both and repaint with appropriate silver- colored paint.
- Reinstate horizontal downspout at west end of kitchen wing.
- Repair existing gutters and downspouts, replacing only those portions that have rusted beyond repair.
- Keep gutters and downspouts painted, including the interior of the gutter trough. Exterior should be painted white; interior of gutter trough should be painted with appropriate rust- inhibitive coating.
- Insure rapid drainage of downspout runoff away from the house.

Windows

- Repair broken glass wherever possible; replace missing glass as necessary.
- Repair or replace window sash at west end of kitchen.
- Retain aluminum awning windows.
- Repair and preserve interior sliding screens.

Doors

- Repair doors as necessary.
- Restore all hardware to good working order.
- Reinstall stored back door and French doors in kitchen (214A).
- Repair and preserve screen doors.

Shutters

- Repair and reinstall original shutters wherever possible.
- Replicate missing shutters.
- Repair all hardware so that shutters are fully operative.
- Wash all existing shutters; then evaluate for repainting.

Galleries

- Repair floor framing as necessary.
- Replace floor boards as necessary, replacing entire boards as has been done on previous occasions.
- Maintain protective coatings on balustrades and posts.

Wood Siding and Trim

- Repair siding and trim at west end of kitchen wing, replacing only what is necessary to create a sound condition.
- Maintain protective coatings on all siding and trim.

Interior

- Clean cypress and pine floors; refinish as necessary.
- Replace vinyl floor covering in kitchen, matching pattern and material of existing covering.
- Repair plaster and woodwork as necessary.
- Clean all painted finishes, using the gentlest means possible.
- Repaint ceiling in stranger's room (211) and elsewhere only as necessary.
- As an aid to interpretation, make exposures of historic paints inside and outside the house.

Electrical

- Install new branch circuit wiring to re- feed historic outlets and to feed any new outlets that are deemed necessary.
- Restore and rewire historic lighting fixtures to working order, replacing missing elements as necessary.
- Recreate the historic meter, fuse boxes and associated wiring on south gallery.
- Install complete fire detection and security system.

Plumbing

- Cap water and waste lines to south bathroom (203).
- Maintain water supply to rear bathroom (213) and maintain toilet and sink for staff use.
- Install dry- pipe fire sprinkler system.

HVAC

- Restore all windows, doors, shutters, and ventilators to good working order.
- Establish program for monitoring of indoor and outdoor temperature, relative and absolute humidity, and precipitation over a cycle of all four seasons.
- Develop interpretive plan and collections list with limitations of building inherent capacity for environmental control in mind.

Handicapped Accessibility

- Install handicapped- accessible lift to original entrance at north gallery.
- Develop special programs to interpret the attic and basement, where handicapped accessibility cannot be readily achieved; develop special programs to interpret the entire house for the visually- impaired.

Administrative Data

Location Data

Building Name:	Big House at Oakland Plantation
Building Address:	4386 LA Hwy. 119 Natchez, LA
LCS#:	91620

Related Studies

Ballos, T. *Completion Report - Oakland Plantation Emergency Stabilization, Cane River National Historical Park, Natchitoches, Louisiana.* North East System Support Office, North East Cultural Resources Center, Building Conservation Branch, and Denver Service Center, NPS, 1997.

Breedlove, Carolyn."Bermuda/Oakland Plantation, 1830- 1880." Unpublished masters thesis, Northwestern State University, 1999.

Lawliss, L., C. Goetcheus, and D. Hasty. *The Cultural Landscape*

Inventory and Assessment, Cane River Creole National Heritage Area Natchitoches, Louisiana. Southeast Support Office, Atlanta, Georgia, 1997.

List of Classified Structures Team. *Historic Resources Documentation, Cane River National Historical Park,* Southeast Support Office, NPS, Atlanta, Georgia, 1998.

Malone, Ann Patton. "A Draft Response to NPS Focus Questions Relating to the Oakland Oral History Project." 1997.

Malone, Ann Patton. "Oakland Plantation, It's People's Testimony." Draft of report from oral history project, 1998.

Miri, A. A. *Historic Structure Assessment Report: Main House, Oakland Plantation, Cane River National Historical Park, Natchitoches Parish, Louisiana.* Southeast Support Office, NPS, Atlanta, Georgia, 1998.

National Park Service. *Cane River Creole National Historical Park, General Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement.* 2001.

Technical Information Center. *Special Resource Study Environmental Assessment - Cane River, Louisiana.* Denver Service Center, NPS, Denver, Colorado, 1993.

Yocum, B. A. *Oakland Plantation: Overseer's House, Store and Post Office, and Manholes Materials Analysis and Physical Investigation, Cane River Creole National Historical Park and Heritage Area, Natchitoches, Louisiana.* Building Conservation Branch, Northeast Cultural Resources Center, Northeast Field Area, NPS, Lowell, MA, 1998.

Cultural Resource Data

National Register of Historic Places: Jean Pierre Emmanuel Prud'homme Plantation, contributing structure, originally listed 29 August 1979 (upgraded from local to statewide significance 2 August 1989) under Criteria A for association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

National Historic Landmark: Oakland Plantation, 2000, listed for its national significance in the areas of architecture and agriculture.

Periods of Significance: The NHL designation places the architectural period of significance between 1818 and the mid- nineteenth century and extends the agricultural period of significance to 1950. In developing the treatment approach for the park, the park's GMP extends the period of significance to about 1960, thereby eliminating "the potential impacts on structures from removing, altering, or moving them" to an earlier location.

Proposed Treatment: The ultimate treatment of the Big House at Oakland Plantation should be to preserve the building as it exists today while making those changes that are necessary to appropriately interpret the site and to meet

the Park's program of use. This approach would include:

- repair and preservation of the building's *existing* features and material;
- rehabilitation of the building's electrical system to comply with modern building and life safety codes;
- rehabilitation of the building's plumbing system;
- adaptations to improve handicapped accessibility to the building while negotiating a plan of compliance alternatives in those instances where full compliance would destroy the building's integrity;
- adaptations to more effectively control the interior climate (temperature and relative humidity) of the building in order to properly preserve the furnishings, decorations, and other interpretive artifacts which will be displayed in the house;
- installation of systems to provide fire-detection and security alarms;
- installation of a fire suppression system to protect the building and its contents from destruction.

PART 1
DEVELOPMENTAL HISTORY

Historical Background & Context

The history of the Prud'homme family in Natchitoches Parish begins with Jean Pierre Philippe Prud'homme (1673- 1739) who emigrated from France around 1718 and married Catherine Picard (1705- 1781) in New Orleans about 1725. By the time their first child was born in 1726, they had settled at the newly- established post of Natchitoches on the Red River, where Prud'homme was a trader and merchant. They remained there for the rest of their lives. At least seven children were born to their marriage, including their sixth son, Jean- Baptiste Prud'homme (1735- 1786). Trained as a doctor in France, Jean- Baptiste returned to Natchitoches as *Docteur de Roi* (royal doctor) and set up a hospital at the southwest corner of Jefferson and Touline. In 1756, he married Marie Francoise Chevert, but she died in childbirth the following year. In July 1758, he married Marie Josephine Charlotte Henriette Colantin (1738- 1788), with whom he had at least eight children over the next twenty years. Their third child, Jean Pierre Emmanuel Prud'homme (1762- 1845), later founded what would become Oakland Plantation.[1]

Natchitoches remained a relatively isolated, sparsely settled area throughout the colonial period; there were still only 740 inhabitants when Louisiana was transferred to Spanish control in 1763. Trading and herding gradually gave way to agriculture, however; and, by the time of the American Revolution, the majority of area residents were engaged in growing indigo and tobacco, the main products for export. Dr. Jean- Baptiste Prud'homme made this transition also, having acquired land as early as 1758 and, by the 1770s, slaves as well.[2]

In 1782, Dr. Prud'homme's oldest son Emmanuel married Catherine Lambre (1763- 1848), daughter of Jacques and Marie Poissot Lambre, the first of at least three marriages between the two families. In 1789, Dr. Prud'homme's daughter Susanne (1775- 1815) married the Lambres' son Remy (1761- 1815); and in 1791, his son Antoine (1764- 1856) married the Lambres' daughter Marie (1775- 1855). All three of these Prud'homme/Lambre pairings would soon establish neighboring plantations along the Red River a dozen or so miles below Natchitoches, cementing a relationship between the two families that lasted into the twentieth century.

1. "The Prud'homme Family," compiled by Mrs. Lucille K. Prud'homme, Prud'homme Coll. #613, Series 3.1.2, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC, pp. 1-2; Sandra Haynie, *Legends of Oakland: The Prud'hommes of Natchitoches Parish* (Shreveport, LA: Sandra Prud'homme Haynie, 2001), pp. 5-9.
2. Anne Patton Malone, "Oakland Plantation, Its People's Testimony," unpublished MSS, National Park Service, 1998, pp. 24-25.

The death of Dr. Prud'homme in 1786 may have provided the impetus for Emmanuel's decision to establish a plantation in the rich bottom lands below Natchitoches; but the first certain proof of his residence there is his listing in the United States territorial census of 1810. It appears likely that long before Congress finally adjudicated the early French land claims in 1812 (the year Louisiana became a state), Emmanuel Prud'homme occupied more than 1,200 acres on both sides of Red River, including the site of today's Oakland Plantation in Section 104, Township 8 North, Range 6 (see Figure 1), adjoining the plantations of his brother- in- law Remy Lambre and his brother Antoine Prud'homme.[3]

An inheritance from their father was probably the reason that the number of Emmanuel's slaves doubled to thirty- eight by 1795 while that of his brother Antoine's slaves went from only three in 1790 to twenty- six five years later. Only Pierre Metoyer and Emmanuel's brother-in- law Remy Lambre were larger slaveholders in Natchitoches Parish in the last decade before the Louisiana Purchase.[4] By 1810, Emmanuel Prud'homme owned fifty- three slaves; by 1820, he owned seventy- four and was well on his way to becoming one of Louisiana's most successful planters.[5]

3. Claim # B-1850, American State Papers, Vol. II, p. 717, from copies at Cammie G. Henry Research Center, Watson Memorial Library, Northwestern State University of Louisiana; Haynie, *Legends of Oakland*, p. 15.
4. Malone, "Oakland Plantation," p. 29.
5. Malone, "Oakland Plantation," p. 40.

In April 1803, Thomas Jefferson engineered the purchase of the Louisiana Territory from France for fifteen million dollars, an act that doubled the size of the United States. In 1811, Congress authorized the admission of Louisiana into the Union, the first of twelve states that would be organized out of the territory. Emmanuel Prud'homme was an early leader in Natchitoches Parish and, as a result, joined Pierre Bossier as the representatives to the constitutional convention in New Orleans in 1811.[6]

The change in jurisdiction of Louisiana from France to Spain and back to France before the territory was finally acquired by the United States in 1803 makes any attempt to document the genesis of these Red River plantations difficult, if not impossible. According to Malone, Emmanuel Prud'homme's residence in the early 1790s was still on a fifty- one- acre tract opposite the post at Natchitoches, a plantation that was thought to be "one of the first settled plantations in the parish" and which he probably inherited from his father, Dr. Jean- Baptiste Prud'homme.[7] However, Prud'homme family tradition holds that Emmanuel Prud'homme was farming the land on which Oakland would be developed as early as 1785, apparently through some sort of rental agreement with the property's original grantee, Nicholas Rousseau.[8] Another tradition states that

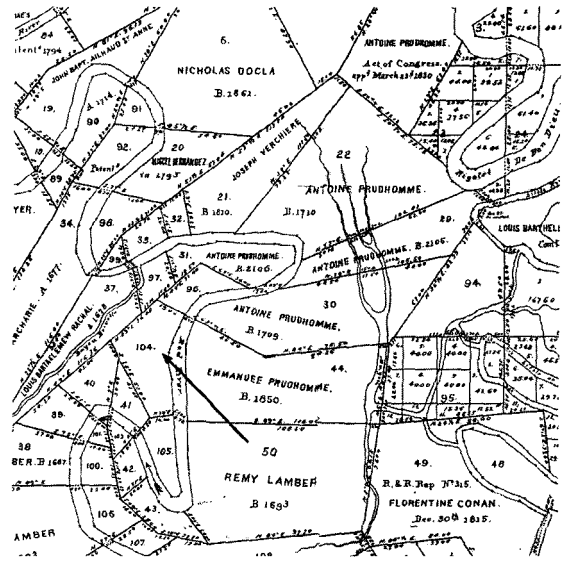

Figure 1 Detail from Walmsley's plat of vicinity of Bermuda Plantation, 1818. Arrow denotes Section 104, site of the Prud'hommes' Big House. Most of the landowners shown on this plat can be identified in the Federal territorial census of 1810. (Cammie G. Henry Research Center, Watson Memorial Library, Northwestern State University of Louisiana)

Prud'homme himself was actually granted the land by the Spanish provincial governor Estevan Miro in 1789, although that appears not to have been the case.[9]

The United States' territorial census of 1810 provides the first certain proof of the Prud'hommes' residence on what is now Oakland Plantation.[10] Throughout the eighteenth

6. Haynie, p. 17.
7. Malone, "Oakland Plantation," p. 26; Donna Rachal Mills, *Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Natchitoches Parish, Louisiana* (Mills Historical Press, 1985; reprint of original publication, 1890), p. 297.
8. Malone, "Oakland Plantation," pp. 26, 44.
9. Alcèe Fortier, ed., " Jacques Alphonse Prud'homme," Louisiana, Comprising Sketches of Counties, Towns, Events, Institutions, and Persons Arranged in Cyclopedic Form (Atlanta: Southern Historical Association, 1909), no page numbers.
10. The 1810 census enumeration corresponds almost completely with the names shown on the Walmsley plat (see Figure 1).

century, tobacco and indigo remained the most important agricultural products of Louisiana, with Natchitoches' high- quality tobacco especially prized. By the early 1800s, however, cultivation of short- staple cotton was rapidly replacing that of tobacco and indigo.[11] Cotton had been grown in Louisiana as early as the 1730s; but, as elsewhere across the South, the difficulties in ridding the fibers of seed prevented any more than small- scale production for home- spun material. In 1795, accounts of Eli Whitney's revolutionary cotton "engine" spread like wildfire; and in Louisiana and elsewhere, clever entrepreneurs were soon building their own models, precipitating a great boom in cotton production that would transform the face of the South.[12]

A legend that has been "repeated through many generations" in the Prud'homme family holds that, in 1797, Emmanuel Prud'homme was the first to cultivate cotton "on a large scale" west of the Mississippi. For that reason, the earliest (1821) portrait of Emmanuel Prud'homme depicts him with a boll of cotton in his hand, which would remain an apt image for the Prud'hommes throughout the nineteenth century.[13]

11. Malone, "Oakland Plantation," p. 32.
12. Bennett H. Wall, *Louisiana: A History* (Forum Press, 1984, 1990), p. 74.
13. Haynie, Legends of Oakland, p. 15; Association of Natchitoches Women for the Preservation of Historic Natchitoches, Natchitoches (Natchitoches Times, 1958), p. 45; letter from M. H. Carver to Mr. and Mrs. Phanor Prud'homme, 6 September 1914, Prud'homme Coll., Cammie G. Henry Research Center, Watson Memorial Library, Northwestern State University of Louisiana.

Bermuda Plantation

The origin of the name of the Prud'homme plantation on Cane River has not been documented; in fact, the name "Bermuda" has not been found in antebellum records. However, according to family tradition, the plantation was originally known as "Bermuda." In correspondence, Phanor Prud'homme I occasionally used "Ile Brevelle," which has led archivists at the University of North Carolina to assume that to be the name of his plantation. However, Ile or Isle Brevelle was apparently named for the Brevelles, early settlers of the area, and was applied to the entire area between Cane River and Old River south of Bayou Brevelle and not specifically to the Prud'hommes' plantation.

After the Civil War, Emmanuel's sons divided their father's old plantation, with the portion on the west bank becoming "Oakland" and that on the east bank "Atahoe." When a post office was established at Oakland in 1877, it took the name "Bermuda." Family tradition is virtually the only source of information about the earliest years of Bermuda Plantation. The family believes, for instance, that Emmanuel Prud'homme built a house on the banks of the Red River (now Cane River) in the late 1790s when he began development of his plantation in earnest. Nothing is known about the Prud'hommes' first house except a vague family tradition of its general location near where the present Big House stands today (see Figure 1).

Figure 2 Portraits of Pierre Emmanuel Prud'homme (1762-1845) and Catherine Lambre Prud'homme (1763-1848), painted in Paris in 1821. (CARI Collection)

According to that tradition, a large pecan tree that stood in the open area just north of the Prud'homme store until after World War II was located in the backyard of the original house.

Emmanuel Prud'homme traveled widely, spending long periods at Hot Springs, Arkansas, where he built a cabin, and making frequent visits to New Orleans. In 1812, Prud'homme was one of Natchitoches' delegates to the convention that framed Louisiana's first constitution. Like many of his contemporaries among the Cane River planters, he built a town house in Natchitoches and, with his frequent travels, may have let the original house at Bermuda fall into disrepair.[14] Frequent flooding and, perhaps, eroding river banks surely threatened the house as well and contributed to Prud'homme's decision to build a new house farther back from the river.[15]

The traditional date for construction of the Prud'hommes' new house is 1818- 1821, with that completion date appearing in historical records as far back as 1909.[16] There is also an old tradition that the Prud'hommes went to France in 1821, had their portraits painted in Paris and acquired furniture that was shipped to New Orleans on the ship *Le Jerome* and, from there, on rafts up the Red River to Bermuda where it arrived in July or August of 1822.[17]

By the time their new house was completed, Emmanuel and Catherine Prud'homme were

14. Haynie, p. 17.

15. Interview by author with Kenneth Prud'homme, 6 May 2001.
16. Fortier, no page numbers.
17. Association of Natchitoches Women, Natchitoches, p. 45, gives a date of June 1822 for arrival of the furniture. Carver's letter and memorial on the occasion of Alphonse and Elise Prud'homme's 50th wedding anniversary in 1914 gives August 22, 1822, as the date on which the furniture arrived. In 1909, Fortice stated that "all its furnishings" were brought from France but did not give a date.

both in their late 50s and had the house mostly to themselves. Two of their daughters had already died: Henriette, who died at the age of twenty in 1806, and Marie Adele, who had married Jean- Baptiste LeComte in 1814 but died in childbirth the day after Christmas in 1815. The other daughter, Marie Adeline, married her cousin Jean Roquier in 1819; but, by the time her parents moved into their new house, Adeline and her husband had probably already moved to Nantes, France, where they apparently spent the remainder of their lives.[18]

Emmanuel and Catherine's oldest sons—Jean-Baptiste and Narcisse—were also married, but they appear to have both been living on nearby plantations that their parents had given them.[19] Jean- Baptiste married Marie Therese Victorie, the daughter of the Prud'hommes' neighbor Jean- Baptiste Ailhaud St. Anne, and they were living across the river to the northeast along Bayou Cadoche. Narcisse married Marie Therese Elizabeth Metoyer, daughter of another Prud'homme neighbor Pierre Metoyer, and Emmanuel presented them with Beau Fort, just north of Oakland, after its original owner died in 1814.[20] In the early 1820s, even Emmanuel and Catherine's youngest son, Phanor, may have been away at school in France, where he is believed to have received his education.[21]

Emmanuel Prud'homme continued to expand Bermuda throughout the 1820s, beginning with an exchange of property with Benjamin Metoyer in 1821 that made Metoyer Point part of the Prud'hommes' plantation. Located just south of Oakland, the property was land that Metoyer's wife Aurore, who was also Emmanuel's niece, inherited from her father Remy Lambre after his death in 1815. Another significant addition to Bermuda came in 1831 when Emmanuel bought the rest of Rachal's plantation, which included land on both sides of the river to the north of Bermuda. He also continued to expand his labor force, bringing the total number of slaves in his possession to 96 by 1830.

By the early 1830s, Phanor Prud'homme was able to take over more and more of the responsibilities of running Bermuda. He was also courting his cousin Susanne Lise Metoyer, daughter of Remy Lambre's daughter Aurore and her husband Benjamin Metoyer. Phanor and Lise were married on January 12, 1835, and spent the remainder of their lives at Bermuda. "A man of culture and refinement,"[22] Phanor Prud'homme became a leader in Natchitoches Parish as a young man, serving as a justice of the peace in the 1830s and being appointed a captain in the State Militia in 1842.

18. Emmanuel's oldest sister, Marie Louise, married Jean François Rouqier in 1778 and, around 1800, built what is now known as the Prud'homme-Rouqier House on Jefferson Street in downtown Natchitoches.
19. Malone, "Oakland Plantation," p. 39.
20. Beau Fort is only one of several plantations with a connection to the Prud'hommes that survive along Cane River, including Oak Lawn, Cherokee, Cedar Bend and Riverside. See Robert B. DeBlieux, Cane River Country: "La Côte Joyeuse" and Kisatchie National Forest" (*Natchitoches Times*, 1993), pp. 13, 14-15, 18, 22.
21. Fortier, no page numbers.
22. Fortier, no page numbers.

Figure 3 Pierre Phanor Prud'homme I (1807-1865), youngest son of Emmanuel and Catherine Lambre Prud'homme. (Prud'homme Family Coll.)

More importantly, he served in the constitutional convention of 1842, which drafted a new and "remarkably democratic" constitution for Louisiana.[23] In addition, he also served two terms in the state legislature in the late 1850s, although the precise dates have not been documented.[24]

Emmanuel and Catherine Prud'homme enlarged their house in the 1820s and/or 1830s, and it is possible that Phanor and Lise lived with them after their marriage. However, when the 1840 census was taken, Emmanuel and his son Phanor were listed as separate heads of house, which would not have been the case if they had been living in the same house. On January 3, 1842, Phanor noted in his journal that workers "began the extension to the house" and, in February, that he had "contracted with the painter Morin to have the two houses painted."[25] It is likely that the "extension" mentioned was to what is now called the Doctor's House, where one significant antebellum addition to the original structure has been identified.[26] Its proximity to the Big House and the absence of any certain evidence of another early house on the plantation suggests the possibility that it was built for the younger Prud'homme family in the 1830s and that they occupied it until the elder Prud'hommes died in the late 1840s. However, it was not unusual in French Creole Louisiana for the parents to move to smaller quarters and let the oldest son and his new family occupy the larger house.

Phanor and Lise Prud'homme's first child, Catherine Adeline, was born in March 1836, followed two years later by Jacques Alphonse, who was born in April 1838 and would inherit Oakland Plantation after the Civil War. A third child, Marie Emma, was born in 1840 and, in 1844, another son, Pierre Emmanuel, named for Phanor's father who died in May 1845 at the age of 83. Their last child, Marie Therese Henrietta,

23. Carolyn Breedlove, Bermuda/Oakland Plantation, 1830-1880, unpublished masters thesis, Northwestern State University of Louisiana, 1999, p. 12.
24. Mills, p. 76; Henry E. Chambers, "P. Emanuel Prud'homme," A History of Louisiana, Vol. 2 (New York: American Historical Society, 1925), p. 223.
25. Tom Thomas, "Historic Resource Study, Oakland Plantation (Draft)," (unpublished mss, Denver Service Center, NPS, 2000), p. 32.
26. See NPS Historic Structure Report for the Doctor's House, 2002.

was born in May 1848, barely two months before the death of Phanor's 85- year- old mother in August.

Phanor Prud'homme administered the succession of his parents' estates. When the community property was finally sold in January 1850, the proceeds amounted to more than $90,000, a huge estate at a time when the average Southern farmer's estate might have amounted to a few hundred dollars. In the sale, Phanor purchased Bermuda for $15,000 as well as the *vacherie*, or ranch, that his father had established on Saline Lake in the early 1800s. He also bought half of the slaves and virtually all of the farming equipment and much of the livestock.[27]

As Phanor was settling his parents' estate in August 1849, a great flood swept the Red River, cutting a new channel above Natchitoches and leaving eighteen to twenty inches of water around the big house at Bermuda. Eventually the main channel of the river would shift five miles to the east, but for another fifty years flooding remained a regular occurrence all along what is now Cane River Lake.

One of the most remarkable documents to survive in the Prud'homme family's archives is a diary that was kept by Lestan Prud'homme II, grandson of Emmanuel Prud'homme's brother Antoine. Begun in 1850 and continuing into 1852, it offers some remarkable insights into the Prud'hommes' daily life. Lestan's parents' plantation was next door to Bermuda and he writes frequently about what one Prud'homme historian called "a prolific Creole social lifestyle" during the antebellum period in the area south of Natchitoches that the French Creoles called *La Cote Joyeuse*.[28] Amid soirees and visits by family and friends, the Prud'hommes remained committed to educating their children, too. They had an extensive library including original editions of Voltaire, Moliere, Diderot and others, most of them in French. In addition, with no public schools, the Prud'hommes maintained a private school in their home that was attended by their own children as well as some of their nearby relatives. Probably located in one of the rooms on the north side of the Big House, the school presumably included a private tutor.[29]

The 1850s would be a decade of unprecedented prosperity for the Prud'hommes, if not one of unmitigated happiness. The promise of the decade for Phanor Prud'homme was cut short by the untimely death of his wife, who fell ill with an unknown fever and "suffering much with a pain in her shoulder." In spite of the ministrations of two doctors, she died on May 19, 1852. Only 33 years old, she left behind five children, the youngest not yet four years old. Lestan's diary provides a poignant account of her passing:

> Lise though not expected to pass the night... only departed this life at 2 1/2 P.M..... The house was full with the relations of the deceased, all crying and plunged in the deepest sorrow.... Never shall I forget the appearance... of the... unfortunate

27. Breedlove, pp. 14-15.

28. Haynie, *Legends of Oakland*, p. 40.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 42.

> husband, his face bathed in tears, his eyes almost wild... when coming up to several gentlemen and I who were in the gallery, he addressed us in the following words: "It is all over, my poor Lise is no more."..... He remained a few seconds silent, and as resuming the command of his mind, he continued, "'tis now I need courage, where are my poor children?"... and flew to the embrace of his children, who were crying and shrieking at the loss of their mother....[30]

In April 1853, Phanor's oldest son, Jacques Alphonse, turned fifteen and was sent to the "collegiate Commercial Institute at New Haven, Connecticut," to begin his preparation for college.[31] In the meantime, Cephalide Metoyer Archinard, Lise's widowed sister, had probably already moved to Bermuda to help Phanor with his younger children.[32] Her own two children, Desiree and Irene, became part of the household as well, and it fell to Cephalide to comfort Phanor when, in October 1854, his fifteen-year- old daughter Emma died. By then, his eldest daughter Adeline was already courting Winter Wood Brazzeale (1827- 1896), and in January 1855 they were married. Exactly ten months later, on October 16, 1855, Phanor and Marianne were married as well.[33]

In 1854, the passage of the Kansas- Nebraska Act repealed the Missouri Compromise and, raising the specter of the expansion of slavery in the West, directly precipitated the formation of the national Republican Party. In May 1856, violence erupted in the Kansas Territory, and for the next several months, the nation's attention was focused on "Bleeding Kansas," one of the major precursors to the Civil War.[34] Phanor Prud'homme's oldest son, Alphonse, was apparently ready to enter Yale University in the fall; but, according to his biographer, "the intense sectional feeling" over Kansas "led his father to call him home" in October 1856. In November, as James Buchanan was being elected the nation's fifteenth President, Alphonse enrolled at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville where he would remain for the next two years.[35]

In October 1857, Phanor Prud'homme had the misfortune to lose his second wife, Cephalide, after not quite two years of marriage. Like her sister Lise, she died at a relatively young age, forty, and left Phanor to spend the final eight years of his life as a widower. The following June, Alphonse transferred from the University of Virginia to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill where he studied civil engineering. In the fall of 1859, his fifteen- year- old younger brother Emmanuel Prud'homme left Bermuda for Washington D. C., where he entered Georgetown College, and around the same time, their sister Henriette left Bermuda

30. As quoted in Breedlove, pp. 16-17, from Lestan Prud'homme diary, 1850-1852, Irma Sompayrac Willard Collection, Cammie G. Henry Research Center, Watson Memorial Library, Northwestern State University of Louisiana.
31. Mills, p. 76.
32. Breedlove, "Oakland Plantation," p. 18.
33. Mrs. Lucille K. Prud'homme, *Prud'homme Family*, p. 18.
34. Breedlove, pp. 20-21, states that Phanor Prud'homme attended a convention of the American or Know-Nothing Party in Baton Rouge in June 1856. If that is true, Prud'homme's participation is inexplicable, given the virulent xenophobic nature of the party.
35. Fortier, no page number.

for boarding school in New Orleans. As the clouds of war began to gather, Phanor Prud'homme was left alone at Bermuda.[36]

Alphonse spent two years completing his studies at Chapel Hill before graduating in June 1860 with a Bachelor of Science degree.[37] He was, apparently, an outstanding student and his major professor gave him a letter of unqualified recommendation, which read in part:

> Mr. James [sic] A. Prud'homme has been my pupil in civil engineering for two years. It gives me pleasure to testify sincerely to his worth as a gentleman and as a student. Punctual in discharging his duties and diligent in his studies, he has been very successful in making acquisitions in the department under my care. I confidently recommend him as a young man well worthy of trust from all who may feel inclined to secure his services. In mechanics, field work, drawing and the use of instruments, he has made such advancement that he needs but time and opportunity to do anything required of a young man in his profession.[38]

Alphonse spent the summer and early fall of 1860 at Bermuda, no doubt helping his father with the plantation. In October, with the cotton harvest well underway, he took a job as a civil engineer with the Mississippi and Pacific Railroad, a precursor to the transcontinental railroad that would finally unite the east and west coasts in 1869.

36. Haynie, p.45.
37. Mills, p. 76.
38. Fortier, no page numbers.

The election of Abraham Lincoln as the nation's sixteenth President in November 1860 on a platform opposing the expansion of slavery was the last straw for the South's "fire- eaters." Within days, South Carolina called a convention to consider secession and, on December 20 and by a vote of 169- 0, became the first of the southern states to secede from the Union. In January, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, Florida, and Louisiana followed suit, as did Texas on February 1. By the time Lincoln was inaugurated on March 4, 1861, the Confederate States of America was a reality; with the firing on Fort Sumter on April 12, the Civil War began.

Emmanuel Prud'homme left school in Georgetown shortly after Lincoln's inauguration, but his brother Alphonse continued his work with the railroad until after Fort Sumter when he, too, returned home to Bermuda. By May, both had enlisted in the Confederate Army. As her brothers left for war, Henriette returned to Bermuda from New Orleans to be with her father. Phanor's step- daughter and niece, Desiree, also came back to Bermuda in 1861 after her husband, Emile LaCoul, joined the army.[39]

The Civil War

After Fort Sumter, western and northern buyers quickly withdrew from the cotton market, although New Orleans factors continued to buy

39. Emil LaCoul's plantation, now known as Laura Plantation, was at Vacherie in the southeastern part of the state. Coincidentally, this was the same plantation that had once been owned by Phillippe Guillaume Benjamin Gilles Duparc, whose wife Anna "Nanette" Prud'homme was Phanor's aunt.

for a while longer. It was a banner year for cotton production, but by year's end, one Louisiana planter lamented that "all commercial interests are entirely destroyed" by the Federal blockade of Southern ports. "Cotton and sugar cannot be sold."[40] A few of the more optimistic planters continued to plant cotton in 1862, and some may even have managed to export their crop overland to the Mexican port at Matagorda until that avenue, too, was closed by the Union blockade. The Federal occupation of New Orleans in April 1862 and of Baton Rouge a short time later forced removal of the state's capital to Alexandria, and ensured that cotton would be worthless to Confederate planters in Louisiana for the duration of the war. As a result, the Prud'hommes and most of the rest of the planters along Cane River had little incentive to continue planting cotton and, instead, focused their efforts on growing corn and other products that could help supply the Confederate armies.

On May 1, 1861, following speeches and a special service at the cathedral, Alphonse Prud'homme left Natchitoches with one of the local companies of volunteer soldiers, the "Pelican Rangers." By June, the company had been divided and they were at Camp Poteau in Arkansas. Alphonse's brother- in- law Winter Wood Brazzealle was captain of Prud'homme Rangers No. 1, and serving with them were Alphonse's cousin Lestan Prud'homme and Winter Brazzealle's younger brother Baker Blount Brazzealle, who would marry Alphonse's younger sister Henriette in 1865.[41]

40. Malone, p. 68.

The Prud'hommes and Brazzealles did not have to wait long for action. By August they were in Missouri under the command of Brig. Gen. Ben McCulloch and, on the tenth, engaged a Union army under Brig. Gen. Nathaniel Lyon in a fierce battle at Wilson's Creek. It was a Confederate victory, but there were over 2,300 casualties on both sides, among them Alphonse's friend and cousin Placide Bossier. "I could not stay to see him die," Alphonse wrote home; "... I cut a large lock of his hair.... I have also his prayer book." His brother- in- law Winter was, he also wrote, "cool as a cucumber, cautioning his men constantly to be steady." Alphonse himself was complimented by his commanding officer who noted that he was "reported to have cheered and acted with coolness."[42]

Alphonse was promoted to sergeant after Wilson's Creek and, in early March 1862, was in the thick of battle again as a Confederate army under Maj. Gen. Earl van Dorn engaged the Union Army of the Southwest at the Battle of Pea Ridge in Benton County, Arkansas. This time, Alphonse and the Confederates were not so lucky; as the three- day battle ended, he found himself wounded and a prisoner of war. He managed to escape ten days later but was so badly wounded that he was discharged and sent home. In addition, his one- year tenure of enlistment was up in April, and so he spent the rest of the spring and early summer recuperating at Bermuda.[43]

41. Breedlove, pp. 24-25.
42. Breedlove, p. 27.
43. Fortier, no page numbers.

Hopes for a brief conflict and a certain Confederate victory had faded quickly and, with the fall of New Orleans in April 1862, evaporated altogether. Alphonse's younger brother Emmanuel was also on active duty, and back home their father was deeply engaged in supporting the Confederate war effort. Continuing to manage his plantation, he was in routine contact with the Confederate government and constantly sending food and other supplies to the Confederate commissary as well as to his own friends and relatives. With the ever- tightening Union blockade of Southern ports, such basics as soap, candles, and cloth were increasingly in short supply, and Phanor Prud'homme was active in reviving some of the home industry that could supply those goods. Spinning and weaving were especially important, and Phanor organized and helped supply spinners and weavers on his own plantation as well as throughout the parish.[44]

By July 1862, Alphonse Prud'homme had recovered from his injuries and joined his brother- in- law Winter Brazzealle in recruiting a battalion of five companies of cavalry. Organized on September 21, 1862, the Second Louisiana Cavalry was led by Colonel W. G. Vincent, Lieutenant Colonel James McWaters, Major Winter Brazzealle, and Alphonse Prud'homme as adjutant. By October, Phanor Prud'homme was again alone at Bermuda, worrying for both of his sons as well as his son- in- law.

By the spring of 1863, the Union armies were beginning to expand their control beyond the southern parishes around New Orleans that they had occupied the previous year. On April 14, Alphonse's unit was engaged in a fierce battle at Irish Bend in St. Mary's Parish, which resulted in a Union victory and opened the way for Federal occupation of western Louisiana. The battle also left Alphonse severely wounded for a second time, although this time he escaped capture. Again, he was forced to return home to recuperate.

In May 1863, Federal troops occupied Alexandria, the temporary state capital after the fall of New Orleans, and state officials were forced to flee again, this time to Shreveport. Recovered from his wounds, Alphonse left Bermuda in June to rejoin his command and resume his duties as adjutant.[45] Anticipating imminent invasion, Phanor and others along the Red River were desperately making arrangements to save what they could, some even going so far as to send their slaves and livestock to Texas. After his long- time overseer Seneca Pace left to join the army in 1862, Phanor appears to have had an increasingly difficult time in securing the services of a competent overseer. In May 1862, he engaged a Mr. Phelps as overseer, but he was gone in October. In December Prud'homme hired P. T. McNeely, but for unknown reasons, McNeely was let go in August 1863. Subsequent overseers were equally short- lived.[46]

Meanwhile, Phanor's youngest son Emmanuel was a member of the Twenty- sixth Louisiana

44. Breedlove, p. 32.

45. An adjutant is an army staff officer who helps the commanding officer by handling correspondence, distributing orders, etc.

46. Breedlove, pp. 99-100; Thomas, p. 47.

Regiment of Lt. General John C. Pemberton's army at Vicksburg. In May 1863, General Ulysses S. Grant's armies converged on the city, which was the last obstacle to full Federal control of the Mississippi River. On May 22, Grant began a terrible siege and bombardment of Vicksburg that went on for six weeks before Pemberton finally surrendered the city on July 4, 1863. With the fall of Port Hudson a few days later, Federal forces had complete control of the Mississippi, effectively splitting the Confederacy in half. Among the thirty thousand Confederate soldiers who surrendered at Vicksburg was Emmanuel Prud'homme; but he was soon paroled, ultimately rejoining the Confederate army and serving until the end of the war.[47]

Through the early years of the war, conquest of northwest Louisiana was considered a low priority for the Union armies; but, with northern industry suffering from want of cotton, priorities changed in 1863. By the spring of 1864, forty- five thousand Federal troops were massed at Alexandria, awaiting the rains that would make the Red River navigable and allow conquest of the upper reaches of the valley and confiscation of its rich store of cotton. All over upper Louisiana, massive amounts of cotton had built up in warehouses as the Federal blockade of Southern ports shut down the cotton export market. Over twelve thousand bales were reported in the Natchitoches area alone, and in order to prevent a potentially- valuable commodity from falling into enemy hands, Confederate army officers executed a two- year- old proclamation from the Governor that ordered "the destruction of all cotton within the limits of Louisiana that is in danger of falling into the hands of the enemy." By the time Federal forces under Maj. Gen. Nathaniel Banks moved out of Alexandria in late March 1864, the banks of Cane River were already ablaze with burning cotton. As the Federal troops ascended the valley in early April, cotton continued to burn; and one Confederate soldier remembered:

> From the 24- Mile Ferry [below Cloutierville] up to the Town of Natchitoches, it looked like everything was on fire, every plantation had fire and smoke. Cotton was burning. Cotton gins and gin houses were burning. And it seemed to be a retreat of 24 miles through the fire and smoke of burning cotton and cotton houses and even when we arrived at Natchitoches, there was cotton burning on the opposite bank of the river.[48]

Although many residents remembered wanton destruction by Federal troops, the goal remained destruction of cotton itself and not necessarily the means of its production. At least officially, destruction of private property was to be avoided, as Federal commanders made clear in orders issued in late March:

> In relation to cotton gins where there are but small lots of cotton and not enough time to

47. Mills, p. 77.

48. Sharon Sholars Brown, editor, "Papers of the Fifth Grand Reunion of the Descendants of the Founders of Natchitoches" (Conference held 27-28 July 1984, Northwestern State University), p. 32, Cammie G. Henry Research Center, Watson Memorial Library, Northwestern State University of Louisiana.

> remove this, the cotton will not be fired, but in all such cases every effort should be made to roll the cotton out. But where there is cotton in any quantity in the gin- houses, and no opportunity to remove it, it must be burned.... You will also refrain from burning where the gin houses connect with dwellings or other expensive range of buildings.[49]

In April, battles at Mansfield and Pleasant Hill, northwest of Natchitoches, resulted in a Federal defeat and "a frantic retreat... a relentless 30- hour- long forced march" that took the Federal troops back down Cane River. On this march, there was widespread looting and burning of civilian property, including the entire town of Grand Ecore, above Natchitoches. One Confederate general remembered

> the destruction of this country by the enemy exceeds anything in history. For many miles every dwelling house, every Negro cabin, every cotton gin, every corn crib, and even chicken houses have been burned to the ground.[50]

That assessment of the extent of destruction that occurred during the Red River campaign may have been overstated; even so, the Prud'hommes' losses were heavy. The Confederates (or Prud'homme himself) had burned nine hundred bales of cotton at Bermuda, and the steam- powered gin that Phanor had built in 1860 was destroyed by Federal troops.[51] Still, although the Hertzogs lost their house at Magnolia, the Big House at Bermuda was not burned nor were Beau Fort, Cherokee, and a number of the other Cane River houses.

Yankee soldiers apparently were in the Prud'hommes' house, however, and according to family legend slashed the portrait of Lise Prud'homme in the parlor.[52] Family tradition also holds that the slaves moved all of the furniture out of the big house, which they expected to be destroyed by Union soldiers, and begged the soldiers not to fire the dwelling. Another family story tells that Phanor was bedridden in the spring of 1864 and, for that reason, the house was not burned.[53] Even more romantic is the story that Phanor Prud'homme defied Gen. Banks' troops with a shotgun, thereby saving his house from destruction.[54] Whatever the reason, the Prud'hommes' house was still standing when the Federal troops departed. For Bermuda and Natchitoches Parish, the war was mostly over.

In July 1864, Lt. Alphonse Prud'homme was mustered out of the army on account of the severe wounds he had received and from which he had never fully recovered. That gave him the opportunity to continue his courtship of Ambrose LeComte's twenty- four- year- old

49. Testimony of F. L. Grappe in Charles C. Bertrand v. United States, Case #345, French and American Claims commission, microfilm, p. 33, Cammie G. Henry Research Center, Watson Memorial Library, Northwestern State University of Louisiana.
50. Brown, "Papers of the Grand Reunion," p. 34.
51. Breedlove, p. 36.
52. Association of Natchitoches Women, *Natchitoches*, p. 46.
53. Steve Gross and Susan Daley, Old Houses (New York: Stewart, Tabor, and Chang, 1991), p. 141.
54. Herman de Bachelle Seebold, Old Louisiana Plantation Homes and Family Trees (Gretna, LA: Pelican Publishing Co., 1971 reprint of 1941 edition), p. 366.

daughter, Elise; and on September 6, 1864, they were married. In spite of the hardships all around them, they were still able to have a proper wedding, perhaps at her father's town house in Natchitoches since the big house at Magnolia was in ruins. Elise even managed to send "a splendid cake, a rich bouquet, and a finely wrought miniature Confederate flag" to a friend who placed an announcement of their marriage in the *Natchitoches Times*, which had somehow managed to resume publication. "We could hardly realize," the announcement read,

> as we beheld the superb cake, that destitution or want ever scowled upon our happy land. We were immediately carried back, in dreamy imagination, to the happy times of yore, ere the foul feet of the invader had left an impress on our soil.[55]

It was a long, sad winter for the Prud'hommes and most other Southerners as the war ground to its inevitable end. The election of Lincoln to a second term coincided with Sherman's "March to the Sea" in November and the fall of Savannah on Christmas Eve 1864, which destroyed the Confederacy's ability to feed itself and left its army and much of the civilian population on the verge of starvation. As the Federal army plundered its way through the Carolinas in February 1865, efforts to negotiate a peace conference collapsed and few were surprised when Gen. Lee surrendered his Army of Northern Virginia on April 9. Three days later, Lincoln was assassinated and, on April 28, the last Confederate army surrendered. The war was over.

55. Deblieux Collection 5-D-3, Folder 262, Cammie G. Henry Research Center, Northwestern State University of Louisiana.

Reconstruction

In spite of the turmoil and uncertainty that were everywhere in 1865, the Prud'hommes appear to have managed to hang on to at least some of their work force and to negotiate some sort of contract with the freed slaves to continue working the plantation. Understandably, records are sparse to non- existent in the immediate aftermath of the war, but slowly the Prud'hommes were able to reorder their lives.

In August 1865, there was another wedding at Bermuda when Phanor Prud'homme's youngest child, seventeen- year- old Henrietta—Harriet, she was called—married Dr. Blunt Baker Brazzealle, the younger brother of her sister Adeline's husband, Winter Brazzealle. Three weeks later, Alphonse and Elise celebrated the birth of their first child, whom they named Pierre Phanor Prud'homme II. The war, however, had left the baby's grandfather and namesake in poor health. That fall, the elder Prud'homme spent most of his time in Natchitoches at the LeComte's town house, and it was there that he died on October 12, 1865, at the relatively young age of 58.[56]

56. For Phanor Prud'homme's obituary, see Melrose Coll., Scrapbook 256, Cammie G. Henry Research Center, Watson Memorial Library, Northwestern State University of Louisiana.

DÉCÉDÉ

Hier soir à la résidence de Mr. A. Lecomte

PIERRE PHANOR PRUDHOMME,

Ses amis et connaissances sont priés d'assister à son enterrement qui aura lieu à la Cathédrale, cet après midi, à 4 heures.

Le convoi funèbre partira de la résidence de Mr. A. Lecomte, à 3½ heures.

De la part de la famille.

Natchitoches, le 13 Octobre, 1865.

Figure 4 Announcement of death of Phanor Prud'homme in October 1865. (Melrose Scrapbooks, Cammie G. Henry Research Center, Watson Memorial Library, Northwestern State University of Louisiana)

Phanor's brother- in- law (and Natchitoches mayor) Felix Metoyer administered the estate; and, as Breedlove pointed out, the inventory of the estate "showed, hard times aside, how relatively lucky the Prud'hommes of Bermuda were." Unlike the LeComte's at Magnolia and many other friends and neighbors on Cane River, the Prud'hommes' house and furniture were intact. And if the gin and nine hundred bales of cotton had been burned, most of the outbuildings survived as did their farm equipment, wagons, a buggy, a carriage, "a surprising amount of livestock," and four thousand bushels of corn. Nevertheless, a tremendous portion of Phanor's estate had vanished with emancipation of his slaves, and real estate values were half what they had been in 1860. Even so, the appraised value of his estate came to $45,986.76; and, in spite of large debts, the Prud'hommes still had resources that would have been the envy of most Southern farmers.[57]

The collapse of the South's slave- based labor system and the widespread destruction and neglect of railroads, factories, and plantations that had occurred during the Civil War left the South's predominantly agricultural economy in shambles and forced planters like Phanor Prud'homme to renegotiate their relationships with their former slaves from the bottom up. In spite of the turmoil and uncertainty of 1865, Prud'homme negotiated contracts with those of his workers "who did not leave with the Yankees in the spring of 1864" and began to return the plantation to normal operation. With his death in October of that year, however, it was left to his son Alphonse Prud'homme to settle up with the workers in January 1866 and to negotiate contracts for the next year.[58]

In early January 1867, Prud'homme's "hands" offered to renew their contract from 1866, but only if they got all Saturdays off. "I will not agree to that," Prud'homme wrote in the plantation journals that he resumed keeping in 1866. He was still unsure of himself, however, and needed the advice of his uncle Felix Metoyer to finally decide to "stick to my decision and give only Saturday PM at risk of losing all hands." Two days later, the old contracts were renewed and Alphonse was able to record "hands quiet[,] appear settled and satisfied."[59] Even in

57. Breedlove, pp. 38-39.
58. Prud'homme Coll. #613, Series 3.1.2, "Plantation Journals," Folder 166, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina.
59. Ibid., Folder 279.

January 1869, however, Alphonse recorded in his journal that "we have had considerable difficulty contracting with our hands this year and many are not yet settled."[60]

By the late 1860s, however, an imperfect system of tenancy and sharecropping had become the arrangements of choice between planter and worker and began to bring some semblance of order to their relationship. Tenancy (i.e., renting of land on which to produce crops) offered some semblance of freedom, but few of the freed slaves, most with nothing but the clothes on their backs, had even the modest resources required to consider tenancy. Instead, they contracted with planters to produce a crop, almost always cotton, to which they would be entitled a certain "share," usually no more than half, at the end of the season. While sharecropping did not require a cash outlay for land rental, it did require seed and equipment, which most "croppers" could not afford to buy. With little money in circulation, the crop lien laws that were passed in the late 1860s were critical to the sharecropping arrangement and contributed greatly to the rise of country stores like the one Alphonse Prud'homme opened at Oakland in 1873. Since land and equipment were considered virtually worthless as collateral after the Civil War, these laws made it possible for farmers, including sharecroppers, to borrow against an unplanted crop to obtain the loans necessary to purchase seed and supplies for planting and the foodstuffs and other items necessary for survival until a crop was actually produced and sold. A "makeshift" arrangement held together by "financial baling wire," according to one historian, it gave credit- starved farmers (black and white) the money they needed to survive at a time when capital was scarce and most of the rural South had no ready access to a bank of any kind.[61]

Crop lien laws were "a curse upon the land," it has been noted, and by 1889 had succeeded in putting nearly three- fourths of the South's white yeomen farmers in debt to supply merchants and had made practically all black farmers little more than serfs upon the land.[62] Under the crop lien system, interest was not figured as such but rather factored into a two-tier price system, with credit prices often set thirty percent or more higher than the cash price. Although often usurious by today's standards, the interest charged through crop liens covered a great deal of risk for the lender, whose loans were secured by unplanted crops that were subject to the usual vagaries of weather and large market forces beyond the farmers' control. In addition, merchants like the Prud'hommes often paid factors and merchant suppliers high rates of interest themselves so that the Prud'hommes' twenty percent charges for credit seem relatively modest when considered in that context.

Although many Southern planters used the crop lien as a tool to reduce their former slaves to peonage, such appears not to have been the case with the Prud'hommes at Oakland, if

60. *Ibid.*, Series 3.1.1., Folder 149.

61. C. Vann Woodward, *Origins of the New South* (LSU Press, 1951), p. 180.
62. Wall, *Louisiana: A History*, p. 236.C. Vann Woodward, *Origins of the New South* (LSU Press, 1951), p. 180.

Breedlove's interpretation of the historical record is accurate. Even after disastrously low harvests in 1867 and 1868, nearly all of Oakland's tenants and croppers received at least some payment in money at the year- end accounting in 1869. In 1873, only two of the tenants were in debt to the Prud'hommes and that only for a total of $7.72.[63] As Breedlove wrote, "Perhaps [the Prud'hommes] could have done more, or been more generous. On the other hand, they could certainly, in their environment and historical period, have done less, been less supportive and more selfish." She noted that there were "remarkably few errors" in accounting in the Prud'homme's ledger books; and, in the end, concluded that the Prud'hommes' "relatively even- handed efforts complete a picture of [Oakland] and their management of it... as both enlightened and pragmatic."[64] It remained, however, that freed slaves—and poor whites, too, for that matter—had few options beyond the often- miserable sharecropping and tenancy arrangements that were offered by southern planters.

As they were negotiating with their laborers, the Prud'hommes were also struggling to rebuild the plantation's infrastructure. With their gins and presses destroyed, they were forced to haul their cotton into Natchitoches for ginning in 1865 and again in 1866. However, by late summer of 1866, a new gin and press were under construction, although neither was brought into operation until near the end of October. At the same time, they were tearing down some of the old slave quarters and replacing them with new houses, which may have included the two extant tenant houses south of the Cottage.[65] They were also making some improvements to the Big House, most significantly including construction of a new kitchen off the rear of the house.

Settlement of Phanor Prud'homme's estate was fraught with difficulties and was not finally settled until the early 1870s. The brothers apparently agreed to a division of Bermuda in 1867 but it was not until December 1868 that an auction of their father's estate allowed them to gain title to the plantation.[66] (Their sister Harriet bought the Prud'homme townhouse in Natchitoches.) Even then, the delay in settling the estate hindered their ability to rebuild the plantation, and they were forced to mortgage the place in 1871. As a result, when Phanor's son Emmanuel married Julia Buard in January 1866, the couple was apparently unable to establish their own household. Family tradition states that they lived in the Big House with Alphonse and Elise, which is probably true since Dr. Joseph Leveque apparently moved into what is now known as "the doctor's house" in June 1866.[67] Not until September 1870 were Em-

63. 1873 ledger, Prud'homme Collection #613, Series 3.1.6.
64. Carolyn Breedlove, "Bermuda/Oakland Plantation, 1830-1880," unpublished master's thesis, Northwestern State University of Louisiana, 1999.
65. Prud'homme Collection #613, Series 3.1.5, folder 271.
66. Mills, p. 77, gives a date of 1867 for division of Bermuda. Breedlove, p. 41-42, recounts some of the difficulties with Phanor Prud'homme's succession.
67. Prud'homme Collection #613, Series 3.1.5, folder 271; interview with Rosalie Keator Prud'homme, undated, files of Ann Rose Malone.

manuel and Julia able to move to their portion of the plantation across the river, which they named Atahoe after the bayou that traversed the property. Alphonse and Elise retained the west- bank portion of Bermuda, which they renamed "Oakland" for the liveoaks that his grandfather had planted in 1826 and which had then reached maturity.[68]

By the time, Emmanuel moved across the river to Atahoe in 1870, some of the hardships of the Civil War were receding into the background. He and Julia had three children by then (they would have five more by 1882) and Alphonse and Elise also had three- - - Phanor II (1865-1948), Jules LeComte (1867- 1916), and Edward Carrington (1869- 1941). The 1870 Federal Census also shows that they had regained a degree of prosperity. Both Emmanuel and Alphonse listed their occupations as farmer, with Emmauel listing $8,000 in real estate and $2,500 in personal property and Alphonse $9,000 in real estate and $11,428 in personal property.[69] If these values were a far cry from their father's wealth in the antebellum period, they still represented what would have seemed great riches to the vast majority of Southern farmers, black or white.

68. Haynie, p. 59; Malone, "Oakland Plantation, Its People's Testimony," p. 126; Mills, p. 77. Emmanuel and Julia Prud'homme must have built a new house at Atahoe in 1870. If a house had existed before that time, they would have surely occupied it after their marriage.
69. Breedlove, pp. 43-44.

Oakland Plantation

Certainly by 1873, Alphonse Prud'homme's Oakland Plantation was in full operation. In April of that year, he and his brother made a final, "amicable partition" of old Bermuda, with Emannuel's portion (mostly on the east bank of Cane River) amounting to 837 acres and Alphonse's portion (all on the west bank) totaling 893 acres.[70] In addition, in June 1873, Alphonse was issued business, liquor, and tobacco licenses for the plantation store that he opened that year. Over the next twenty years, the Prud'homme store would become a significant source of income for the family.

In spite of falling cotton prices and the poor economic conditions that made the last quarter of the nineteenth century "the Long Depression" for Southern farmers, Alphonse Prud'homme managed to restore something of the family's former prosperity. Two more children—Marie Cora (1871- 1952) and Lallah (1875- 1958)—were born to Alphonse and Elise Prud'homme before Reconstruction formally ended in Louisiana in 1877. Three more would be born over the next six years: Marie Julia (1878- 1933), Marie Maie (1880- 1964), and Marie Noelie (1883- 1978).

By the late 1870s, the family was able to afford the luxury of travel again; and, as his father and grandfather before him had done, Alphonse was even able to send his children to college outside the South, which was no small feat in those days. By 1885, all three of the Prud'hommes' sons—Phanor, Edward, and Jules—were

70. Breedlove, pp. 44-45.

enrolled at Notre Dame University while their eldest daughter Cora was attending St. Mary's Academy in Natchitoches. The other Prud'homme girls were educated at St. Vincent's Academy in Shreveport, Louisiana, with Maie and Julia both graduating in 1895.[71]

While the operation of Oakland as a cotton plantation remained the focal point of his livelihood, Alphonse Prud'homme was, like his father, prominent in the parish's business and financial circles and was actively involved in the economic development of the parish in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The New Orleans & Pacific Railroad (later called the Texas & Pacific) was organized shortly after the Civil War; and in 1871, Natchitoches appointed an agent to negotiate with the company to have the rail line brought through the parish. In 1875, Alphonse Prud'homme and others, including his uncle Benjamin Metoyer, even donated rights of way for the railroad through their property. When the line was actually constructed in 1882, however, it bypassed the town of Natchitoches entirely. Threatened with economic ruin as a result of the routing of the railroad, the business leaders in Natchitoches incorporated their own railroad company in 1885 and, two years later, levied a special tax to commence construction of a "Tap Line" railroad from the Cypress station north to the town of Natchitoches. Surveyed by Alphonse Prud'homme, this spur line paralleled the present route of Louisiana Highway 1, bringing rail service through the heart of Isle Brevelle and within a couple of miles of Oakland Plantation.[72] By 1895, and probably before, Alphonse Prud'homme had constructed Brevelle Station (sometimes called Prud'homme Station) near the railroad crossing at Bayou Brevelle, about half- way between Natchez and Cypress. According to Mayo Prud'homme, Alphonse Prud'homme "put a side track there [to] pick up cotton, or anything else that had to be shipped."[73] Eventually, however, Prud'homme closed the station to reduce cut-through traffic on the Oakland farm road that began near the store and Big House and ran southwesterly to the railroad station.[74]

In December 1877, Alain L. Metoyer was appointed postmaster for a new post office called "Bermuda" in Natchitoches Parish.[75] Although postal records do not indicate the precise location of that office, the map accompanying the application appears to indicate that the post office was located at Oakland Plantation in Alphonse Prud'homme's plantation store.[76]

71. Haynie, pp. 87-88.

72. Southern Publishing Company, *Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Natchitoches Parish, Louisiana* (Tuscaloosa, AL: Mills Historical Press, 1985 reprint of original 1890 edition), p. 315.
73. Malone, "Oakland Plantation...," p. 161.
74. Interview with Kenneth Prud'homme, 9 May 2001; "Natchez, Louisiana," unpublished MSS, Creighton Coll. (Folder 5), Cammie G. Henry Research Center, Watson Memorial Library, Northwestern State University of Louisiana.
75. "Post Master Appointments," Records of U. S. Post Office, microfilm M841, Roll 51, Federal Archives and Record Center, East Point, GA. Note that the section numbers in the Post Office records do not always correspond to the actual surveyed section numbers in Natchitoches Parish.
76. "Post Office Locations," Records of U. S. Post Office, microfilm M1126, Roll 244, Federal Archives and Record Center, East Point, GA.

Since there was as yet no free delivery of mail except in urban areas, rural post offices, which were almost always associated with a country store, were a great boon to area residents. The merchant, too, benefited since the presence of a post office helped increase his traffic and sales.

With the advent of the railroad through the parish, Alphonse Prud'homme greatly expanded the array of merchandise offered at the Oakland store, but he did not spend his time behind the counter. Instead, around 1878, he hired his cousin August Lambre Prud'homme[77] to run the store and keep the books. One of Alphonse's numerous cousins in the area, Lambre Prud'homme married Lucy Leveque in 1880 (although they later divorced) and continued to operate the store until his death in 1894.

Lucy was the daughter of the Prud'hommes' doctor J. A. Leveque, who lived and worked at Oakland from around 1866 until his death in 1893. It may have been after Lambre's death that Alphonse Prud'homme's son Jules LeComte "Buddy" Prud'homme (1867- 1916) began managing the store for his father and using the store as his residence. A small apartment was built for him on the north side of the store building where he is believed to have lived the rest of his life.[78] In addition, around 1900,

77. Lambre Prud'homme was the brother of the diarist Pierre Lestan Prud'homme. Their parents were Jacques Lestan Prud'homme and Marie Eliza Lambre.
78. Interview by the author with Kenneth Prud'homme, 3 April 2001.

Figure 5 Jacques Alphonse Prud'homme I, c. 1890. (Prud'homme Family Coll.)

Alphonse Prud'homme's son Edward assisted his brother "Buddy" as a clerk in the store.[79]

Alphonse Prud'homme was, according to a biographical sketch in 1890, "a member of one of the most prominent families in the State, and [was] broad- minded, liberal and intelligent, one who [had] the utmost confidence and respect from all classes." As a leader in the community, he was one of the directors of the Merchants and Planters Protective Union, one of the parish's earliest financial institutions when it was founded in 1880. Ten years later, he was also one of the original stockholders in the new Bank of Natchitoches.[80] A "stanch democrat [sic]," he had also been a candidate for the State Legislature in 1876 and "received the full

79. 1900 Federal Census, Natchitoches Parish.
80. Mills, *Biographical and Historical Memoirs*, p. 314-315.

Figure 6 Phanor Prud'homme II and Marie Laurie Cloutier, c. 1895. (Prud'homme Family Coll.)

vote of the whites and a portion of the colored men," although that was not enough to gain him a seat in the waning days of Reconstruction- era politics. He remained active in the Democratic Party, however, and served on the staff of at least three of Louisiana's Governors: William W. Heard, Newton C. Blanchard, and Jared Y. Sanders.

Alphonse and Elise Prud'homme's eldest son, Phanor II, graduated from Notre Dame with a degree in business administration in 1888 and returned to Natchitoches to assume his duties as heir to Oakland. By 1890, he was courting Marie Laure Cloutier, the nineteen- year- old daughter of Emile and Coralie Buard Cloutier, and on February 3, 1891, they were married.

Where they lived during the first few years of their marriage is not known; but by the time their first child, Jacques Alphonse Prud'homme II, was born in December 1896, they may have moved into the Cottage next door to his parents, where they appear to have been living when the Federal Census was taken in June 1900. By the time the census was taken, they had another child, Louise Vivian, and Laure Prud'homme was pregnant with another, Elise Elizabeth, who was born in December 1900. Phanor and Laure Prud'homme had six more children by 1913, but along the way, three of their children died. Six- year- old Louise Vivian died in March 1905, two weeks before the birth of Marie Leanore, who herself lived barely six weeks. Their second son, who they named after his grandfather, was born in February 1908 but lived only eleven days.

In April 1903, Alphonse Prud'homme celebrated his sixty- fifth birthday and, by then, had already begun turning over much of the responsibility for the operation of Oakland to his oldest son. Neither Phanor II nor his father could have foreseen the great changes in store for Oakland, even though both of them were already aware of the reports of growing losses from boll weevil infestations of the cotton crop in Texas, losses that were being reported in Louisiana by 1904. First observed in the Rio Grande Valley around 1893, the weevil steadily expanded its territory north and east until even the cotton- growing regions of Georgia and the Carolinas were being devastated by the end of World War I.

In the years leading up to World War I, the situation grew increasingly desperate; and, as Dr. Malone points out, many Southern farmers

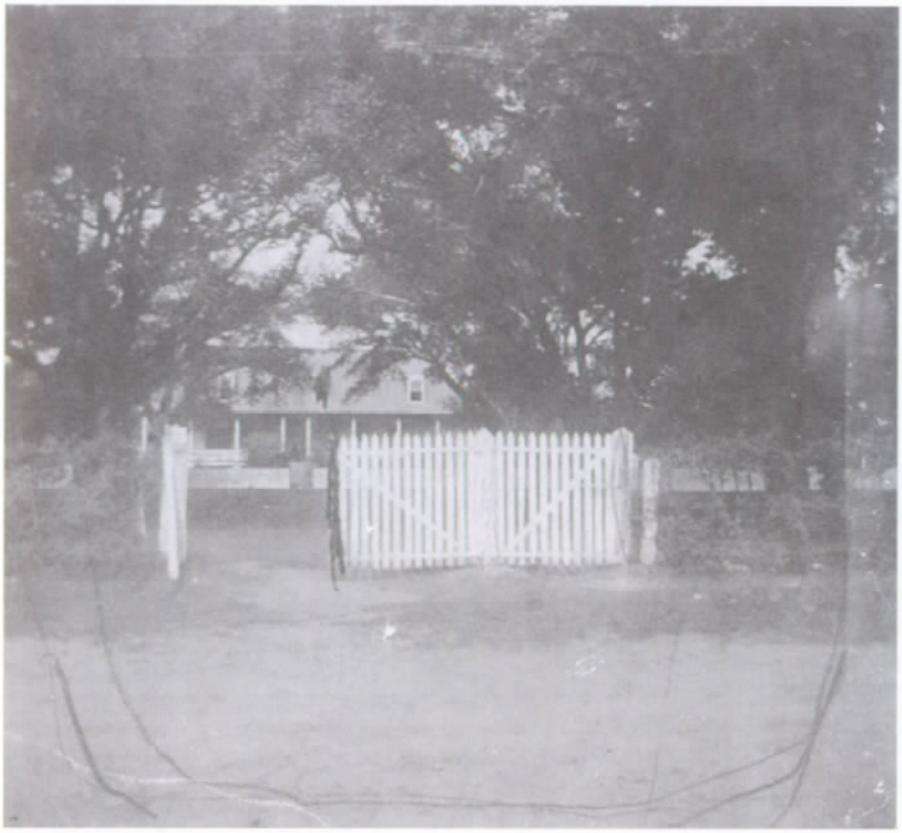

Figure 7 Earliest known photograph of Oakland, c. 1910. (Henley Hunter Coll., Cammie G. Henry Research Center, Watson Memorial Library, Northwestern State University of Louisiana)

were brought to "the brink of ruin" by the weevil. While the boll weevil did not bring an end to cotton farming in the South, it did make the business far more difficult and only slowly did farmers learn to deal with the pest. The Prud'hommes were perhaps better prepared than most since they had always stayed abreast of the latest advances in agriculture and were able to minimize their losses. In spite of reduced yields, Alphonse Prud'homme's cotton won a gold medal at the great Louisiana Purchase Exposition held in St. Louis in 1904 and won another at the Jamestown Exposition of 1907, which celebrated the 300th anniversary of the country's first permanent British settlement.

Cotton prices rose in the early 1900s, initiating a brief period of prosperity for Southern farmers and for Natchitoches. Telephone service was introduced along Cane River in 1906 and the Prud'hommes were among the first to benefit from that technological marvel. They also embarked on some much- needed renovations of the Big House in the first decade of the twentieth century, including installation of acetylene- gas lighting. In 1909, the old LeComte town house in Natchitoches was dismantled for construction of a new hotel, and

Figure 8 View from front porch of Big House, around 1910. (Henley Hunter Coll., Cammie G. Henry Research Center, Watson Memorial Library, Northwestern State University of Louisiana)

Figure 9 View of front porch of Big House, around 1910. (Henley Hunter Coll., Cammie G. Henry Research Center, Watson Memorial Library, Northwestern State University of Louisiana

the slate was used to replace the old cypress shingles that had covered the Big House since its construction. In addition, in the summer of 1910, Phanor Prud'homme II bought the family's first automobile, a "Model T" Ford.

The outbreak of war in Europe in August 1914 did little to immediately disrupt life in America, and it certainly did not disrupt the plans for celebration of Phanor and Elisa LeComte Prud'homme's fiftieth wedding anniversary, held at Oakland on September 6, 1914. It was an elaborate affair with guests arriving at the Brevelle station from Shreveport, New Orleans, and elsewhere, coming to Oakland for the festivities which included an orchestra and caterers brought in from New Orleans.[81]

Although Woodrow Wilson worked to keep the country out of the war in Europe, the country was gradually drawn into the conflict and, in April 1917, declared war on Germany. Like many of his generation, Alphonse Prud'homme II was anxious to volunteer and soon found himself with the other doughboys in France. After the Armistice in November 1918, he remained on duty in Paris and was distraught in February 1919 when he got word that his father, Phanor Prud'homme II, had died at Oakland. By the time he got home, his father was long buried and the nation to which he returned seemed suddenly a very different place.

What Malone calls "a brief and general inventory" was taken of Alphonse Prud'homme's estate in May 1919 and shows that, if the world

81. Haynie, p. 110.

Figure 10 Phanor and Laure Prud'homme and their son Alphonse II at Oakland, c. 1910. (Melrose Collection, Scrapbook 0071, Cammie G. Henry Research Center, Watson Memorial Library, Northwestern State University of Louisiana)

had changed, Oakland had not. The inventory included 140 bales of cotton at Putnam and Normand, his factor (i.e., broker) in New Orleans, and a variety of plows, cultivators, and hand tools. Phanor Prud'homme II would soon replace the old steam engine at the gin with a diesel engine, but at the end of World War I, Oakland was still being worked as it had been since before the Civil War. The Prud'hommes had apparently replaced the old 1910 Ford Model T with a 1917 Chandler; but the inventory still included four old wagons, one old surrey, and one buggy which the Prud'hommes were still using for transportation.

The outbreak of war in Europe in 1914 brought sharply higher prices for cotton, which rose as high as 43 cents a pound in 1919; but the following year, the price of cotton crashed to a fraction of that, sending the South's entire cotton-based, agricultural economy into collapse.[82] In addition, as the cotton economy was being destroyed by the boll weevil and foreign competition, large numbers of black sharecroppers and tenant farmers abandoned the plantations for better jobs and less discrimination in the North, especially during and shortly after World War I. Often called the "Detroit Exodus" for the large numbers who migrated to that city's booming automobile industry, the migration left the South strewn with abandoned and derelict tenant farms and plantations and left landowners and businessmen hurting for labor.[83] Nearly a decade before the Great Depression ruined the national economy, the

82. Malone, p. 74.
83. Malone, p. 88.

South's agricultural economy was already in shambles.

In October 1923, Alphonse I's widow, Elisa LeComte Prud'homme, died, a month short of her 83rd birthday, leaving their son in charge of the old plantation. Alphonse I's sister Harriet Prud'homme Brazzeale had died in the spring of 1922, leaving only their brother Emmanuel, across the river at Atahoe. For Alphonse II, or "Phonsie" as he was called, and his siblings, the older generation, with their vivid memories of not only the antebellum period but also of the Civil War and Reconstruction, provided a vital and irreplaceable link to the past.

In December 1923, Phanor Prud'homme's cousin Ursin Lambre died. He had been postmaster of the Bermuda Post Office for nearly twenty years and Phonsie jumped at the chance to replace him. Phonsie had already begun managing the store for his father and would continue to run it for nearly fifty years longer. He saw the post office as a good boost for business, which it was, and on January 31, 1924, he was appointed post master for the Bermuda Post Office, which was again returned to the Prud'homme Store at Oakland.[84]

Phonsie was still unmarried when he was appointed postmaster, but he was already courting Rosalie Lucile Keator, the eighteen- year-old daughter of Mayo Sands Keator (1869- 1955) and Mable Lucile Blake (1876- 1955). Born in Webster Groves, a suburb of St. Louis, in 1906, Lucile often visited her grandfather Dr. James Elias Keator (1822- 1908), whose family occupied Keator Point just to the northeast of Oakland. Around 1918, she began boarding at St. Mary's Academy in Natchitoches and, while there, became close friends with Phonsie's sister Adele. Phonsie and Lucile began dating; and on her birthday, April 2, 1924, Phonsie surprised her with an engagement ring. They were married on August 9, 1924, and took up residence in the Big House with his parents.

The Prud'hommes suffered what Malone described as "a precipitous decline in fortunes" in the 1920s; and, although they had always had "a propensity to 'make do'" even in good times, the economics of the next twenty years made that attitude a necessity. Most of their food, including meat, vegetables, and milk, was raised on the plantation; and, with sinking prices for cotton, income from the store became even more important. They began raising sheep and goats for meat and wool to be sold and, with constant "recycling and innovation," were able to soldier on through the 1920s, only to see the bottom drop out of the national economy after 1929 and cotton prices collapse to nine cents a pound.[85] With huge cotton crops in 1930 and 1931, the price of cotton dropped to a nickel in 1932, far below the cost of production. Calls for voluntary reduction in acreage went largely unheeded until 1933 when FDR's "New Deal" finally forced farmers to plow under a quarter of their crops or face financial penalties. In doing so, Dr. Malone points out, "they were, in fact, plowing under an old way of life." Al-

84. "Post Master Appointments," Records of U. S. Post Office, *microfilm* M841, Roll 51, Federal Archives and Record Center, East Point, GA.

85. Malone, pp. 145-146.

though the New Deal helped stabilize cotton prices, not until World War II did prices again rise to a profitable level.[86]

When the stock market crashed in 1929, Phonsie and Lucile had two sons, James Alphonse Prud'homme III who was born in January 1927 and Kenneth Andrew Prud'homme who was born in February 1929. The birth of Mayo Keator Prud'homme in February 1932 and of Rose Vivian Prud'homme in November 1934 completed their family. None of them remembered real deprivation in the 1930s as their parents adapted Oakland to new realities; "all was not bleak," Malone remarks. Cotton continued to be the principal crop but cattle production was increased, and they even set up a fish camp in the pasture to the north of the Big House. They moved the old cook's house from behind the Big House and perhaps relocated other buildings as well to create four furnished "cabins" that could be rented to fishermen along Cane River Lake. Phanor kept boats for rent as well and Phonsie even started raising "shiners" for sale as bait at the store.[87]

Phanor and Laure Cloutier Prud'homme celebrated their fiftieth wedding anniversary with an elaborate reception at the Big House on February 3, 1941; but already Laure Prud'homme was not well. On New Year's Eve 1941, she died at the Big House. Both of Lucile's parents were still in good health in St. Louis; but with the death of Phonsie's mother, the decision was made for the Keators to move to Natchitoches where Lucile could more easily help them as they needed. So as the war unfolded for America in 1942, the Keators moved into the Big House, where they occupied the front room on the north side of the house. Born in Cheneyville, Louisiana, "Grandpa" Mayo Sands Keator (1869- 1955) was a civil engineer who spent many years with the railroads. Fascinated with new technology, he was also an inveterate inventor. Converting Uncle Buddy's old apartment in the store into a workshop, he spent many hours at his workbench creating a variety of items, including lamps, a telescope, and a photo enlarger (which he created out of a coffee pot). He even experimented with a "perpetual- motion machine."[88]

As World War I had changed the nation so, too, did World War II. The prodigious demands of the war effort led to the end of cotton price controls in 1943, and cotton soared to twenty cents a pound. After more than twenty years of miserable economic conditions, a measure of prosperity returned again to Oakland and the other Cane River plantations. The exodus from the countryside that had begun a generation earlier continued, however, as young men were drafted into military service. After the war, the number of people abandoning the countryside mushroomed as tenancy and sharecropping gave way to large- scale, mechanized agricultural operations and people of all races sought the better life that seemed to beckon in the nation's cities and towns. Oakland experienced the same phenomenon, and with the death of Phanor Prud'homme in May 1948, it fell largely

86. Malone, pp. 89-90.
87. Haynie, p. 96; Malone, p. 146.
88. Interview by the author with Kenneth Prud'homme, 3 April 2001.

to his eldest son Phonsie to deal with the consequences. Not long after his father's death, Phonsie began replacing the old mule power on which the plantation had depended for a hundred years with modern tractors. Other equipment followed, and by the 1960s, even cotton picking became a mechanized operation, which virtually eliminated the need for tenants and other cheap labor on the south's cotton plantations.

The crumbling of the old plantation system that had begun before World War II "really got kicked off in the forties," Lawrence Helaire, one of the Prud'hommes long- time tenants, remembered. "We had to go somewhere where we could find something to do and make some money." And so, in 1949, he and his wife became one of the earliest of the Prud'hommes' tenants to leave Oakland.[89] Over the next decade, the other tenants slowly drifted away, with the last leaving in 1959.[90]

As the Prud'hommes were transforming their farming operation, they also began renovating the Big House, something which had not been done in a large way since before World War I. In a series of projects beginning in 1947 and ending in 1964, both the interior and the exterior of the house were gradually renovated, including the addition of a new kitchen and bathrooms.

When their grandfather died in May 1948, Mayo and Vivian were still in high school and the two oldest boys, Kenneth and Alphonse III, were in college. Al graduated from Northwestern State University in Natchitoches the following year and, in 1951, married Martha Jane Allen. Like many of his generation, however, he saw a limited appeal in continuing a family farm operation and began working as a cotton broker in Texas. He found he missed Oakland, however, and not long after the birth of their first son, James Alphonse Prud'homme IV, in 1954, Al decided to move back to Oakland and continue in the footsteps of five generations of his forebears along Cane River. Kenneth Prud'homme married Sally Ann Calhoun in 1958; and soon he joined his brother in running the plantation, which allowed their father to gradually retire and spend most of his time running the store.[91]

With most rural areas experiencing a drastic decline in population, many institutions like the country store and the rural post office closed their doors for good in the 1950s and 1960s.[92] J. Alphonse Prud'homme II retired as postmaster in February 1962, replaced by his son, J. Alphonse Prud'homme III, who served four years before resigning in April 1966. His wife, Martha Jane Allen Prud'homme (b. 1932), served as interim postmaster until July when Mrs. Cleo M. Draugnet (1913- 1978), who had married a grandson of the Prud'hommes of Atahoe, was appointed to the post. Already the days of the Bermuda Post Office were numbered, however. With better roads, rural mail delivery was nearly universal and there was simply no longer much need for the country post office; so, at

89. Malone, p. 182, 194.
90. Malone, "Focus Questions," p. 44.
91. Haynie, p. 104.
92. Malone, "Oakland Plantation...," pp. 177-178.

Figure 11 View of living room at Oakland, c. 1990. (Image published in Gross, Daley, & Wieneck's *Old Houses*)

the end of the business day on July 14, 1967, service at the Bermuda Post Office was formally terminated.[93] After running a post office at Oakland off and on for nearly a hundred years, the Prud'hommes were at last on a rural delivery route and had to put up their own private mail box at Oakland's front gates.

As changes that swept the agricultural economy after World War II led to the demise of a number of the old farm buildings and tenant houses at Oakland and all along Cane River, dramatic changes were also occurring in the town of Natchitoches. A revival of building after the moribund years of the Depression and World War II was beginning to destroy the historic heart of the city as the old town houses and commercial buildings were replaced with newer commercial buildings. To most, it was all "progress," but to a growing number of people it seemed a needless wasting of history. When plans were announced to cover the brick pavement of Front Street with asphalt, there was an outcry and Lucile Prud'homme and a number of others formed the Association of Natchitoches Women for the Preservation of Historic Natchitoches. To promote their cause, they began organizing tours and special events that included downtown Natchitoches as well as the Cane River plantations. Preservation of the brick pavement of Front Street was only the first of their successes. Lucile, who was an ardent amateur historian and genealogist, eagerly opened Oakland for tours. In the basement story of the house, she even took out a wall to combine the two rooms on the east side and created a museum out of the innumerable artifacts that had accumulated around the plantation since the early 1800s. As one of her granddaughters recently wrote, "without her diligence, much of Oakland's history would have faded into obscurity."[94]

Phonsie Prud'homme continued to operate the store for a few more years; but, by the early 1980s, he was nearly blind and, in the fall of 1982, regretfully closed it for good.[95] Meanwhile, his sons were facing an uncertain future

93. Post Office records give the date at which the Bermuda Post Office was discontinued.

94. Haynie, p. 2.

as escalating production costs and competition by corporate agriculture threatened the viability of family farms everywhere. Although not bankrupt like many in their situation, Alphonse and Kenneth Prud'homme knew they could not continue; and, in 1984, made the decision to quit farming. As Kenneth put it to a reporter, "The family has been at it for well on to two hundred years and finally decided we couldn't make a living at it." He add, "I'm tired of it. I want to get out before I go broke."[96] So, in 1984, they auctioned off the farm equipment, leased what land they could, and retired from the business entirely.

It was a sad time, especially for Phonsie, a sadness only increased when his eldest son Alphonse III was diagnosed with cancer in 1987. He died in June 1988 not long after Oakland was designated a Bicentennial Farm in recognition of its two centuries of operation as a family farm. In October 1991, Phonsie himself passed away at the age of 94, and in September 1994, Lucile followed. Rather than leave the house empty, since their children already had houses of their own, Vivian's daughter Denise and her family moved into the house, the seventh and eighth generation of Prud'hommes to occupy the Big House at Oakland.

Oakland had long been known for the remarkable way that the family had preserved the plantation; and several years earlier, Bobby Deblieux, one of the leaders of the Natchitoches preservation movement, had approached the family with the idea of selling the plantation to the National Park Service. The notion was dismissed out of hand by the family at first; but slowly they began to realize that the historic plantation might not be preserved without some special arrangement. According to Phonsie and Lucile's granddaughter Sandra Prud'homme Haynie, "tales of how the plantation was when [her grandfather] was a boy motivated the family more towards the dream of restoring the plantation to its once grand splendor." A congressionally- mandated study of the Cane River area was completed in 1993, and in November of 1994, Congress passed Public Law 103- 499 creating Cane River Creole National Historical Park and the Cane River National Heritage Area. In 1997, after several years of negotiations, the Prud'hommes finally sold the core of Oakland Plantation, including the Big House and many of its furnishings, to the National Park Service. In June 1998, the Prud'hommes vacated Oakland Plantation.

95. The last store inventory in the Prud'homme Coll. was made in 1970; see Prud'homme Collection #613, Series 3.2.7, folder 460.
96. Malone, p. 210.

Chronology of Development & Use

The traditional construction dates for the Big House at Oakland are 1818- 1821, with the completion date appearing in historical records dating as far back as 1909.[97] Family tradition, supported by historical documentation, states that Emmanuel and Catherine Lambre Prud'homme went to Paris, France, in 1821. There they had their portraits painted and acquired furniture, which arrived in New Orleans on the ship *Le Jerome* and was then rafted up the Red River, arriving at Bermuda Plantation in July or August of 1822.[98] There were numerous subsequent changes to the house, including three major additions, which brought the house to its present configuration in 1964.

97. Fortier, no page numbers.
98. Association of Natchitoches Women, Natchitoches, p. 45, gives a date of June 1822 for arrival of the furniture. Carver's letter and memorial on the occasion of Alphonse and Elise Prud'homme's 50th wedding anniversary in 1914 gives August 22, 1822, as the date on which the furniture arrived. In 1909, Fortice stated that "all its furnishings" were brought from France but did not give a date.

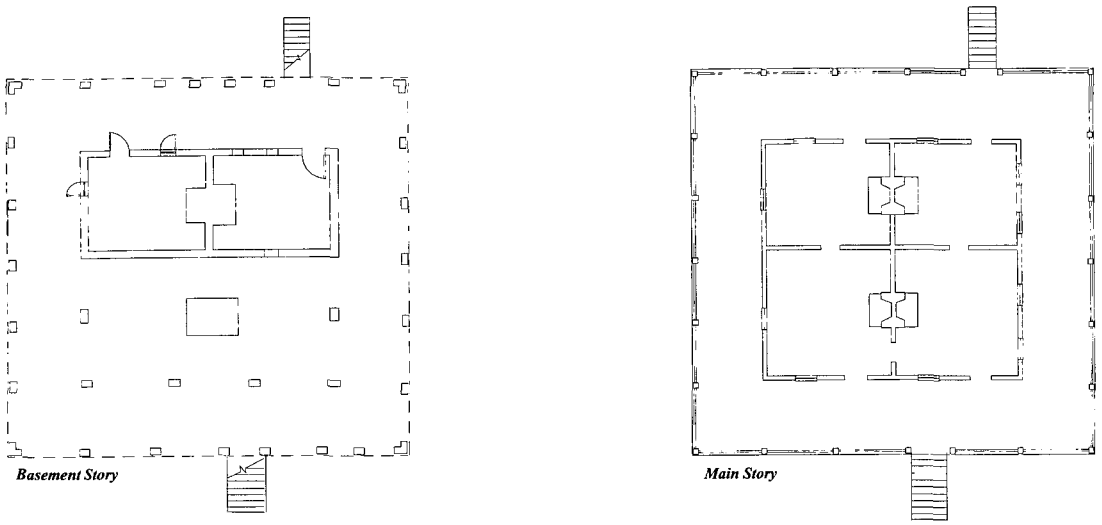

Figure 12 Reconstructed floor plan of Big House as it was originally constructed, c. 1821. (T. Jones, NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

In June 1998, Barbara A. Yocum, architectural conservator with the Northeast Cultural Resources Center (NPS), conducted a physical investigation and materials analysis of the Big House (see Appendix D for her report). She documented seven significant changes to the original four- room house, most of which corresponded with the sequence established by the family's oral tradition.

The following chronology is based largely on Yokum's materials analysis and report, augmented by additional building investigation that included a few areas of the house that were beyond the scope of her study. In addition, analysis of historical documentation has informed interpretation of the physical evidence in developing this chronology of the house's development and use.

Original Construction, 1818 - 1821

The Big House was constructed to replace the Prud'hommes' first residence, which they had built close to the river, probably in the 1790s, and which had fallen into disrepair. There has been some suggestion that the present house incorporates elements of the first; but, if the first house was not destroyed by the river (and it appears that it was not), it seems unlikely that the Prud'hommes would have taken it down before the present house was completed. Furthermore, no materials in the present Big House can be clearly identified as having been salvaged from another building.

However, there is clear evidence for salvaged materials in the Cottage next door, where wallpaper- covered timbers and boards survive in the attic of the earliest portion of that house. Since wallpaper remained very much a luxury item in the early nineteenth century and would almost certainly have not been used in any other building but the original "big house," it is

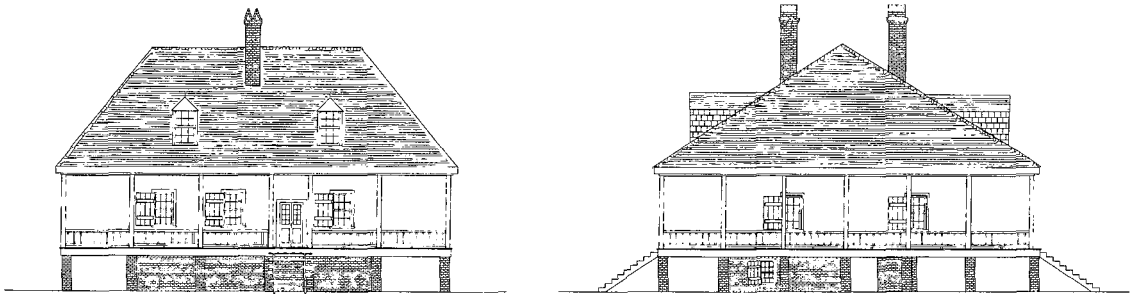

Figure 13 Conjectured appearance of the Big House as it was originally constructed, c. 1821. (T. Jones, NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

possible to conclude that the Prud'hommes' original house on Cane River was taken down for construction of the Cottage (or Doctor's House, as it has been called), which current evidence suggests was constructed in the 1830s.[99]

The traditional dates associated with the original construction of the Big House, 1818- 1821, establish what might appear to be an unusually long period of construction for the house. However, the period may include the time necessary to fell trees, hew and saw timbers, and cure lumber. While timbers could be more easily hewn into framing lumber while green, the wood had to be fully cured before it could be turned into flooring, molding, and other woodwork. There is no indication that construction was interrupted, although there was a serious financial panic and economic downturn in 1819 that could have disrupted plans.

Traditionally, the original house has been described as having five rooms.[100] Four original rooms encompassing about 1370 square feet have been identified on the main story, and the consistency of the framing and similarity in materials suggest that they are contemporaneous. The original rooms that have been identified include all of Rooms 205 and 206 and the eastern two- thirds of Rooms 202 and 210. The fifth room, which was presumably on the main story, has not been identified but may have been a *cabinet* on the rear gallery. *Cabinets*, which were simple plank- walled spaces used as offices or sleeping quarters for children, were a common feature in French Creole architecture, with the present Room 201 being a good representation of their placement and manner of construction.[101] If the fifth original room was a

99. During the course of the present study, a Historic Structure Report on the Cottage, or Doctor's House, has also been under development.

100. Association of Natchitoches Women, Natchitoches, p. 45.

101. Carolyn Wells, "Architecture of Colonial Natchitoches" (unpublished masters theses, Northwestern State University, 1973), pp. 29-30.

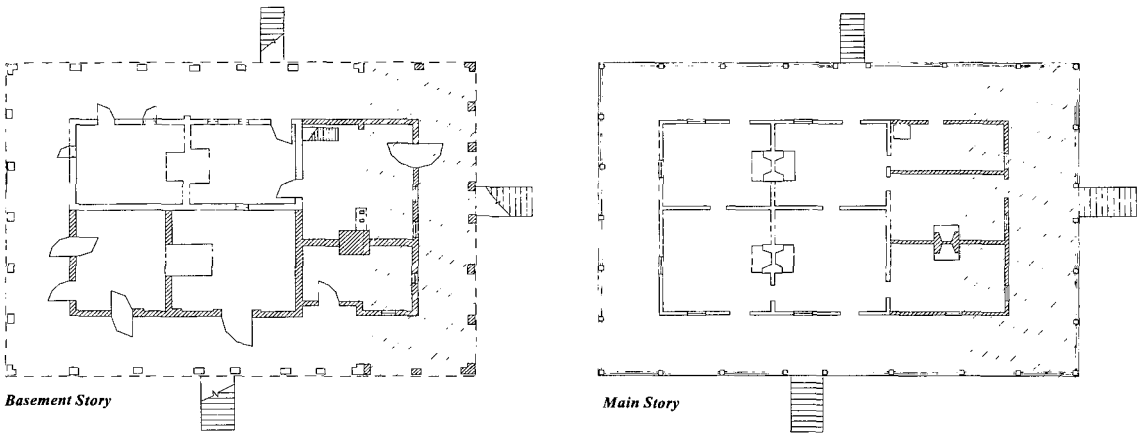

Figure 14 Reconstructed floor plan of Big House, c. 1825. (T. Jones, NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

cabinet, evidence for it was apparently obliterated by expansion of the house in the 1820s and 1830. Presumably there was also a detached kitchen associated with the house, but its location has not been documented.

Yokum's analysis revealed that no windows, doors, or other woodwork remained from the original house except for the board ceilings in Rooms 205, 206, the eastern two- thirds of 202 and 210, the eastern two- thirds of the south gallery, and the southern two- thirds of the east gallery. The flooring in those rooms has also survived but is now covered by pine and cypress flooring installed after World War II. It is not clear if any of the gallery flooring dates to the original construction of the house, although at least some of it probably does. Attic flooring and the paneling in the two original (southernmost) dormers also appear to date to the house's original construction.

Previous descriptions of the house have identified four original rooms (101, 102A, 102B, and 105) in the basement story; but close examination of the foundation reveals that only two of those rooms (101 and 105) were part of the original basement story. Unlike the solid brick walls that form Rooms 101 and 105, brick piers can still be identified in the walls on the south and east sides of Room 102 (which was originally divided into two separate spaces), indicating that the front or east side of the house sat on open piers when originally constructed.

Antebellum Additions and Alterations, 1825 - 1860

Traditional accounts of the house acknowledge that it was expanded once before a final expansion brought it to its current size (minus the kitchen wing) around 1835.[102] The most colorful explanation for these changes maintains that the first expansion of the house was to the *west* and occurred when Emmanuel and

102.Association of Natchitoches Women, Natchitoches, p. 45.

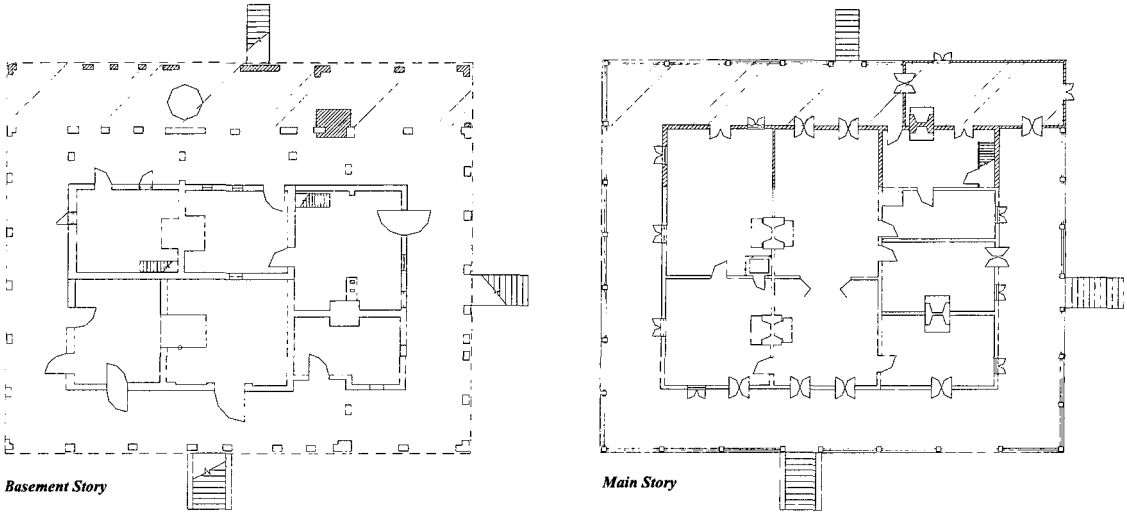

Figure 15 Reconstructed floor plan of Big House, c. 1835. (T. Jones, NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

Catherine Prud'homme discovered that the dining room was too short for their new furniture. However, investigation of the present structure shows incontrovertibly that the first addition was to the *north* and included the addition of two rooms (encompassed by what are now 207, 209, and the eastern two- thirds of 208) and an expanded gallery.[103] Considering the historical evidence for the family's circumstances in the early 1820s, it seems very unlikely that both the first and second additions would have been completed by 1822, which would be necessary to accommodate the traditional sequence of events surrounding the dining room furniture.

As noted in the historical overview, Emmanuel and Catherine Prud'homme were both in their late 50s by the time the house was completed in 1821 and only their youngest child, Pierre Phanor, was still an unmarried minor. Phanor would not reach his twenty- first birthday and adulthood until 1828 and, thus, was likely to have been away at school in France throughout the middle part of the decade.[104] It seems, then, that the Prud'hommes would have had little reason to expand their house before about 1825, when Phanor may have returned home. In French Creole culture, bachelors typically had separate quarters from the main house; and, by the time he turned 21 in June 1828, Phanor would probably have expected his own *garçonniere*, as these quarters were called. No clear evidence for the location of Phanor's *garçonniere* has been found, but it could have been one or both of the two rooms that were built on the north side of the original four-room house in the 1820s. The second addition expanded the house to the west by nearly 25%

103.Yokum, p. 52.

104.Fortier.

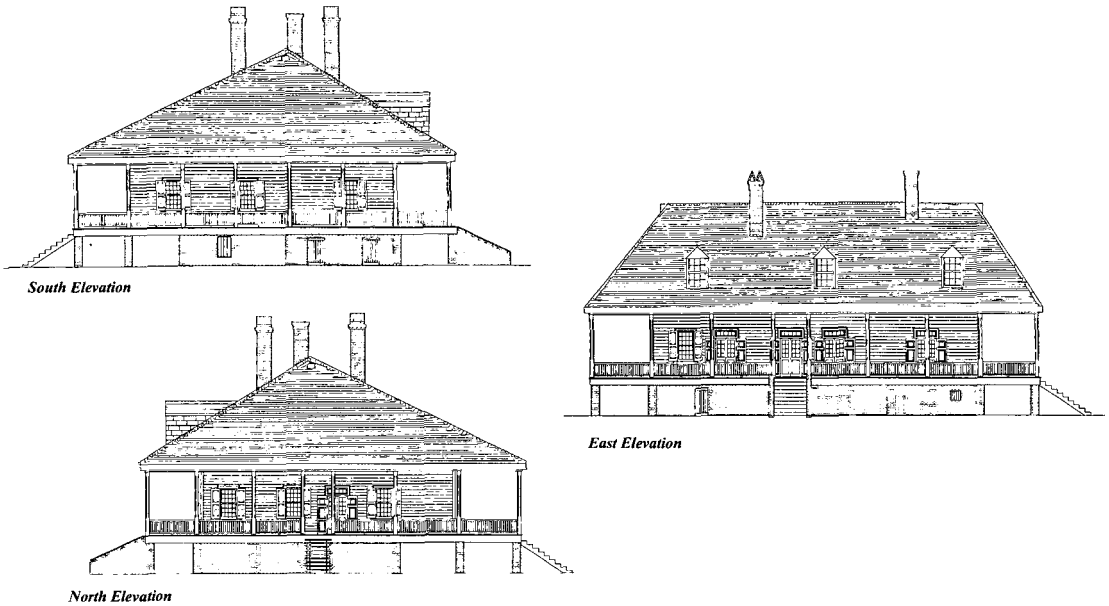

Figure 16 Conjectured appearance of the Big House, c. 1835. (T. Jones, NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

and brought the main block of the house to more or less its present size. Yokum's analysis of the house found nothing to contradict the family's belief that the main block of the house reached its present size by 1835, a date that coincides with the marriage of Phanor Prud'homme and Susanne Lise Metoyer in January of that year.[105] This expansion included extending Rooms 202 and 210 onto what had been the rear gallery, the addition of Room 212 to the west of the rooms that had been added earlier on the north side of the house, and expansion of the gallery around all of these new additions. In addition, most of the existing exterior and interior woodwork—siding, trim, windows, and doors—was installed as part of or shortly after this building campaign.

105.Association of Natchitoches Women, *Natchitoches*, p. 45.

There is physical and/or historical evidence for additional spaces at the rear of the house, although the precise sequence of their construction and their subsequent removal has not been fully documented. While they may have all been built in the 1830s, it is also possible if not probable that they were part of other undocumented building campaigns in the 1840s and 1850s. In any case, all of them must have been removed during the alterations to the house shortly after the Civil War.

At least one more room on the main floor appears likely to have been associated with the expansion of the house in the 1830s. The chimney base beneath the west wall of Room 212 has been thought to have served a single fireplace in Room 212; but recent evidence suggests the presence of a second fireplace and, therefore, a second room on the west side of Room 212. A description of the house in 1941 noted that this second fireplace was still present on the rear

gallery- - an "outdoor fireplace," as it was described- - and also stated that it originally heated "the office of Madame Prud'homme." There, the description states,

> as was customary on well- regulated plantations, each morning the house- slaves reported to receive their orders for the day. A wall of the office was lined with bookcases and cabinets, in which were kept the household files and recipe books for the many varieties of preserves, condiments, wines and cordials made on the plantation.[106]

Pier placement and floor framing beneath the present kitchen (214) suggests that Mme. Prud'homme's office extended to the north end of the gallery although the space may have been divided into two rooms. If this was a typical *cabinet*, as it probably was, it would have been built with simple plank walls like the north and south walls of Room 201 and its removal would have left few traces.

It has been suggested that Room 212 was used as a kitchen during the antebellum period. That suggestion was made, however, before the existence of Mme. Prud'homme's office was documented and ignores the traditional location of a detached kitchen "straight out the back door."[107] However, with a detached kitchen in use throughout the antebellum period, Room 212 may have been used as a serving pantry.

106.Herman de Bachelle Seebold, *Old Louisiana Plantation Homes and Family Trees* (Gretna, LA: Pelican Publishing, 1971 reprint of 1941 edition), p. 366.

107.Interview with Vivian Prud'homme Flores by Dr. Ann Malone, March 5, 1996.

Room 209B may well have served as a store room or pantry, since it was connected by a trap door and stairs to the "cooling room" (104) and wine cellar (105) in the basement. Throughout the antebellum period, secure food storage remained a necessity and, along with china and silver, much food would have been kept under lock and key.

Family tradition holds that the antebellum Big House had a *garçonnière* which was removed to rebuild the house at Atahoe, which burned in 1873. In the French Creole culture of Louisiana, a *garçonnière* was typically inhabited by unmarried sons, but it also could be used by visiting guests. Lestan Prud'homme's journal provides this brief description of the *garçonnière* at Phanor Prud'homme's town house in Natchitoches and the one at Bermuda Plantation may have been similar:

> My Aunt Benjamin, Leonce, my Uncle Cloutier and his son John came in town. We were seven in a very small room at Phanor's called la garçonnière, and as all did not come in together, we did not get to sleep before midnight, and as out of three beds we had to make room for seven, none slept too much.[108]

Sometimes, the *garçonnière* was an entirely separate building near the house, although there is no indication that was the case at Oakland. Most often the *garçonnière* was a room

108.Haynie, p. 61.

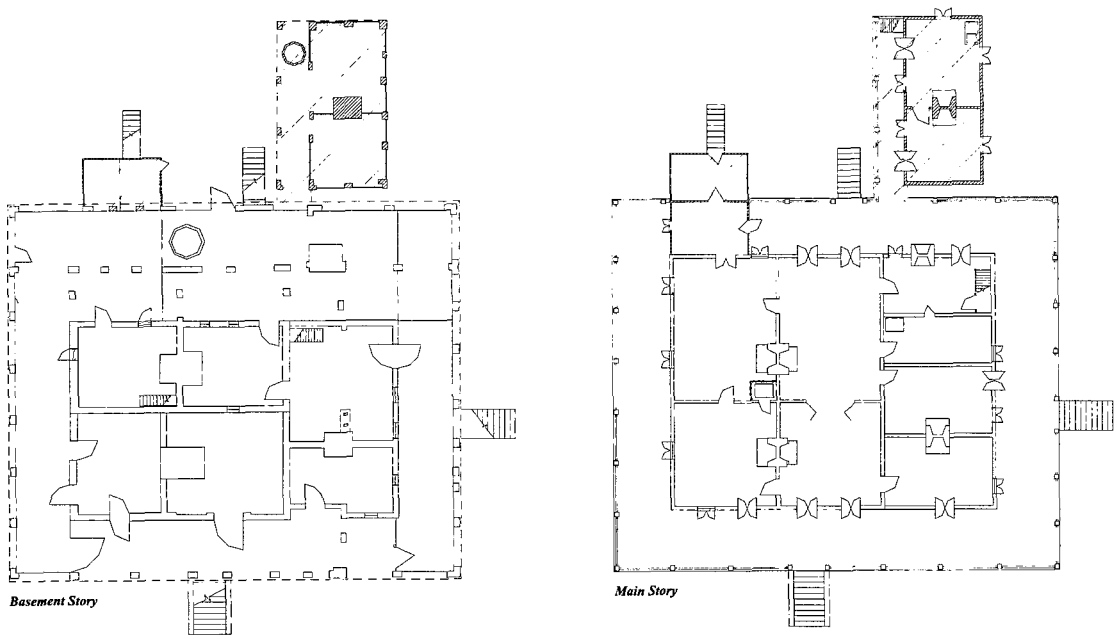

Figure 17 Reconstructed floor plans, c. 1875. (T. Jones, NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

located at the rear of the house, often behind the kitchen.[109] Although its location at Oakland remains speculative, the Prud'hommes' *garçonnière* may have been a single room that was part of the main house, perhaps located on the rear around the northwest or the southwest corners of the house, where there have been many alteration to the original structure. Sometimes the term was used to indicate an attic or sleeping loft for the younger boys in the family. The attic of the original house (1821) at Oakland was not completely finished, but it was floored and the two original dormers boarded on the inside, so that it could have been planned or even used as a *garçonnière* in the 1820s.

The *bousillage* walls of the original four- room house and its first northward expansion were apparently whitewashed inside and out. The earliest exterior woodwork and painted finishes appear to date to the house's second, westward expansion in the 1830s, although Yokum noted the possibility that there was a delay in installing the exterior woodwork. An entry in the plantation journal in 1842 states that "the two houses"—presumably the Big House and the Cottage—were being painted. Quite possibly, this was the date of the first painting documented by Yokum. In that first painting, the gallery ceilings, all siding, window and door casings, baseboard, window sash, and doors were painted in a cream color; the chair rail and shutters were painted grey.

109.Mary Ann Sternberg, *Along the River Road* (Baton Rouge, LA: LSU Press, 1996), p. 21, 76.

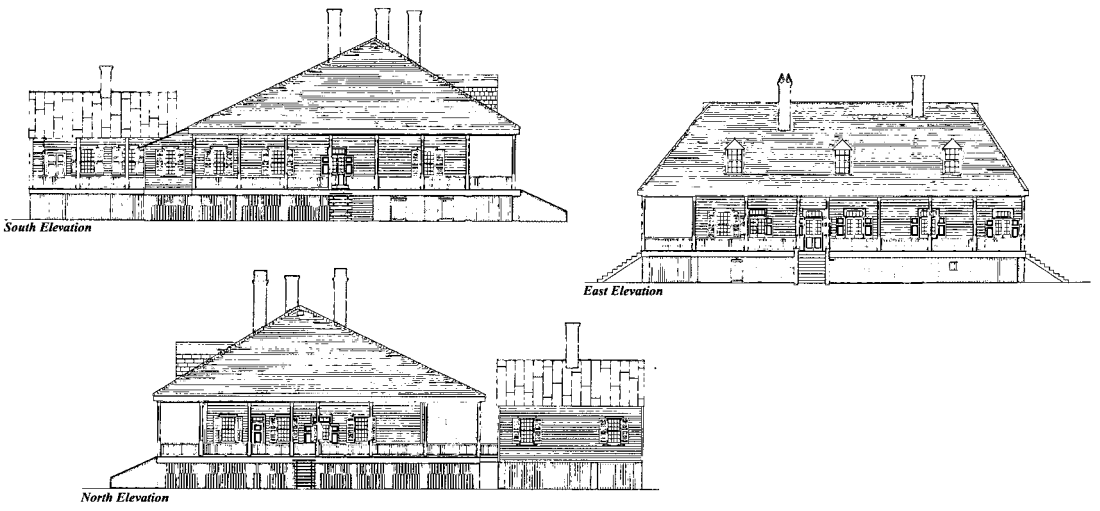

Figure 18 Conjectured appearance of the Big House, c. 1875. (T. Jones, NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

Although shutters, baseboards and some other elements were repainted more often, the entire house appears not to have been repainted but twice during the nineteenth century, once before the Civil War and once after. The first repainting, which may have occurred in the late 1850s, continued the cream color of the siding, the window and door casings, window sash, and doors; but the baseboards were painted grey; chair rails and shutters, dark green. Before the Civil War, the cream- colored gallery ceilings were changed to light blue- green, then later to light gray, and finally gray- blue.

Prior to its enclosure by the existing cypress palings after the Civil War, the brick foundation remained fully visible. During that time, the brick foundation walls and piers were painted red with mortar joints "pencilled" in white, a popular treatment of brick in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The technique was meant to disguise the irregularity of color, texture, and coursing that was typical of handmade brick. The treatment can still be identified at several locations on the foundation of the present house, especially in Room 106.

Reconstruction-Era Additions and Alterations, 1865 - c. 1880

Although the Prud'hommes lost much property as a result of the Federal campaign up the Red River in the spring of 1864, they survived the Civil War with the Big House intact. Nevertheless, Emancipation as well as other social and technological changes unleashed by the war brought about significant changes in lifestyles. As a result, the Prud'hommes made major alterations to the Big House after the Civil War, removing some rooms while adding and altering others to suit changing needs and changing fashion. These post- war additions to

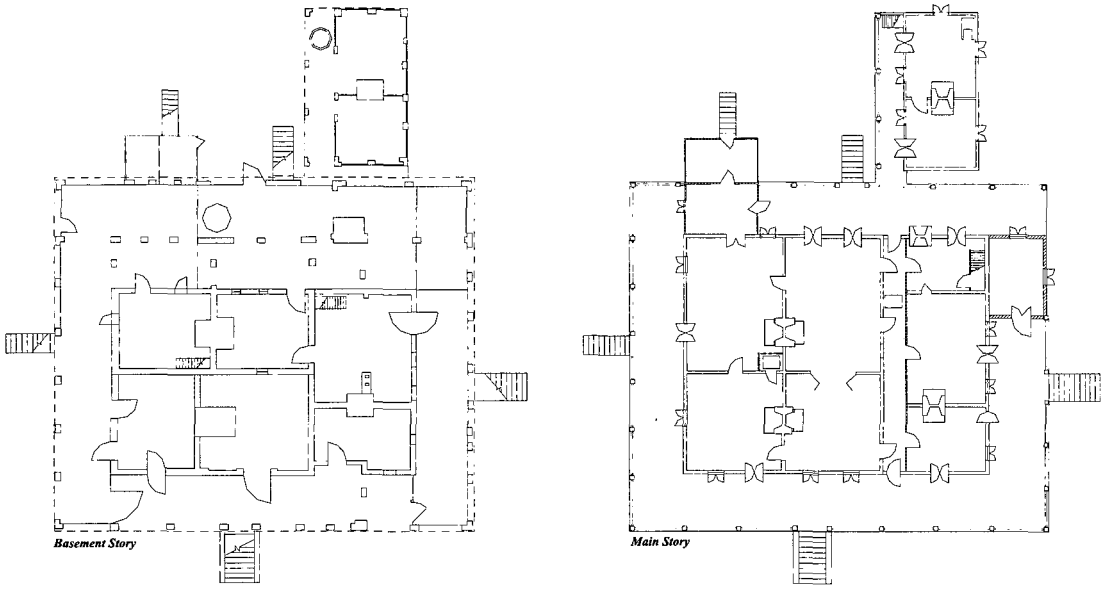

Figure 19 Reconstructed floor plans, c. 1885. (T. Jones, NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

the house, which were completed over a period of about fifteen years after the war, can be readily identified and materials analysis and building investigation has established a sequence for their construction. How ever, precise dating of most of these changes remains illusive. The servant's room (101) in the basement was probably not used at all after the war.

One of the more significant changes was the replacement of the old kitchen behind the house. Little is known about this structure but that, according to family tradition, it was located behind but not connected to the house itself. The demise of slavery meant fewer servants to carry food and utensils back and forth across the yard, and it is not surprising that the Prud'hommes (like many of their contemporaries) built a new kitchen attached to the house by a convenient breezeway. Historical references suggest that the new, two- room kitchen wing was constructed in 1865.[110] The wing included the kitchen itself (216) and a large pantry (215 and 217 combined) with a gallery across the south side of the wing. At the west end of the gallery, stairs rose to the attic, indicating that area was extensively used for storage. In addition, the ground level of the wing appears to have been completely underpinned with brick and divided into two spaces, again most likely for some sort of storage. The cistern beneath the west end of the kitchen gallery was probably constructed at the same time.

Shortly after the Civil War, perhaps simultaneously with construction of the kitchen wing, Alphonse Prud'homme is thought to have built another addition off the south end of the rear gallery. Sometimes referred to as an office, this addition is thought to have contained a bath room as well, although it is not clear if that was

110.Seebold, *Plantation Homes*, p. 366.

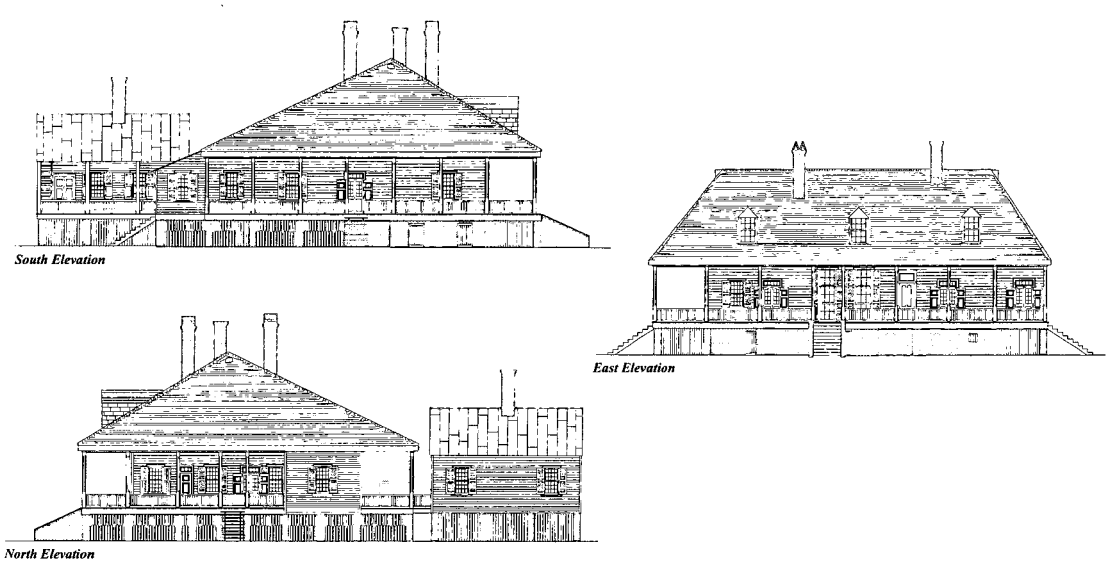

Figure 20 Conjectured appearance of the Big House, c. 1885. (T. Jones, NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

part of the original construction or a later modification. Any function that this addition may have had as an office was probably lost after Prud'homme added an office to the rear of the store in the late 1870s. Perhaps along with this addition, the Prud'hommes also enclosed the foundation of the house with the present cypress palings. Although the palings did not enclose the front of the basement level, the rest of the basement level was fenced off, with gates on every side of the house providing access to the basement area.

According to family tradition, Emmanuel Prud'homme's house at Atahoe burned in 1873 or 1874 and the Prud'hommes removed the *garçonnière* at Oakland to use the materials in rebuilding. As noted above, the location of this room is unknown but almost certainly was located somewhere at the rear of the house.

Materials analysis suggests that the Prud'hommes added the "stranger's room" (211) by enclosing part of the north gallery sometime after construction of the office/bathroom addition. Such rooms, which were called "parson's rooms" in some parts of the South, were often found during the nineteenth century and were meant to provide lodging separate from the main house for travelers and other non-family members. However, fears of abolitionists and others made that use much less common in the late antebellum period and, in the late nineteenth century, they became less and less common.

One of the Prud'hommes' most significant changes, which may have been contemporaneous with construction of the stranger's room, was the addition of a central hallway to the house. Reportedly, Mrs. Prud'homme did not like the fact that the main entrance to the house was through the French doors into her parlor (206). So a hallway (208) was created out of the

south sides of Rooms 207, 209, and 212, with a formal front door at the east end. At the same time, she had the French doors in the east wall of the parlor replaced by the present floor- to-ceiling, triple- hung windows.

Construction of the hallway appears to have been part of a renovation of the entire house, which included replacement of the four original marble mantles in Rooms 202, 205, 206, and 210 with the existing wooden mantles, reportedly because the original mantels were cracked.[111] A closet (204) was also added at this time in the northeast corner of Room 202. Enclosing the area around the trap door to the old servant's room (101) in the basement, this closet actually opened into Room 205. It may have been at this time as well that the walls and ceiling of the kitchen (216) were paneled with beaded tongue- and- groove boards.

Finally, the post- war renovations included a complete repainting of the house, inside and outside. On the outside, the siding and trim continued to be painted a creamy white, the shutters green, and the ceiling blue; but baseboards and chair rails were painted red while the doors were painted a peach color. More color was introduced on the interior as well with baseboards and mantles painted a brick red and the doors polychromed in light peach, dark peach, and gray.

111.Paint analysis suggests that this change occurred in conjunction with the renovation around 1880. See Yokum, p. 64, Appendix D.

Alterations Prior to World War I

As during the antebellum period, the house did not remain static in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, although it would not be totally repainted again until 1953. One of the most significant changes was the addition of a gas lighting system in the house sometime between 1902, the patent date on the surviving gas- making apparatus, and 1912, the earliest of the inscriptions found on the door in the room that was built to house the gas- making equipment (106). Gasoliers were installed in most of the major rooms of the house and on the front porch but apparently not in the parlor (206), where an ornate kerosene chandelier from around 1890 still provided light. Gas lighting was also apparently not installed in Rooms 211 or 212 or in either of the rooms in the kitchen wing (215- 217).

In 1906, the LeComte's old town house on Front Street in Natchitoches was torn down for construction of a hotel and, according to the family, the Prud'hommes salvaged the slate roofing from the LeComte house and had it installed on the Big House at Oakland. Up until that time, the house had been roofed with cypress shingles and, in order to support the slate, the original lath for the wood- shingled roof was replaced by the present solid decking. In conjunction with roofing the house with slate, the present galvanized metal roof vents at each end of the roof ridge and the semi- octagonal gutters and round downspouts were probably installed as well.

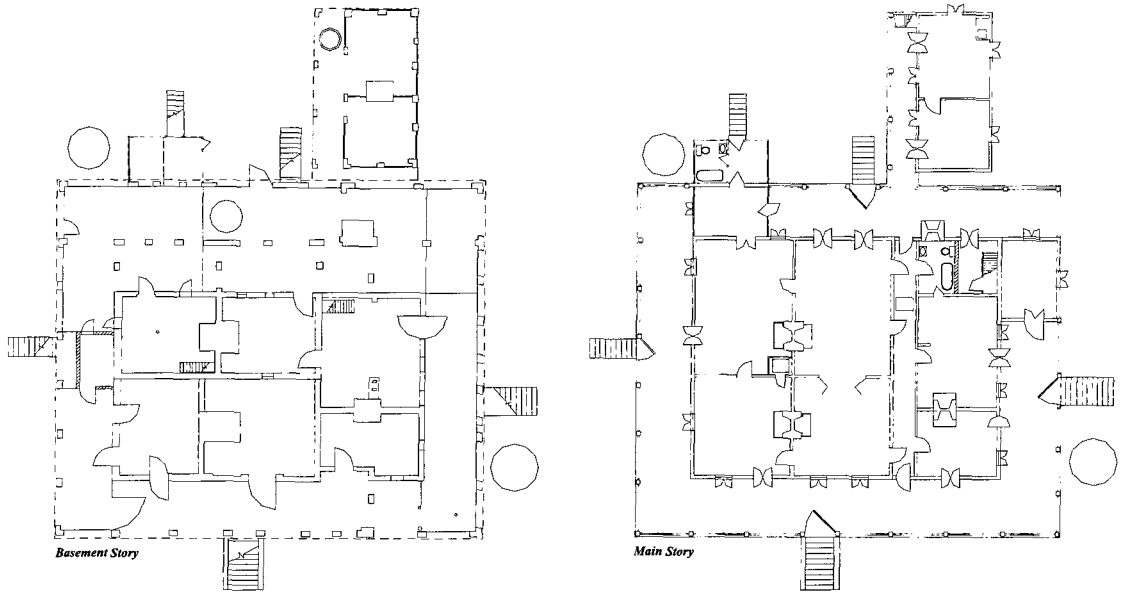

Figure 21 Reconstructed floor plans of the Big House, c. 1927. (T. Jones, NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

Around 1906, too, telephone service became available along Cane River and the Prud'hommes were among those who soon installed telephones. Where that telephone was located has not been documented.

There may also have been changes to the house's water supply system during this period. Three subterranean brick cisterns have been documented under the house, all of them dating to the nineteenth century. By World War I, two above- ground cisterns or water tanks were also installed near the house, both cylindrical and manufactured from corrugated metal. One was located off the north side of the house opposite Room 209 and one was off the south end of the rear of the house next to the addition that included what is now Room 201.

By the early 1920s, hot and cold running water and bathrooms had already been installed in the house. The character of the surviving toilet from one of those bathrooms suggests that indoor plumbing could have occurred prior to World War II. One bathroom is thought to have been installed in the "office" extension off the west side of the master bedroom (202). The other was created by subdividing Room 212 and creating a bathroom in the southern half of that space.

In the early 1930s, the Prud'hommes had a door cut between Room 209 and the stranger's room (211). For the first time, it was possible to access Room 211 from the interior of the main house.

In 1936 or 1937, the house's first electrical system was installed. The main electrical service entered the house at the south gallery, where the electrical meter and a series of fuse boxes were installed on the gallery wall between the

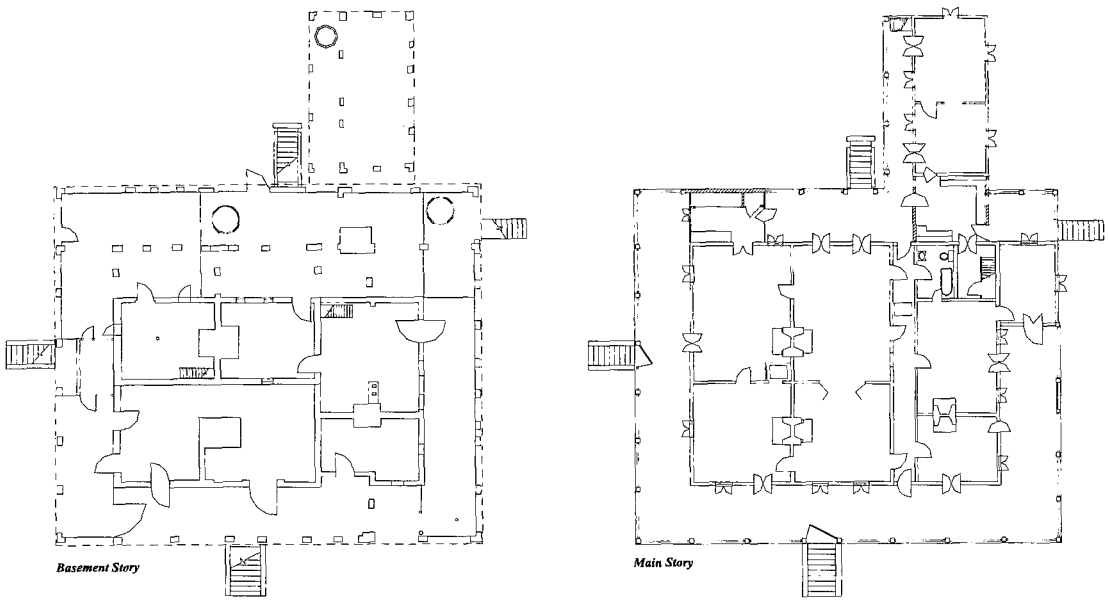

Figure 22 Reconstructed floor plans of the Big House, 1948. (T. Jones, NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

bathroom (203) window and the French doors on the south wall of Room 202. The original gasoliers and wall sconces were wired for electricity and reinstalled, presumably in their original locations. Where gasoliers were not present, ceiling- mounted, porcelain light bases were installed in secondary rooms. Wiring was mostly hidden, although some was surface mounted, including a number of switches that were surface mounted on door casings. One or two convenience receptacles were also installed in most of the major rooms.

Additions and Alterations after World War II

Except for installation of gas lighting around 1910, a new bathroom around 1927, and electrical wiring around 1937, very little appears to have been done to the house prior to World War II. With the war's end, however, the Prud'hommes, like many American families, began a series of repairs and improvements that would eliminate much of the deterioration that had occurred as maintenance was deferred during the Depression and World War II. These did not occur all at once; but rather over a period of years, with significant alterations to parts of the house in 1948, 1951, 1953, 1956, and 1964.

In some cases, deteriorated elements were simply removed rather than repaired. The wooden steps from the north gallery, the wooden walls enclosing the piers beneath the old kitchen (215- 217), the chimney between Rooms 215 and 216, and the chimney on the west side of Room 212 disappeared during this period and were not replaced. The wooden steps from the south and rear galleries were also in poor condition; they were removed and rebuilt in brick salvaged from the demolished

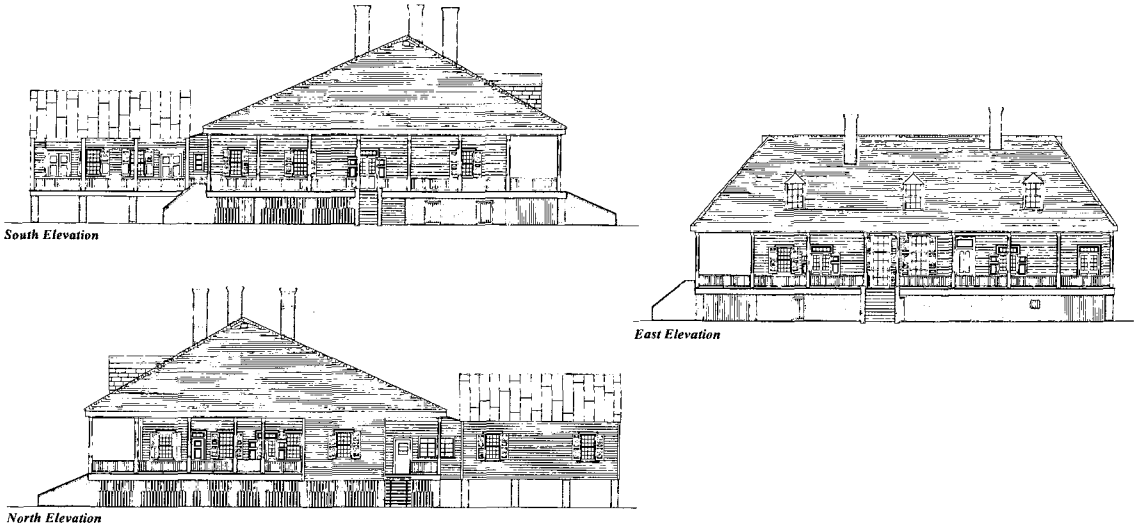

Figure 23 The Big House, c. 1948.
(T. Jones, NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

chimneys.[112] The small wing that Alphonse Prud'homme I built off the west side of the master bedroom (202) shortly after the Civil War was also in poor condition, and the decision was made to remove the portion of it that extended beyond the edge of the west gallery. The old room's north and south walls within the gallery remained in place, and the space was enclosed by a new west wall. Closets were installed on both the east and west sides of the new space (201), which was then used as a dressing room.

More significant was the Prud'hommes' decision in 1948 to replace the old kitchen that had been built in 1865. Rather than simply remodel the existing space, however, they decided to enclose the breezeway that separated the old kitchen from the main house, eliminating the inconvenience of an exterior passage between the kitchen and the dining room. The new kitchen (214A) was then created with doors connecting to the rear gallery, Room 212, and the old pantry (215). In addition, the old wood-burning cook stove was finally replaced with a modern gas stove and the old kitchen chimney and fireplaces were torn down.[113]

In order to complete the connection of the new kitchen to the rest of the house, the old bathroom was removed from the south side of Room 212, which was then converted into a breakfast room. To replace that bathroom, a new bathroom (Room 213) was created by enclosing part of the rear gallery at the end of the hall. The new bathroom was tiled and included a modern shower, but the Prud'hommes chose to relocate the old toilet to this new bath rather than replace that fixture.

112. Interview with Kenneth Prud'homme, 4 April 2001.

113. "Remembering Oakland," videotaped interview with Vivian, Mayo, and Kenneth Prud'homme by Dr. Bennie Keel, Southeast Archaeological Center, February 1999.

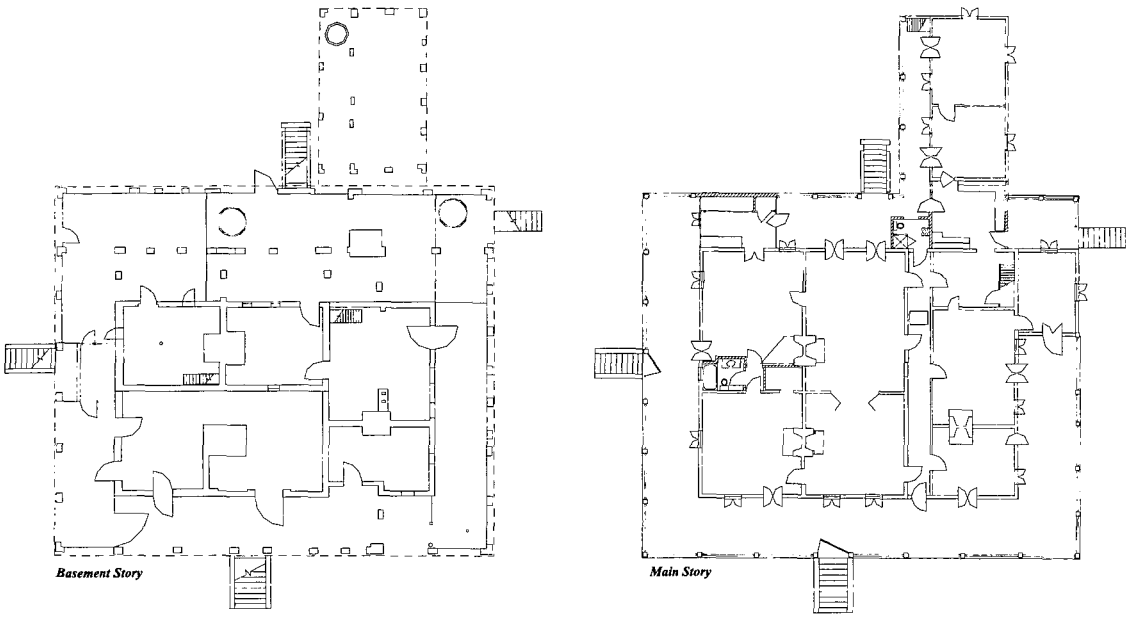

Figure 24 Floor plans of the Big House, 1953. (T. Jones, NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

In 1953, a second bathroom was also created between the two bedrooms on the south side of the house by first removing the small closet that contained the stairs to the servant's room in the basement. New walls were then built on the east side of Room 202 to create a larger closet (204), which still opened into the front bedroom (205); the bathroom (203) itself; and a hall between. A new window was also created on the exterior wall of the new bathroom. This bathroom featured a built- in bathtub as well as a cabinet for the lavatory, both of which had become standard bathroom features since the old bathroom was built in the 1920s. The final interior alteration during this period was construction of a closet on the south side of Room 209.

By the 1950s the house's slate roofing, which had been salvaged from the old LeComte town house in Natchitoches, may have been 150 years old and was badly weathered; so, in 1951, the decision was made to replace it. To do that, the Prud'hommes chose to use asbestos- cement roofing tiles, a product introduced in the early twentieth century and touted for its fire resistance and longevity. The galvanized metal roof vents and the unusual semi- octagonal gutters and round downspouts that had been installed with the slate roof in the early 1900s remained in place.

It was probably also at this time that significant repairs were made to the chimneys and some fireplaces, including removal of the unusual brick caps that covered the top of the southeast chimney. In 1953, the exterior of the house, which had been repainted only once since the renovations in the 1880s, underwent extensive repairs and repainting. The basic color scheme

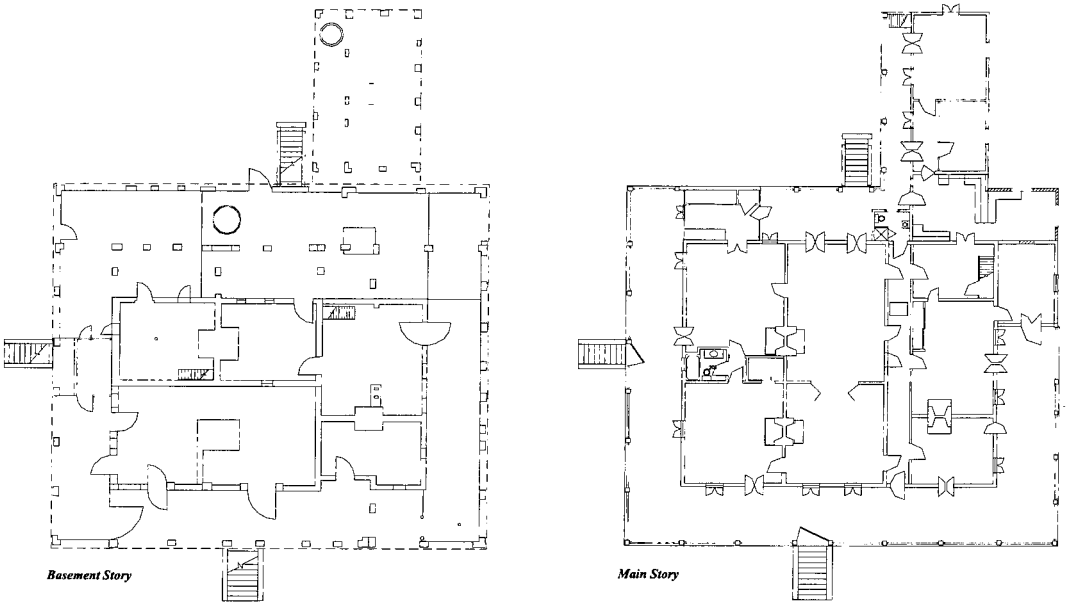

Figure 25 Floor plans of the Big House, 1964. (T. Jones, NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

was not altered except for elimination of the red which had been used on the baseboards and chair rails on the galleries since the 1880s. As part of the 1953 renovation, the Prud'hommes also redecorated much of the interior of the house, some of which had not been repainted since the 1880s. Thomas J. Dunsford, a color consultant with Pittsburgh paints, offered recommendations for paint colors and for colors of drapery and other fabrics, most of which appear to have been followed. In addition to the new construction, the master bedroom (202), front bedroom (205), "long hallway" (208), the northwest bedroom (209), and the stranger's room (211) were repainted. Three years later, Dunsford made additional color recommendations when the Prud'hommes repainted the guest bedroom (207), the living room (206), the dining room (210), and the breakfast room (212).[114] The house was not repainted again during the Prud'hommes ownership.

Changes to the Big House at Oakland after 1960 were minimal and generally confined to the kitchen wing of the house. In late summer 1964, the Prud'hommes removed the north wall of the kitchen they had built in 1948 and enclosed the north end of the rear gallery to create a new breakfast area. The kitchen (214A) and the new breakfast room (214B) were both paneled with sheet paneling at the same time, covering drywall which had been used in construction of the kitchen itself. New cabinets were also installed at this time. The wood windows on the north side of the old kitchen (216), which became a wash room, and the old pantry (215), which was used for storage, were probably

114.Yokum, pp. 235-238.

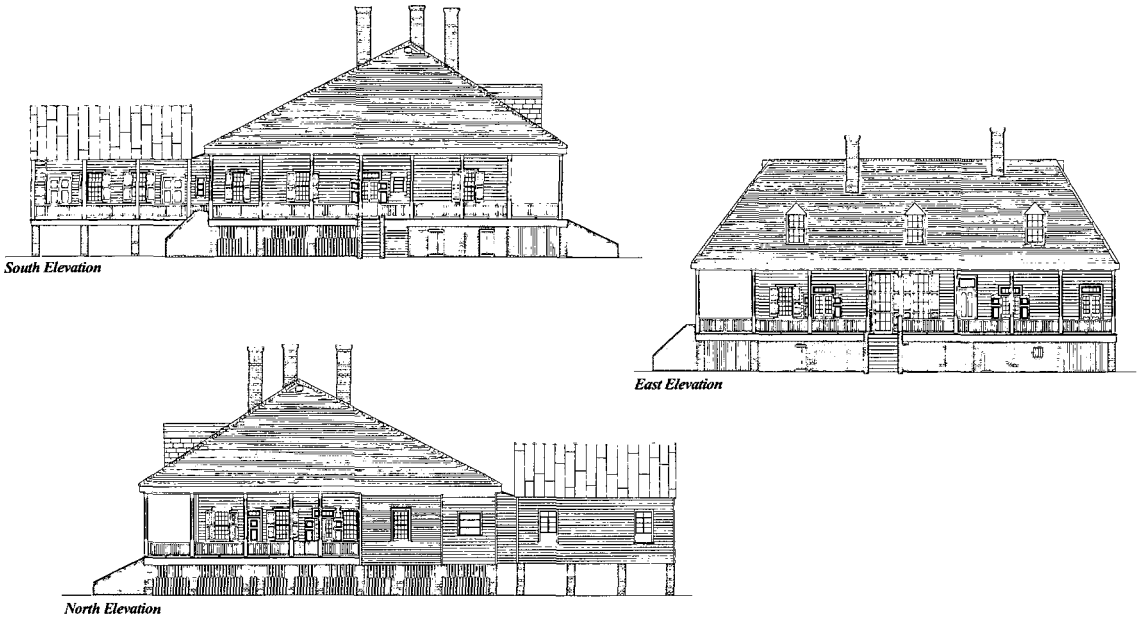

Figure 26 The Big House, after 1964. (T. Jones, NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

replaced with the present aluminum windows at that time as well.[115] The final significant alteration that the Prud'hommes made to the house was installation of a central heating and air- conditioning system in 1987. Equipment was installed in the closet (204) off the southeast bedroom (205), with condensers on the north side of the house and distribution through ducts in the attic and ceiling- mounted registers.

NPS Stabilization, 1998-2000

Beginning in 1998, the NPS has made a variety of repairs to the building. The cistern under the northwest corner of the house collapsed, taking with it one of the house's brick foundation piers, and was filled in by NPS staff. Floor framing at the southwest corner of the south gallery was reconstructed to repair major water damage. Coatings have been applied to the hip ridges on the west side of the roof to stop persistent leaks. The fuse boxes on the south gallery, which were associated with the original electrical system in the house, were removed; incoming electrical service replaced; and a new 400- amp panel installed in Room 215. The exterior was repainted (except for shutters and doors) in 2000. Temporary plywood floors, walls, and doors were installed throughout the house to protect historic material while the house was used for temporary park offices.

115.Date and many details are established by annotated photographs in the Prud'homme Coll., folder 7.1.64, in the Southern Historical Collection at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

Oakland Big House Time Line

1784	Jan 16	Jean Pierre Emmanuel Prud'homme (EP) m. Catherine Lambre (CLP)
1785	Jun 23	EP and CLP's first child, Jean Baptiste Emmanuel Prud'homme (JBEP) is born.
1786		EP and CLP's second child, Henriette, is born.
1788	Feb 16	EP's mother, Marie Colantin Prud'homme, dies.
	Mar 24	EP and CLP's third child, Louis Narcisse, born.
1789		Estevan Miro, governor- general of Louisiana, grants EP tract that forms the core of what would become Bermuda (and later Oakland) Plantation.
	Oct 21	EP's father, Dr. Jean Baptiste Prud'homme, dies in Natchitoches.
1800	Nov 14	EP and CLP's fourth and fifth children, Marie Adele and Marie Adeline, born.
1803		U. S. purchases Louisiana Territory from France.
1807	Jun 24	EP and CLP's last child, Pierre Phanor Prud'homme I (PPP), born.
c. 1810		Cotton introduced to Red River Valley; EP owns 53 slaves.
1812	Feb 5	Emmanuel Prud'homme files claims with the government of the United States to 1354 acres along the Red River (now, Cane River) at Isle Brevelle.
1815	Dec	End of War of 1812.
1816	Jul 26	EP's ownership of Bermuda Plantation confirmed and platted- - - a house is indicated on the plat in Section 104.
1818		EP begins construction of Big House house to replaces original home at Bermuda Plantation.
1819		Severe financial depression.
1820		EP owns 74 slaves.
1821		Construction of Big House completed.
1830		EP owns 96 slaves.
1833	spring	U. S. Army engineer Henry Shreve begins removal of "Great Raft" on Red River above Natchitoches.
1835	Dec 12	PPP marries Susanne Lise Metoyer.
		PPP begins running Bermuda Plantation.
1836		Big House enlarged to 12 rooms.

Oakland Big House Time Line

1837		Financial panic and depression.
1838	Mar 7	Shreve completes removal of "Great Raft."
	Apr 17	Jacques Alphonse Prud'homme I (JAPI) born to PPP and Lise Prud'homme.
	Sep 11	Chimney repairs completed on Big House.
1839		PPP serving as Justice of the Peace.
1840		EP owns 104 slaves.
1842	Jan	PPP records that he "[B]egan the extension of the house."
	Feb	PPP notes "I have contracted with the painter Morin to have the two houses [the Big House and the Cottage] painted giving him Nathan for the sum of $150 which is $75 for each."
1844	Jan 8	Pierre Emmanuel Prud'homme II (PPPII) born to PPP and Lise Prud'homme; cotton selling below cost of production.
1845	Jan 2	PPP contracts to have 40' x 80' mill with 12' galleries on each side constructed.
	May 13	Emmanuel Prud'homme I dies.
1848	Aug 4	Catherine Lambre Prud'homme, wife of Emmanuel Prud'homme I, dies.
1849	Aug	Flood leaves 18- 20" of water in front of Big House; Red River begins changing course to the east.
1852	May 19	Suzanne Lise Metoyer, wife of PPP I, dies.
1853	Apr	JAPI enters Collegiate Commercial Institute at New Haven, CT.
1854	Feb 3	PPP's slave Raymond training for operation of steam engines.
1855	Jan 16	PPP's daughter Adeline marries Winter Wood Brazzeale.
	Oct 16	PPP marries his late wife's widowed sister, Marianne Cephalide Metoyer.
1856	Jun	PPP delegate to Know- Nothing convention in Baton Rouge.
	Oct	JAP I returns home from CT.
	Nov	JAP I enters University of Virginia.
1857	Jan	PPP gets new Pratt gin stand.
	Oct	PPP's second wife, Marianne Metoyer, dies.
1858	Jun	JAP I enters University of North Carolina.
1859- 60		New gin built at Bermuda.

Oakland Big House Time Line

1860	Jun	JAP I graduates from University of North Carolina.
1860	Oct	JAP I employed as engineer on "central stem of the Mississippi & Pacific Railroad.
1861		Overseer's House built by Seneca Pace.
	Jan 23	Louisiana convention on secession meets.
	Apr	Firing on Ft. Sumter begins Civil War.
	May	JAP I quits railroad job.
1862	Mar 7	JAP I wounded and captured at Battle of Pea Ridge (Elkhorn Tavern), AK.
	Mar 15	JAP I escapes and returns home.
	May 22	Natchitoches Union publishes Sec. of War's order "to burn all the Cotton and Tobacco,... to prevent it from falling into the hands of the enemy."
	Dec 14	PPP engages P. T. McNeely as overseer.
1863	Apr	JAP I severely wounded again and returns home.
	Jun	JAP I returns to active duty.
	Aug 16	Overseer McNeely leaves Bermuda.
1864	Mar	Gen. Banks begins Federal campaign up the Red River.
	Mar 30	Federal troops reach Natchitotches.
	Apr 1	Confederate government issues orders for burning of cotton along Cane River.
	late Apr	Prud'hommes' "magnificent cotton mill with its steam engines" and the old gin are burned.
	May 14	Alexandria, Louisiana, burned.
	Jun 6	Jacques Alphonse Prud'homme marries Elise Elizabeth LeComte.
	Jul	JAP I mustered out and becomes enrolling officer for the parish.
1865	Apr 28	Last of the Confederate armies surrender, ending the Civil War.
	Aug 29	PPP's daughter Henriette marries Blount Baker Brazealle.
	Oct 12	PPP dies in Natchitoches.
1866	Apr 11	Steamer "Caddo" leaves new gin stand at Bermuda.
	Jun 19	Dr. Leveque and family move into Cottage.

Oakland Big House Time Line

1867		Informal agreement between JAP I and his brother Pierre Emmanuel Prud'homme (PEP) to divide old Bermuda Plantation.
1868	May 20	JAP I appointed administrator of PPP estate, replacing Felix Metoyer.
	Dec	First succession sale at Bermuda.
1870		PEP relocates across the river to Atahoe.
1871	Mar	La. Supreme Court sends PPP's probate back to parish court.
	Aug	PEP and JAP I mortgage Bermuda for $1200.
	Sep	PPP estate settled in parish court.
1873		House at Atahoe burns.
	Apr	Formal division of Bermuda between JAP I and PEP.
1874		Part of Oakland Big House used to rebuilt house at Atahoe.
1875		JAP I donates right- of- way for railroad.
1877	Apr	Federal troops withdrawn from Louisiana.
1878		PEP buys right to Cane River ferry.
1880		JAP I director of newly- established Merchants and Planters Protective Union.
1890		JAP I one of original shareholders in Bank of Natchitoches.
1891	Feb 3	PPP II marries Marie Laurie Cloutier at the Cora Lambre Plantation.
1896	Dec 18	Jacques Alphonse Prud'homme II born.
1901		J. Alphonse Prud'homme builds a house at what is now called Riverside Plantation for his son, Pierre Phanor Prud'homme, and family.
1904		Boll weevil invades upper Louisiana.
1906		Telephone service reaches Cane River.
		Old LeComte house in Natchitoches dismantled; slate used to reroof Big House.
1908		Last high water at Oakland due to damming of Cane River.
1910	Jul 6	Prud'hommes get Ford automobile.
1912		New iron bridge built over Cane River at Oakland.
1913		Mantles replaced in Big House; Antoine Prud'homme house burns.
1919	Feb 17	J. Alphonse Prud'homme dies.

Oakland Big House Time Line

1923	Oct 23	Mrs. JAP I dies.
1924	Aug 9	JAP II marries Rosalie Lucile Keator.
1927		Old mule barn burns at Oakland; first tours of historic Oakland.
	Jan 9	Jacques Alphonse Prud'homme III born.
1929	Feb 11	Kenneth Prud'homme born.
1932		Mayo Prud'homme born.
1934	Apr 10	PEP dies at Atahoe.
	Nov 4	Vivian Prud'homme born.
1936		Cane River Lake created.
c. 1937		Rural electrification comes to Cane River.
c. 1941		Last cotton ginned at Oakland.
1941	Dec 31	Mrs. JAP II dies.
1945	summer	Mrs. JAP II's parents, Mayo and Lucille Keator, moved to Oakland.
1948	May 21	PPP II dies.
		New kitchen built on back gallery; cypress floors laid in parlor and dining room.
c. 1949		Tractors replace mules at Oakland.
c. 1951		Slate roof on Big House replaced with cement- asbestos tiles.
1953		New bathrooms built; pine floors laid in bedrooms.
1964	Sep	North end of rear gallery enclosed for sitting area off kitchen.
1967	Jul 14	Bermuda Post Office closed.
c. 1971		"Oakland" sign installed at entrance gates.
1980		New concrete bridge built over Cane River.
1984		Prud'hommes auction farm equipment.
1986		Prud'hommes install central air- conditioning.
1988		Oakland Plantation named a bicentennial farm.
	Jun 13	JAP II dies.
1993		Congressional study of Cane River area completed.

Oakland Big House Time Line

1994	Nov 2	Public Law 103- 499 passed creating Cane River Creole National Historical Park and the Cane River Creole National Heritage Area.
1997		Prud'hommes sell Oakland to the National Park Service.
1998	Jun	Prud'hommes vacate Oakland.

Physical Description

Note: A plan of the existing building is included at the end of this section.

This section contains a systematic accounting of features, materials, and spaces in the Big House according to age, significance, and general integrity. The Big House was documented by the Historic American Building Survey (HABS No. LA- 1192) in 1987. Thirty-two sheets of drawings were produced, including plans, elevations, and structural and architectural details. In the spring of 1998, Barbara A. Yokum, architectural conservator, Building Conservation Branch, Northeast Cultural Resources Center, NPS, conducted a physical investigation of the house and analysis of its materials, including paint, to determine the building's historical evolution. Also in 1998, Ali Miri, historical architect in the NPS Southeast Regional Office, conducted a comprehensive investigation and assessment of the physical condition of the Big House. The findings from their studies of the house are synthesized below, along with the findings of additional archival research and building investigation that are part of the present study. Floor plans for the house showing room numbers used in

Figure 27 View of Oakland Big House from northeast. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

Figure 28 View of south side of old kitchen (c. 1865) off west side of main house. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

this report can be found at the end of this section.

Historic Character

The Big House at Oakland Plantation is a two-story, wood- framed, hipped- roof structure. The main story is raised about seven feet above a brick basement story and is surrounded by galleries, forming a "raised cottage" typical of traditional French Creole architecture in Louisiana. There are six rooms in the basement story and twelve rooms in the main story of the house. A one- story, gable- roofed wing extends from the north end of the rear (west side) of the house. Excluding the galleries, the structure encompasses about 3,500 square feet of floor space.

The house evolved over a 150- year period and underwent at least seven significant alterations, with the earliest occurring within a few years of the original construction and the latest in 1964. Materials and features from all of these eras remain intact and most contribute to the structure's historical and architectural significance.

Associated Site Features

The most prominent site features that were historically associated with the Big House were the cisterns. Two of these are still intact although no longer in use. Both are underground cisterns, one beneath the west end of the gallery on the south side of the kitchen wing and another beneath the pump on the rear gallery of the house itself. A third underground cistern was located under what is now the southwest corner of Room 214B, but it collapsed and was filled in by NPS personnel in 1996. Two above-ground water tanks were features of the site through most of the twentieth century. Both consisted of cylindrical,

Figure 29 View of cistern beneath rear gallery. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

Figure 30 View of cistern beneath kitchen gallery. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

corrugated- metal tanks set on brick piers. One was located off the north gallery, opposite Room 209. The other was located off the southwest corner of the house next to the missing extension of Room 201. Dates of construction for any of these cisterns are not known, although the below- ground cisterns are assumed to date to the nineteenth century. Historic photographs show the tank on the north side of the house in place in 1913. Both tanks were removed prior to the 1950s.

Foundation

The house is a wood- framed structure, raised about six feet above the surrounding grade, and set on a combination of brick foundation walls, twelve to fourteen inches thick, and sixty brick piers, which are generally about 12" by 18"- 24". Most brick are handmade and kiln- fired, probably on site. The brick are generally laid in six- course common bond with simple struck mortar joints. Brick size varies, with the oldest brick ranging around 7¾" to 8" by 2¼" to 2½" by 4". Second and third generation brick appear to be slightly smaller, ranging around 7½" by 2" to 2¼" by 3¾". Yokum characterized the early mortar as "a mixture of red clay and lime," which was finished with a simple struck joint. Many of the piers have been repaired and repointed, using a variety of other mortars, including portland cement; but few of the piers appear to have been totally rebuilt. The character of any footings or other below- grade features of the foundation has not been investigated.

In addition to brick walls and piers, there are five brick fireplace foundations; but only three of these still support fireplaces. The oldest are presumed to be the two foundations for the fireplaces in Rooms 202, 205, 206 and 210, although differences suggest that they may not be contemporaneous with one another. The fireplace foundations throughout the house

Figure 31 Brick piers on north end of east gallery. Pier at left is from the original house, c. 1821; pier at right is from the first expansion of the house, c. 1825. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

support pairs of fireplaces in the rooms above. All of these foundations are rectangular except for the foundation for the fireplaces in 202 and 210 where the southern half (beneath the fireplace in 202) is fourteen inches shorter than the 6'- 6" width of the northern half (beneath the fireplace in 210). The foundation for the fireplaces in Rooms 205 and 206, however, is a regular rectangle. These differences suggest the possibility that the fireplaces are not contemporaneous, although that seems unlikely. Alternatively, the differences may be simply anomalies of vernacular construction. The foundation for the fireplaces in Rooms 207 and 209 presumably dates to the first expansion of the house and is considerably smaller than those on the south side of the house. A fourth

Figure 32 Demolished foundation for fireplaces under kitchen wing. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

fireplace foundation is located beneath the southeast side of Room 214, although the fireplaces and chimney have been removed. This foundation engages two earlier brick piers, indicating that the chimney and fireplaces were added sometime after the original house was extended to the north and west. One of the fireplaces on this abandoned foundation served Room 212; the other served a room that pre- dated the addition of the kitchen wing after the Civil War. The room could have been the garçonniere that was dismantled after the Civil War to make repairs to the house at Atahoe across the river; but it was remembered as Mrs. Prud'homme's office. The fireplace was not removed, however, but remained in place on the open gallery until that area was enclosed for the present kitchen (214) in 1953.[116] Much less remains of the fifth foundation, located beneath and contemporaneous with the kitchen wing (215- 217) that was constructed

Figure 33 Detail of north wall of gas room (106), showing two earliest generations of brick work, both with mortar joints pencilled in white over red. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

after the Civil War. The framed openings for the two fireplaces and a chimney can be identified in the floors and ceilings above. It was apparently removed during the renovations in the early 1950s.

During the antebellum period, the brick foundation walls and piers were painted red with mortar joints "pencilled" in white, a popular treatment of brick until the twentieth century. The technique was meant to disguise the irregularity of color, texture, and coursing that was typical of handmade brick. The red paint can still be identified at several locations; but the only extant example of the pencilled mortar joints is in a very small area on the upper few courses of the brick foundation wall that forms the north wall of Room 106 beneath the south gallery.

116.See Herman Seebold, Old Louisiana Plantation Homes and Family Trees (Gretna, LA: Pelican Publishing Co., 1971 reprint of 1941 publication), p. 366. Seebold's description of the house notes the presence of "an outdoor fireplace" on the back porch. This could only have been located where the chimney base is located beneath the west side of Room 212. A photograph taken about 1950 shows the placement of the chimney but reveals no details about the fireplace itself.

Structural System

Except in the kitchen wing (Rooms 215- 217) and in twentieth- century alterations (Rooms 213- 214), the house is timber- framed with a combination of hewn and sash- sawn cypress lumber using mortise- and- tenon connections. Walls are framed with studs that are generally 3" by 4"; floor joists, 4" by 9"; ceiling joists, 3"- 4" by 7"- 8"; and rafters, 3½"- 4" by 4½"- 5½". Of special interest in the attic are the two king- post trusses near the southwest side of the house. These were installed so that the original west walls of 201 and 210 could be removed when the house was extended to the west in the 1830s. Instead of the brick "nogging" used to infill timber- framed walls in the English tradition, the French Creole tradition in Louisiana used *bousillage* (a mixture of mud and spanish moss, straw, and/or animal hair) to infill the space between the timbers. Portions of the historic *bousillage* walls of the house are visible along the attic staircase from Room 212 and in the closet below the staircase. Original *bousillage* walls have survived in the outside walls of Rooms 202, 205, 206, and 210; in the east- west wall that separates those rooms; and in the south wall of 208, the east and north

Figure 34 View of timber-framed *bousillage* construction, whitewashed, visible in stairwell to attic. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

walls of 207, the north wall of 209, and the north and west walls of 212.

The other rooms in the house (201, 211, and 213-217) do not have *bousillage* walls. The kitchen wing (now Rooms 211 and 215- 217) was built with a modified braced frame utilizing hewn cypress sills and circular- sawn joists, studs, and rafters, which were fastened using a combination of mortise- and- tenon joinery and cut- nailed connections. The twentieth- century additions (Rooms 201, 205, 213, and 214) have modern wood frames using standard dimensions and wire- nailed connections.

Support beams (sometimes called "shake sills") have been installed at the mid- point of the span of the floor joists beneath Rooms 202, 206, and 210 to lessen vibrations from foot

Figure 35 View to southwest in attic, showing original roof framing. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

traffic and to provide additional support for loads on the floors. The beam and chamfered posts supporting the joists under Room 205 are finely crafted and may have been added in the nineteenth century.

Exterior

Roofing: On the main house, historic wood-shingled roofing was replaced by slate roofing salvaged when the Lecomte House in Natchitoches was torn down in 1906. That slate roof was replaced by the existing cement- asbestos roof in 1953. Most of the shingles are in good condition. Flashing around chimneys and dormers is galvanized steel, some of which may date to the early twentieth century. The triangular, sheet- metal vents at each end of the roof ridge were apparently installed along with the slate roof around 1906. With the exception of the dormers which retain their original decking, roof decking consists of closely- spaced 1" by 6" boards. This decking is in very good

Figure 36 Typical semi-octagonal gutter and round downspouts, which date to early twentieth century. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

Figure 37 Typical French doors with solid wooden shutters. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

condition and was also installed along with the slate roofing in the early 1900s. On the old kitchen addition (Rooms 215- 217), roofing is standing- seam metal, which perhaps replaced an earlier wood- shingled roof in the late nineteenth or early twentieth centuries but may be contemporaneous with the wing's original construction.

The main roof of the house drains into 6", zinc- coated steel gutters which have an unusual half- octagonal design. Five- inch, half-round gutters are used on the kitchen wing. All gutters are roof- hung and drain into 4" round downspouts.

Window and Door Openings: The house has fifty- three exterior openings: seventeen in the basement story, thirty- three in the main story, three in the main attic, and two at each end of the kitchen attic. Yokum's materials analysis indicated that all of the window sash and doors date to the second, westward expansion of the house or later. On the main story, none of the thirteen exterior doors are solid (i.e., without glass); eight are double French doors measuring around 3'- 8½" by 7'- 1". All of the French doors and most of the other exterior doors have fixed, four- and five- light transoms. Only the transom at the front door is hinged to open; it also has a wood- framed screen hinged on the exterior. Except in the post- World War II additions, where aluminum- framed awning and casement windows were used, the windows in the main block of the house are double- hung with twelve- light sash in an opening around 3'- 0" by 5'- 8". In the post- Civil War additions (201, 215- 217), six- and nine- light sash are also found. (See HABS Sheet #22 for drawings of the windows).

Figure 38 Typical 12/12, double-hung window with louvered shutters, c. 1835. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

All but five of the windows on the main floor have exterior shutters; the attic dormer windows have none. Except for a single set of barred shutters on the east side of the house, most of the window shutters have movable louvers. Except for the main front door, which has no shutter, the doors and all but four of the basement openings have solid wooden shutters. The four openings in the basement without shutters have vertical iron bars closing the openings. (See HABS Sheet #23 for drawings of shutters).

In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, screen doors were installed at most door openings and wood- framed, sliding, half- screens were installed at most window openings. Most of these remain intact.

Details of all window and door openings can be found on HABS Sheets #19- 27. Details of exterior openings can be found under the appropriate room descriptions below.

Siding and Trim: With the exception of some later alterations and additions around the rear of the house, all of the exterior siding and trim dates to the nineteenth century, much of it from the second, westward expansion of the house in the 1830s. The walls of the main house underneath the galleries are finished with 1" by 6", flush- laid boards. It is not known if the edges of these boards are tongued and grooved or only rabbeted. Except in the north and south sides of Room 201 at the southwest corner of the house, where vertical wall boards were used, the walls on the gallery are paneled with boards laid horizontally. On the west side of Room 201, the north side of Room 211, and the entire kitchen wing, typical 6" lap siding covers the exterior walls, using an exposure of about 5½".

The gallery walls of the main block of the house have a 4"- wide chair rail set about 33" above the gallery floors and a 5½" baseboard capped with 1¼" quarter round. Molded casings are used at all windows and doors (see HABS Sheet #22 for profiles).

Foundation Enclosures: Before the Civil War, there was apparently no enclosure of the foundation piers around the perimeter of the house. The brick walls of the basement rooms remained clearly visible and were painted red with "pencilled" mortar joints. Fragments of that treatment can still be found in Room 106 (see description below) with red paint still visible on the brick at several other locations. The

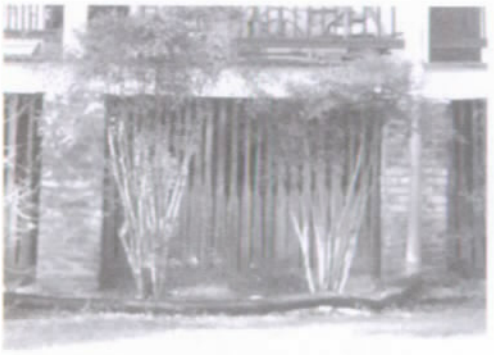

Figure 39 .Views of earliest type of foundation enclosures, (c. 1870). (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

Figure 40 View of a somewhat of foundation enclosure. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

brick piers along the front or east side of the front gallery appear to have always remained open except at each end. There, and continuing around the perimeter of the house on the north, south, and most of the west side, painted wooden palings enclose the open area between the piers. These palings were sawn from split cypress in an unusual oar- like pattern that could exclude animals from entering while still allowing for good ventilation. Around the northeast corner of the house, sawn (not split) cypress was used for the palings. There are no nail holes or other evidence for these palings on the interior face of the house sills where the now- missing wing at the south end of the west side of the house was once attached. This indicates that the palings were installed after (or along with) construction of that addition, presumably shortly after the Civil War.

Grade- level courses of brick at the west end of the kitchen wing and a wooden door frame on the south side below Room 217 are all that

Figure 41 View of the third type of foundation enclosure. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

remain from the enclosure of that area. Horizontal boards (now covered with corrugated metal) above a grade- level course of brick are present beneath the west side of Room 214B. Wood- framed walls with horizontal planking were once present between the piers of the kitchen wing, but only fragments of the framing remain in place beneath the east end of the south side of the wing. These walls were reportedly removed in the 1940s.

Figure 42 View north on front or east gallery. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

Figure 43 View to northwest on rear gallery, showing intersection with gallery on south side of kitchen wing. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

Galleries: Open galleries or porches surround the main house, except where Rooms 201, 211, 213, and 214 were created by enclosing portions of the original west and north galleries. A connecting gallery, 6' deep, extends from the west gallery down the south side of the kitchen wing as well. The galleries around the main house are around 11' deep with a ceiling height of 11'-2" except at the west end of the south gallery and all across the rear gallery, where the ceiling height is 5" lower. The reason for this difference may relate to now- missing *cabinets*, which were plank- walled rooms like Room 201 that were widely used in the Natchitoches area to gain extra living space.[117] It is also possible that the difference in ceiling height was simply the result of it being easier to frame the ceiling of the extended gallery in that manner. The gallery ceilings are finished with tongue- and-groove boards, 4" to 8" wide, except on the south side of the kitchen wing where 12" boards were used. The boards comprising the southern two- thirds of the east gallery ceiling and the eastern two- thirds of the south gallery ceiling probably date to the original construction of the house.

Floor boards in the main galleries are tongue-and- groove cypress boards, 4" to 6" wide; on the south gallery of the old kitchen addition, floor boards are plain cypress boards 6" The flooring on the rear (west) gallery appears to have been largely replaced and there have been numerous repairs to the flooring of the other galleries as well.

Brick stairs between brick buttresses presently rise from the ground to the galleries on the east, south, and west sides of the house. Historic photographs show that the brick steps to the front (east) gallery were in existence by about

117. Carolyn Wells, "Domestic Architecture of Colonial Natchitoches" (Masters Thesis, Northwestern State University, 1973), pp. 29-30.

1910; the worn condition of the brick in those photographs suggests that the steps date to the antebellum period, perhaps to the second expansion of the house in the 1830s. Steps on the other sides of the house were originally wooden. It is apparent from alterations to the existing balustrades that the steps to the south gallery were added at a later date, although when has not been documented.

The wooden steps to the rear gallery, where there have probably always been steps, and the wooden steps to the south gallery were both replaced with the present brick steps in the 1940s. Column placement shows that a fourth set of steps, now missing, rose to the north gallery and were an original feature of the house as it was expanded in 1835. Photographs show that these stairs were removed between 1926 and 1953. Wooden steps at the north end of the rear gallery, which were probably added after the Civil War, were removed when Room 214B was constructed in 1964.

On the main part of the house, the headers that support the perimeter of the roof above the galleries have beaded edges and are supported by a series of twenty- five wooden columns or posts, one of which is engaged by the wall on the west side of Room 201 and another by the northeast corner of Room 211. A portion of one of the original gallery headers, painted gray, was reused as a floor joist beneath the southeast corner of Room 209.

Figure 44 Brick stairs to rear gallery, shown here, and similar stairs to the south gallery replaced wooden stairs after World War II. Brick stairs to front gallery date to the nineteenth century. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

Figure 45 Typical gallery post, balustrades, and flooring. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

Figure 46 View of typical porch header and column top. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

Figure 47 View of front porch light fixture. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

Posts are 7" by 7" and chamfered from 1" above the top rail of the balustrades to 7" below the header for the roof. The posts feature a distinctive "foot" (similar to the detail found on one of the original posts at the Prud'hommes' nearby store) that is formed by intersecting, 2"- diameter, semi- circular holes through the base of the post, which was intended to reduce the amount of end grain that is in direct contact with the porch deck, thereby reducing moisture penetration. The lower 6" to 8" of most posts have been replaced, although the original detail was replicated each time the posts were repaired. Only some of the posts on the west gallery have not been repaired and retain the original detail.

The four posts on the gallery on the south side of the old kitchen wing (c. 1865) are slightly smaller, 4" by 6." Edges are not chamfered but the bottom of the posts have the same detail as the posts on the main galleries but with the holes running in only one direction.

The main gallery balustrades are approximately 28" high with the bottom rail set about 4" from the floor. The top rail is 3½" by 3" and the bottom rail is 2" by 3"; the edges of both rails are reeded. Balusters are plain, 1" square, and set on 4½" centers. On the south gallery of the old kitchen addition, top rails are 2½" by 3½", bottom rails are 2" by 2½", and 1"- square balusters are set on 4" centers. Wooden gates are located at the tops of the three sets of existing stairs and of the now- missing stairs to the north gallery. Historic photographs show that the gate at the top of the front stairs was not in place around 1910 and the other gates may not have been either. Although the design of these gates does not match the balustrades and appear to have been salvaged from another location, their materials and manner of construction indicate that all four gates date to the nineteenth century. The column on the south side of the front

Figure 48 Myers pump on rear gallery, still connected to cistern located below. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

porch steps has two pairs of empty mortises, one of which held the original hinges for the present gate, which is now hung with modern steel strap hinges.

Historic photographs from around 1910 show a single- burner, gaslight fixture hung from the ceiling near the front steps. The present electric, single- bulb fixture is wrought and/or cast iron and was probably installed when the house was electrified in the late 1930s.

Of interest on the rear or west gallery is the cast- iron pump that drew water from a cistern that once existed below the gallery floor. Manufactured by "F. E. Myers & Bro." of Ashland, Ohio, the pump model is "Myers 1073" and bears patent dates of August 7 and November 1883. It is connected to the subterranean cistern below by a 1¼", galvanized, steel pipe.

Paint: Yokum's materials analysis (see Appendix) show that the earliest exterior painted finishes date to the house's second, westward expansion around 1835 when most of the existing woodwork appears to have been installed. Through most of the antebellum period, siding, window and door casing, window sash, and doors were painted white or cream, baseboard was painted grey, chair rail and shutters were painted dark green, and the gallery ceiling was painted light blue- green.

Most siding and trim were repainted only once or twice before the 1880s, although some exposed or heavily- used areas were repainted more often. During the renovations around 1880, the exterior was completely repainted, continuing the cream- colored siding and trim, green shutters, and blue ceilings on the galleries. Baseboards and chair rails were, however, painted red and doors were painted a peach color. The color scheme was continued until the house was repainted in 1953 when the baseboards and chair rails were returned to white.

Interior

The main story of the house has seventeen rooms, encompassing about 3,500 square feet of floor space. Rooms 202, 205, 206, 210, and most of 207, 209, and 212 date to the antebellum period. Of these, Rooms 205 and 206 have been the least altered. The kitchen wing (215, 216, and 217) was built just after the Civil War, replacing an earlier room or rooms on the west side of Room 212. Part of the north gallery was enclosed for the "stranger's room" (211) shortly

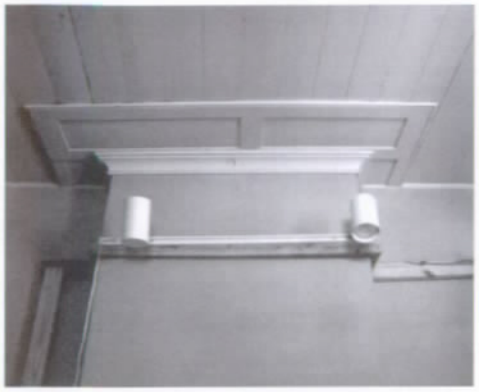

Figure 49 Board ceiling, typical of those found in most rooms on the main floor of the house. Paneling detail around chimney breast is typical of that found in 202, 205, 206, and 210, although molding details are different in each room. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

Figure 50 Typical beaded, tongue-and-groove boards used to panel parts or all of walls and ceilings in 202, 204, 207, 209, 215, and 216. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

before or shortly after the Civil War, and a new room (or rooms) was created on the west side of Room 202 around the same time. In the 1880s, the hallway (208) was created out of the south sides of Rooms, 207, 209, and 212. In the early 1920s, a bathroom was added in Room 212. After World War II, new pine and cypress flooring was installed over the original cypress flooring. In 1953, a new bathroom (213) was constructed on the gallery at the west end of the hall, and the 1920s bathroom was removed from Room 212. A second bathroom (203) was also added on the southeast side of Room 202 and a new kitchen (214) replaced the old kitchen (216) at the same time.

In the main block of the house, most of the existing ceiling and wall boards, plaster, mantles, windows, doors, and wood trim date to the antebellum period; the wall on the north side of the hall (208), the front door, and the gaslight fixtures (electrified in the 1930s) date to the late nineteenth century. Nearly all of the original cypress flooring throughout the house survives; but, except in the closet beneath the attic stairs in Room 212, the original flooring was covered by the present cypress and pine flooring in the late 1940s and early 1950s. The six rooms in the basement story, which appear to have been used only for storage since the Civil War, encompass about 1,748 square feet. Rooms 101 and 105 are the oldest, with 102, 103, and 104 added in the 1820s or 1830s. Located under the south gallery, Room 106 is wood framed and was built around the turn of the twentieth century to house the gas- making equipment for the Prud'hommes' gas lighting system. The ceilings in all of the basement spaces are formed by the exposed floor joists and floor boards of the rooms above and, except for 106, the walls are formed by the brick foundation walls of the house. Three of the basement- story rooms

Figure 51 View of board door at basement level, typical of the oldest doors in the house. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

Figure 52 View of four-panel door from 1880s and, through doorway, typical six-panel door from 1830s. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

(103, 104, and 106) have brick floors; the others are dirt.

Doors: Some of the board doors and wrought-iron hinges in the basement story may date to the original construction of the house. On the main floor of the house, the oldest doors date to the second, western expansion of the house in the 1830s. All of the French doors, six of the six- panel doors, the folding doors in the parlor, the north door in 207, and the door beneath the attic stairs in 212 date to this period. Five of the six- panel doors date to the alterations to the house around 1880. (See HABS Sheet #19- 20 for drawings of interior doors.)

Figure 53 Early spring lock on French doors in dining room. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

Hardware: Some of the wrought- iron strap hinges in the basement story may date to the original construction of the house. Besides these, three large groups of cast- iron door hinges are found in the house, with the oldest

Figure 54 View southeast in Room 101, showing plumbing lines from bathroom 203. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

being two- knuckle, lift hinges found on the French doors. Three- knuckle and five-knuckle hinges were introduced later in the nineteenth century. Some of the original (1830s) spring locks with brass knobs remain at the French doors; but most of the other door knobs and latches were replaced with porcelain knobs and rim locks after the Civil War.

Paint: Like the exterior, the interior of the house was repainted infrequently. The interior color palette was limited to cream and grey before the Civil War, with bolder red, peach, and other colors introduced as part of the 1880s renovations and throughout the twentieth century. The last complete redecoration of the house was in the early 1950s and most of the rooms have not been repainted since that time. The use of wallpaper has not been documented in the house (see Yokum's materials analysis for complete details of paint chronology.)

Mammy's Room (101)

Located on the southwest side of the house, this room is thought to have been used as a bedroom for the Prud'hommes' black "mammy" in the nineteenth century. Charged with care of the children, this servant was typically the only slave who actually lived in the house with the family. The only basement room used as living space, this room is one of two rooms that composed the original basement story of the house. A wooden staircase in the northeast corner of the room rises to the main floor; and, although it has been thought that the staircase rose to the master bedroom (202), it was actually connected to the *southeast* bedroom (205), which would have been used as a nursery or children's bedroom. The stairs opened through a trap door in a small closet in the northeast corner of the master bedroom (202). The staircase remains in place but access to the main floor of the house was eliminated by construction of the present, somewhat larger closet (204) in that location in 1953.

Floor: Floor area is 18'- 2" by 14'- 2½" or around 256 square feet. The floor is dirt.

Walls: Walls are formed by the brick foundation walls of the house. A thin coat of stucco has been applied to the walls, but much of it has eroded away.

Ceiling: The ceiling is formed by the open floor joists (typically around 3½"- 3¾" by 9"- 10") and flooring of the room above.

Doors: In addition to the trap door (now closed) to Room 205, there is a single door on

the west side of the space. The door is 3'- 1" by 5'- 9", constructed of vertical planks horizontally braced. Hardware includes wrought- iron strap hinges, wrought- iron latch and cast- iron rim lock and escutcheon (see Appendix B, HABS Sheet #13).

Windows: Window openings are found on the west and south walls. Both are 2'- 6" x 3'- 11" and are closed by exterior, solid, wooden shutters with wrought- iron hinges and wrought- iron latches. A wooden frame for double- hung sash (both missing) remains in the south window and there is shadow evidence for the same framing in the west window. Framing for vertical wooden bars (now missing but similar to those in 103) is also present in the west window.

Lighting: There is no lighting except that provided by windows and door.

Heating: There is no evidence for a fireplace, stove, or other heating device in this room.

Miscellaneous Features: In the northeast corner of the room, wooden stairs rise to the now-abandoned trap door to Room 202. The stairs were made inaccessible by the construction of Room 204. Hinge mortises and a 1953 photograph of the original surrounding closet prove that the stairs opened into 205 and not into 202.

A support beam has been installed running north to south at the mid- point of the span of the floor joists for Room 202. Three wooden posts support the beam. Cast- iron waste lines from the Bath Room (203) descend along the

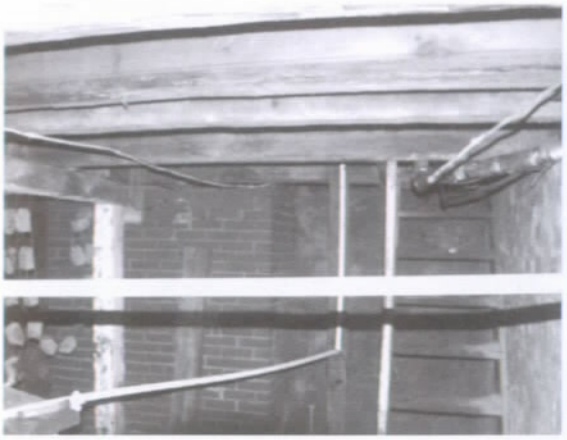

Figure 55 View north in Room 101, showing stairs to first floor, which were probably abandoned shortly after the Civil War. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

south side of the room and exit below grade toward the southwest side of the room. Water supply pipes for the other bathroom and for the kitchen also run through this room.

Museum (102)

This room was not part of the original four-room house and may be contemporaneous with the two rooms (103 and 104) that were added at the north end of the house. When it was created, this room is reported to have been divided into two separate spaces by east- west brick walls on each side of the chimney base near the center of the room. According to family tradition, the southernmost space was historically used as a "potato room" for long- term storage of sweet potatoes and other such root crops. When Mrs. J. A. Prud'homme created her museum of plantation artifacts in the 1950s,

Figure 56 View to east of north side of "Museum" in 102. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

Figure 57 View to south showing connection between the two sides of Room 102. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

the wall on the west side of the chimney base was removed, creating the present space.

Floor: Floor area is 37'- 2½" by 18'- 5" or about 630 square feet. The floor in this room is dirt but is considerably drier than the floors in the rooms on the west side of the basement story.

Walls: The west wall is formed by the original brick foundation walls on the east sides of Rooms 101 and 105. The south and east walls are formed by brick piers infilled with solid brick walls. Original (c. 1818) piers are evident in the walls on the south and east sides of this room.

Ceiling: The ceiling is formed by the open joists and flooring of the rooms above.

Doors: All of the openings into this room are doors. The main entrance is on the east and opens into the northern half of the space. That door is 4'- 7" by 5'- 9", constructed of 1" by 2¾" wood slats, set 2- ¾" apart, with wrought- iron hinges. It was originally locked with a rim lock, but now by a modern padlock and chain.

The southernmost door on the east side of this room has both inward- and outward- swinging doors. The inner door is 3'- 0" by 5'- 8", constructed of 2" wooden slats set 3½" apart, with wrought- iron hinges and latch. The outer door is 2'- 10" by 5'- 6" and is a solid, wood- plank door. The easternmost opening on the south side of this room is 3'- 1" by 5'- 7" with a door made from ten- inch, beaded, tongue- and-groove boards, hung on wrought- iron hinges. There is no evidence for an interior wood- slat door at this opening. The western most opening on the south side of this room is 3'- 0" by 5'- 8", with a wood- slat door like that at the southernmost opening on the east wall. An outer solid- plank door was present at this opening when the building was recorded by HABS in 1987 but is now missing.

Lighting: Each side of the room is lit by a single electric light, probably installed in the 1950s.

Miscellaneous Features: Of some interest is the added beam that has been installed perpendicular to the floor joists under Room 206. Similar "shake sills" have been added under other floors but none have chamfered posts to support the beam.

Store Room (103)

This room appears to be contemporaneous with the building campaign that extended the house to the north in the 1820s.

Floor: Floor is 19'- 2" by 12'- 0" (widest point) or about 212 square feet. Unlike Rooms 101 and 102, this floor is paved with brick.

Walls: Walls are formed by the brick foundation walls of the house. It is not clear why the southern half of the east wall is inset from the plane of the other walls.

Ceiling: The ceiling is formed by the open joists and flooring of the rooms above.

Doors: Entrance is through a single door at the south end of the east wall. Door is 3'- 0" by 5'- 1"; similar to southernmost door on east wall of Room 102 with six slats, 1" by 2"; wrought iron hinges; cast- iron rim lock with ghost of older rim lock.

Windows: Two windows are located in this room, one on the east wall and one on the north wall. The east window is 2'- 4½" by 3'- 7" and closed by 1" by 2" vertical bars 2½- inches apart. The north window is 2'- 0" by 2'- 0", closed by six, vertical, 1" iron bars in a wood frame.

Figure 58 View south in 103. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

Lighting: There is no lighting except that provided by windows and door.

Miscellaneous Features: Wood shelving is located along the north end of the room, part of the west side, and across the south end. The accumulation of materials and general condition of the room make a thorough investigation impossible; but it is likely that some sort of shelving has always been a feature of this room.

Cooling Room (104)

Like the store room (103), this room was created as part of the expansion of the house to the north, presumably in the 1820s. Although "cooling room" implies a function similar to that of a spring house, it is likely that this room was simply used for long- term storage of food

Figure 59 View to north in 104, showing door exiting beneath north gallery. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

Figure 60 View to southwest, showing stairs rising to hall on main floor. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

and other items. The room can be entered through a door on the north wall or by stairs from the trap door in the hall (208) above. A door in the south wall also connects this room to the wine cellar (105).

Floor: Floor is 19'- 2" by 20'- 11" or nearly 400 square feet. The floor is paved with brick.

Walls: Walls are formed by the brick foundation walls of the house.

Ceiling: The ceiling is formed by the open joists and flooring of the rooms above. Hand- planed and painted joists, 3½" by 7¼", are used at three locations on the southeast side of the room. With beaded edges, these appear to have been a portion of the original gallery header. The joists on the south side of the ceiling are generally sawn; those on the north side, which was added later, are generally hewn.

Doors: The door opening on the north wall is 4'- 1" by 5'- 7" and has both inner and outer doors. The outer door is a solid wood plank door, 4'- 0" by 5'- 5½", with wrought- iron hinges. The upper part of the door is not solid but covered by a window sash nailed to the exterior. The inner door for this opening is 4'- 3" by 5'- 5½", with wrought- iron hinges. It is constructed with 2½- inch slats spaced 2½ inches apart, with 4½- inch slats mounted behind every other opening.

The door to the wine cellar (105) is 2'- 11" by 5'- 2", made with 1" by 2½" vertical slats. Wrought- iron hinges have broken, but the door is still in the wine cellar. No rim lock was used, only a wrought- iron latch.

Windows: There are two, nearly identical window openings on the north wall. Both are 3'- 0" by 1'- 11" and are closed by ten, 1"- square, iron rods set in a wooden frame.

Lighting: There is no lighting except that provided by windows and door.

Miscellaneous Features: In the southwest corner of the room, cypress stairs rise steeply to the

trap door in the hall (208). Although the bottoms of the stringers are in contact with the brick floor, the staircase remains in relatively good condition. Originally only 32" wide (north to south), the trap door opening was later enlarged to its present dimensions (about 40"). The existing stairs probably date to that alteration, which appears to have occurred in the nineteenth century. Floor- to- ceiling wooden frames or scaffolds for shelving are located on part of the west and south walls. Shelving is movable and not fixed, presumably to accommodate storage of items in a variety of sizes. Near the center of the space, a beam running east to west marks the outside of what was the original gallery on the north side of the original four- room house. On the east side of the room, construction of the brick foundation for the fireplaces in Rooms 207 and 209 necessitated cutting this beam and installing the pair of posts near the east wall. Note that the sawn joists on the south side predate the hewn joists on the north side.

Figure 61 View to northeast in wine cellar. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

Figure 62 View to northwest in wine cellar. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

Wine Cellar (105)

This room is one of two rooms in the basement story that were part of the original (c. 1818) house. As the name implies, the room was used for storage of wine.

Floor: The floor is 18'- 3" by 14'- 6" or about 265 square feet. The floor is paved with brick but excessive ground water has left a layer of mud that nearly obscures the brick pavers.

Walls: Walls are formed by the brick foundation walls of the house.

Ceiling: The ceiling is formed by the open joists and flooring of the rooms above.

Doors: In addition to the door from Room 104 on the north wall, which appears not to be an original opening, a door on the west wall opens to the exterior. The opening is 3'- 1" by 5'- 9" and the door is made up of solid planks, with wrought- iron hinges and cast- iron rim lock. A series of eleven holes, about 2" in diameter, have been cut into the upper part of the door, presumably for additional ventilation.

Figure 63 View of interior of "gas room," 106. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

Windows: The openings on the west wall are 2'- 0" by 1'- 11", closed by six iron bars, 1" square.

Lighting: There is no lighting except from the windows.

Miscellaneous Features: A series of racks or scaffolds for movable shelves, similar to those in Room 104, are located on all four walls of this room. Many wine bottles are still stored, upside down, in holes cut into the shelves.

A support beam resting on a pair of posts, all of pressure- treated pine, has recently been installed running north to south at the midpoint of the span of the dining room floor joists above.

Gas Room (106)

Located under the south gallery of the house, this room was called "boiler room" in the HABS documentation of 1987. However, there is no evidence that there was ever a boiler in the house, although two modern water heaters are located in the northwest corner of the space. Pencilled inscriptions (see below) on the inside of the door indicate that the room actually contained the gas- making equipment for the house's gas lighting system. A variety of residential gas- making plants were available and were widely used by those who could afford them in rural areas away from municipal gas works.[118] Stored in the old wash house behind the Big House are parts of the Prud'hommes' gas- making plant. A "Pilot Acetylene Generator" made in Chicago, Illinois, the existing equipment includes a cylindrical main tank, 25 inches in diameter and 5'- 1" tall, and two smaller cylindrical tanks, 24" by 48" and 29" by 23". The patent dates on the larger tank range from 1895 to 1902. The simple design of the existing gasoliers in the house, including the Craftsman influence indicated by their antique- copper finish, suggest that the Prud'hommes installed gas lighting in the house in the first decade of the twentieth century.

Floor: The floor is dirt, 6'- 4" by 10'- 8" or about 68 square feet.

118.Roger Moss, *Lighting for Historic Buildings*, pp. 100-101; Mim Sherman, "A Look at Nineteenth-Century Lighting: Lighting Devices from the Merchant's House Museum," *APT Bulletin*, vol. xxxi, #1, p. 42.

Walls: The east, south, and west walls of the space are paneled with 5", tongue- and- groove boards, most of it double beaded but some with double V- joints. The north wall is formed by the brick foundation of the original house.

Ceiling: The ceiling is paneled like the walls with 5", tongue- and- groove boards, some double beaded and some double V- jointed.

Door: The door on the east wall is 3'- 1" by 5'- 9" made up of random- width, tongue- and- groove boards. The inside of the door is covered with penciled inscriptions dating to at least 1912, and including references to the room's being "cleaned out" and to "charged lights." One inscription on the door confirms that these references were to a gas plant and not batteries for electric lights: "Burned all night... all burners on. Sept. 6, 1914"

Window: A single window opening is located on the west wall, closed by solid wood plank shutter, 2'- 5" by 2'- 8".

Miscellaneous Features: On the brick wall near the ceiling at the east end of the room is a small area where the wall is painted with "penciled" mortar joints. This treatment, which was popular throughout the nineteenth century, began by painting the entire wall brick- red. Then, often ignoring the actual mortar joints, white mortar lines were painted or "pencilled" over the surface to eliminate some of the irregularities in size and shape that were inherent with most hand- made brick. This finish must predate the existing wood palings that enclose the open area beneath the galleries, which appear

Figure 64 View west under south gallery, showing door to gas room. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

to have been installed in conjunction with the Reconstruction- era additions to the rear of the house (see "Foundation" above). The paint here is very fragile and is the only example of the treatment to be found anywhere on the house.

In the northeast corner of the room are two water heaters. Neither of them is now operative, having been replaced by a new water heater installed by the NPS in the northeast corner of Room 217.

Dressing Room (201)

According to family tradition, this room was part of a larger room that was constructed off the west side of the house after the Civil War;

but its size and configuration remain mostly undocumented. Reportedly built by Jacques Alphonse Prud'homme I, perhaps for an office, the room was reduced in size in the twentieth

Figure 65 View to south in dressing room. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

Figure 66 View to north in dressing room. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

century by tearing away the portion that extended beyond the edge of the gallery. No date for this change has been documented; but historic photographs show that it had occurred prior to the exterior repainting of 1953. In 1953, the remainder of the room was converted into a dressing room by the addition of floor- to-ceiling closets against the east and west walls.

Floor: The room is 14'- 4" by 9'- 11"; including the closet area, floor area is 142 square feet. Floor framing is that of the earlier west gallery. Flooring is 3¼", tongue- and- groove flooring, running north and south and laid over earlier floor boards, 5" to 6" wide, running east and west.

Walls: The east wall is *bousillage* and what appear to be the original 5¾", flush- laid, tongue-and- groove boards remain on the wall. The west wall is wood- framed, finished with 5¼", V- joint, tongue- and- groove. The north and south walls do not have studs but were constructed by attaching the horizontal interior paneling to vertical exterior boards. Yokum's paint study indicated that the north and south walls were part of the original room that was constructed around 1870.

The construction of the rear or west wall differs from the north and south walls. It appears to be framed as a conventional stud wall but, for unknown reasons, extends beyond the south wall of this room and engages a post at the end of the south gallery.

Ceiling: The ceiling is set at 10'- 8", the same level as the ceiling at the west end of the south

gallery. It is finished with 6", tongue- and-groove boards that may be the original gallery ceiling.

Doors: There are two nineteenth- century doors in this room, one on the north wall and one on the east wall. On the north wall is a single exterior door, 2'- 4½" by 6'- 10", with fifteen lights above two vertical panels, a three- light transom, and hung with two- knuckle, three-inch hinges. This door, which may have been part of the original room, also has a screen door that was created from a shutter similar to the one at the window on the north side of Room 207. The opening to Room 202 has double French doors, 3'- 8½" by 7'- 1", with a five- light transom. Each leaf is 1'- 10" wide, with eight lights, and hung with fixed- pin, two- knuckle, butt hinges, 4" by 4". The glass in these French doors was replaced by modern mirror when the room was converted to a dressing room after World War II. In addition to these doors, modern flush doors are used at the lower closets on the west wall. The upper storage areas on both walls are closed by sliding, plywood doors.

Window: The single window in this room is 2'- 4" by 5'- 4" with double- hung, nine- over- nine sash (the only example of that muntin pattern in the house). The window has antique glass and was apparently part of the original room that was constructed after the Civil War.

Lighting: A single, shadeless, electric light, hung from the ceiling, lights the space.

Bedroom (202)

Historically used as the master bedroom, this room was enlarged during the Prud'hommes' third major building campaign when the entire house was extended about 10' to the west. The location of the room's original west wall, which was *bousillage*, is marked by the pilasters on the north and south walls of the present room. The header for the house's original roof is visible at the top of the present west wall, marking the line of the outside of the original (c. 1820) west gallery.

In the northeast corner of the original room was a trap door that opened to wooden stairs descending into the mammy's room (101). At an early date, perhaps originally, this trap door was enclosed in a small closet with a door that opened into the other bedroom (205). Yokum's analysis indicates that, as part of the renovation of the house that occurred around 1880, French doors from the parlor (see Room 206) were installed on the south wall of this room, probably replacing a window in that location. In 1953, the room was reduced in size by the construction of the present closet (204) and bathroom (203) at the eastern end of the room. The trap door to the basement was closed at that time.

Floor: The room is 18'- 9" by 21'- 3" or about 398 square feet. Joists are hewn, 3½" to 3¾" by 9-10", 38" on centers. Floor framing in the southeast corner of the room is irregular, perhaps from alterations related to the bathroom (203). Original cypress flooring is mostly 5" to 6" wide and remains mostly intact, overlaid in 1953 with new 5¼", tongue- and- groove, pine flooring.

Figure 67 View west in master bedroom, showing doors to dressing room. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

Figure 68 View northeast in master bedroom, showing door to dining room. The line of the back wall of the original house can be identified in the change in materials that is visible along the right edge of this opening. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

Walls: The north, south, and west walls are *bousillage*; the east wall is wood- framed. North, west, and south walls are finished with 3¼", double- beaded, tongue- and- groove paneling installed around 1880; earlier plaster walls, like those in the other three rooms that were part of the original (c. 1820) house, may remain beneath the present paneling on those walls. Paneling on the east wall appears to date to 1953. The chimney breast is plastered, some of it perhaps dating to the house's original construction.

Ceiling: The ceiling is set at 11" and finished with tongue- and- groove boards, 5" to 6" wide, running north and south. Around the chimney breast, small lengths of boards are run perpendicular to the remainder of the ceiling boards, forming a small panel whose size mirrors the hearth below. This paneled area is bordered by 1/2" beaded molding. Three of the original ceilings (Rooms 202, 205, and 210) are paneled around the chimney breasts, each in a slightly different manner. Near the center of the ceiling is a square metal register, about 8" square, that is part of the ducted HVAC system that was installed in the late 1980s.

Doors: This room has two sets of French doors, 3'- 8½" by 7'- 1", one on the south wall to the gallery and one on the west wall to Room 201, each with a fixed, five- light transom. Each leaf of the doors is 1'- 10" wide, has eight lights, and is hung with fixed- pin, two- knuckle, butt hinges, 4" by 4". The glass in the doors on the west wall was replaced by modern mirror when the room was converted to a dressing room after World War II. Materials analysis indicated that the doors on the south wall were salvaged from the parlor (206) when that room was remodeled around 1880. Six- panel doors with rim locks and porcelain knobs open to the din-

ing room (210) on the north and to the small hall and front bedroom (205) on the east. The north door is 2'- 11" by 7'- 0". It has applied panel molding and is hung with three- knuckle, fixed- pin, butt hinges, 4" by 4". The east door is 2'- 10" by 6'- 11", has molded stiles and rails, and is hung with two- knuckle, fixed- pin, butt hinges, 4" by 4".

Windows: The room has two windows, one on the west wall and one on the south wall. Both are 3'- 1" by 5'- 7½", with twelve- over- twelve sash and sliding half- screens on the interior.

Trim: The original door and window casings are intact (see HABS Sheets #22, 27, and 28, for details of moldings). When the paneling was installed, quarter- round was added around the perimeter of the openings. There is a 4½" baseboard with a ¾", quarter- round base cap and a ¾" shoe molding. One- inch quarter round was also used to trim the junction of the walls and ceilings and a 5" crown molding, *cyma recta*, finishes the juncture of the panel and the chimney breast.

Lighting: Besides doors and windows, lighting is limited to a pair of sconces that were part of the house's gas lighting system before being electrified in the 1930s. The sconces, which are brass with etched glass shades, are mounted on the wall next to the door to the dressing room and on the opposite wall near the door leading to 205. The room apparently never had a ceiling- hung light fixture.

Fireplace: The fireplace marks the center of the original room (c. 1818). The wall that created the present closet (Room 204) in 1953 was built flush with the breast of the fireplace and required shortening of the mantle shelf. The interior of the firebox has been rebuilt with modern fire brick, probably in the 1950s when the hearth, which may have originally been stuccoed, was covered with a Portland- type concrete. There is no ash dump or damper nor has the condition of the flue been evaluated. The mantle dates to the late nineteenth or early twentieth century when the original black

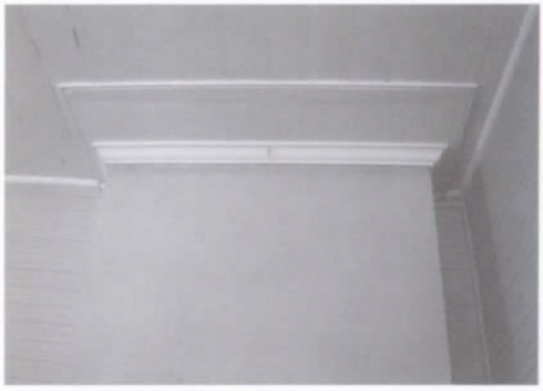

Figure 69 Top, view of mantle piece in master bedroom; below, view of chimney breast and ceiling paneling. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

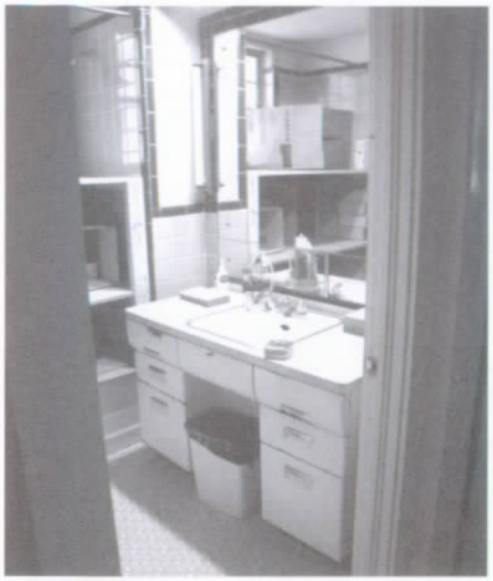

Figure 70 View to southwest of bathroom. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

marble mantles were replaced (see HABS Sheet #28 for details of present mantle).

Miscellaneous Features: Because of the low ceilings in the added bathroom (203) and closet (204), the Prud'hommes were able to create a storage area accessed by doors high on the new east wall of this bedroom. Doors are plywood with Colonial Revival iron handles. The interior of the closet has a plywood floor and walls paneled with beaded tongue- and- groove boards, apparently reused from the alterations to the east wall.

Bathroom (203)

This space was created in 1953 out of the southeastern corner of the master bedroom (202). Most of the bathroom's original features from that period remain intact and in good condition.

Floor: The room is 7'- 4" by 6'- 0" with about 29 square feet of usable floor space, not including the tub area. The floor is finished with ceramic tile in a design composed by pink and white tiles, 1" square, set in a field of larger pentagonal tiles in a lighter shade of pink. The tile is in excellent condition.

Walls: Except for the outside (south) wall, which is *bousillage*, the walls are wood framed, those on the west and north dating to 1953. The room has a wainscot of ceramic tile that uses 4¼" grey squares banded by maroon tile, 2" by 4".

Ceiling: The ceiling is drywall, set at 7'- 11". Above it are the small closets that open into Room 202.

Door: The single door is a hollow- core, flush door, 2'- 8" by 6'- 8", dating to 1953.

Window: The awning window on the south wall was created in 1953. Aluminum framed, it is 2'- 4" by 6'- 8" with machine- pressed glass in a star- burst pattern.

Lighting: Lighting is provided by a pair of chrome- or nickel- plated fixtures with 24" fluorescent tubes located on each side of the mirror above the sink.

Heating: Dating to 1953, a small gas- fired space heater is built into the east wall of the room.

Fixtures: A white, porcelain- enameled, cast-iron tub, five feet long, is located beneath the window on the south wall. On the west wall is a metal base cabinet, 4'- 0" long and 1'- 10" deep, with a square- edged formica counter top that is set with a white porcelain- enameled sink measuring 12" by 15". Built into the tiled wall above the sink is a chrome toothbrush holder that rotates out of sight into the wall when not in use. The white, free- standing, porcelain toilet is located on the east wall. The date "June 30, 1951" is stamped on the inside of the tank lid. Above the toilet are a pair of chrome shelves, 8" by 24".

Figure 71 View of bathroom floor. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

Closet (204)

This closet, which opens from the front bedroom (205), was created in 1953 and replaced a smaller closet around the trap door to the mammy's room (101). The door from these stairs apparently opened into the front bedroom (205), which would have been the children's bedroom or nursery, and not the master bedroom. When the Prud'hommes installed a central HVAC system in 1987, the air- handler was installed in this room. Remains of earlier shelving are located around the space.

Figure 72 View west of closet (204) which was rebuilt in 1953 and originally contained the stairs from the mammy's room in the basement. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

Floor: Floor is 7'- 1" by 4'- 4" or about 30 square feet, covered with 3¼", tongue- and-groove pine, running east to west.

Walls: The north wall is *bousillage*; the other walls are wood- framed. All walls are paneled with 3¼", beaded, tongue- and- groove boards.

Figure 73 View northwest in front bedroom, one of the least-altered rooms in the house. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

Figure 74 View east in front bedroom. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

Ceiling: Ceiling is paneled with tongue- and-groove boards, 5" to 6" wide like those used throughout the oldest part of the house.

Door: The door opening is apparently original but the present door is modern ¾" plywood hung as a sliding door. Modern wood trim covers the jambs but it is probable that the original door was a typical hinged door.

Miscellaneous Features: A modern 125- amp Norstar electrical panel is located on the west wall along with modern telephone switching equipment. Air handler for the HVAC system is located in southwest corner—Carrier Model 40QBO48300, serial #1986A 18065.

Bedroom (205)

This room was part of the original house and historically used as a bedroom. It may have been used as a children's room in the antebellum period, since the stairs down to the mammy's room (101) descended from this room. In the mid- twentieth century, this was the bedroom of Marie Lucie Prud'homme, Alphonse Prud'homme II's spinster sister. It is the least- altered of the original four rooms in the house.

Floor: The room is 18'- 9" by 18'- 9½" or about 390 square feet. Floor framing uses hewn joists about 3½- 3¾" by 9- 10", 38" on centers. The original cypress flooring remains mostly intact, overlaid with the present 5¼", tongue- and-groove, pine flooring from 1953.

Walls: The north, south, and east walls of this room are *bousillage*; the west wall is wood-framed. All walls are finished with plaster over split lath. Yokum's analysis suggested that the original plaster had been skim coated. The plaster now has a sand finish.

Ceiling: The ceiling is set at 11' and is finished with typical tongue- and- groove boards, 5" to 6" wide, running north and south. In a small panel on the ceiling around the chimney breast, the boards run east and west and are set off by ½" beaded molding. Three of the original ceilings (Rooms 202, 205, and 210) are paneled around the chimney breasts, each in a slightly different manner. A typical metal heat register, about 8" square and part of the ducted HVAC system, is located on the ceiling between the chandelier and the south window.

Doors: The room has four doors, which lead to the gallery on the east, the parlor (206) on the north, and the back bedroom (202) and closet (204) on the west. The door to the parlor is 2'- 11" by 7'- 0½"; the door to the back bedroom is 2'- 10" by 6'- 11". Both have six panels with molded stiles and rails and are hung with fixed-pin, five- knuckle, butt hinges, 2½" by 4". Double French doors with a five- light transom lead to the east gallery, each leaf 1'- 10" by 6'- 11", and hung with two- knuckle, 4" by 4" butt hinges.

Windows: The room has two windows, one on the south wall and one on the east wall. Both windows are 3'- 1" by 5'- 7", double- hung with twelve- over- twelve wooden sash. Both have a sliding wood- framed screen covering half of the opening; neither has sash locks.

Trim: The original door and window casings are intact (see HABS Sheets #22, 27, and 28, for details of moldings). The room is trimmed with a 4½" baseboard plus 1¼" molded base cap and ¾" shoe molding. One- inch quarter- round is used at the juncture of the walls and ceiling, except around the chimney breast where a 5", coved, crown molding is used.

Figure 75 View of paneling at chimney breast in front bedroom (205). (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

Lighting: A typical, two- light, ceiling- mounted gasolier, now wired for electricity, lights the room. The metal of the gasolier is finished with an antique- copper plate. Glass globes are etched.

Fireplace: The fireplace and mantle here are similar to those in Room 202; but the mantle shelf is slightly lower than and not as long as the mantle shelf in 202. The interior of the firebox has been rebuilt with modern fire brick, probably in the 1950s when the hearth, which may have originally been stuccoed, was covered with a Portland- type concrete. A mid- twentieth- century gas space heater now occupies the fire box. There is no ash dump or damper nor has the condition of the flue been evaluated (see HABS Sheet #28 for details of mantle).

Figure 76 View south in parlor (206), showing door to front bedroom. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

Figure 77 View west in parlor showing folding doors (c. 1835) to dining room. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

Parlor (206)

One of the original four rooms in the house, the parlor did not reach its current appearance until after the Civil War when the family replaced the original French doors on the east wall with the present floor- to- ceiling, triple- hung windows.

Floor: The room is 18'- 10" by 18'- 9" or about 345 square feet. Floor framing uses hewn joists and the original cypress flooring remains mostly intact, overlaid with new 5¼", tongue- and- groove, cypress flooring in the late 1940s.

Walls: The north, east, and south walls are *bousillage*; the west wall is wood- framed. All walls are plaster on split lath.

Ceiling: The ceiling is set at 11' and finished with tongue- and- groove boards, 5" to 6" wide and running north and south. Unlike the other three original ceilings, there is no paneled area in the ceiling around the chimney breast. Near the center of the ceiling is a metal register, about 8" square, that is part of the ducted HVAC system that was installed around 1986.

Doors: The room has three door openings. On the south wall is the door from Room 205, which is 2'- 11" by 7'- ½", with six panels and molded stiles and rails, and hung with fixed- pin, five- knuckle, butt hinges, 2½" by 4". On the north wall, a second six- panel door opens to the hall (208). Measuring 2'- 9½" by 6'- 11", the door has molded stiles and rails and is hung with fixed pin, butt hinges, 3- 15/16" by 4" like those at the door between 202 and 210. On the west wall is an arched opening into Room 210 with folding doors and a nine- light fanlight. The door is 9'- 0" by 7'- 3" with four leaves hinged in pairs to open from the center. The two leaves at each jamb are six- panel, 32" wide, with molded stiles and rails and hung with fixed- pin, butt hinges, 2½" by 4", similar to those used at the door to Room 205. The inner leaves are 23", each with a single molded panel

in the lower part of the leaf and eight lights in the upper part. They are hung from the outer leaves by H- shaped, cast- iron hinges.

Windows: On the east wall are two large openings, 3'- 5" by 10'- 6", triple hung with six- light sash. These openings are thought to have replaced earlier French doors around 1880 when a new hall (208) and entrance were created. Yokum found components of the earlier doorways to have been reused throughout the house (see Rooms 202, 211, and 208). The southernmost window still has its original flip- type sash latch on the lower sash; the other window latches are modern.

Trim: The original door and window casings are intact (see HABS Sheets #22, 26, 27, and 28, for details of moldings). The room is trimmed with a 5" baseboard plus 1¼" molded base cap and ¾" shoe molding. One- inch quarter-round is used at the juncture of the walls and ceiling, except around the chimney breast where a 5" coved crown molding (like that in Room 205) is used.

Fireplace: The fireplace here is similar to the other three original fireplaces. The mantle is somewhat more elaborate, having a shallow arch above the fire box opening. See Appendix B, HABS Sheet #29 for details of mantle. Of special interest is the six- pointed emblem incised into the stucco of the fireplace surround. There is no ash dump or damper nor has the condition of the flue been evaluated.

Lighting: The ceiling- mounted chandelier is an elaborately- decorated kerosene lamp with glass shade and bowl and trimmed with filigreed brass trim. Designed to be hung from the ceiling, it is very similar to a kerosene "Library Lamp" advertised in a catalog from Edward Rorke and Company, issued about 1890.[119] It has been electrified, probably in the 1930s.

Figure 78 View of electrified kerosene chandelier in parlor. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

Office (207)

This room was part of the first expansion of the house in the 1820s but was shortened on the south when the Prud'hommes created the hall (Room 208) after the Civil War. It may have been at that time also that the door to the north gallery was created. Sometimes used as an office, the room became the Keators' bedroom when they moved to Oakland in 1946.

119. Roger Moss, *Lighting for Historic Buildings* (Preservation Press, 1988), p. 92.

Figure 79 View north in Room 207, part of 1820s addition to original house. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

Figure 80 View south in Room 207 showing wall added c. 1880 to create central hall. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

Floor: The room is 15'- 3½" by 12'- 7" or about 191 square feet. Floor joists are typically 3½" by 8" set on 36" 38" centers. The joists on the south side of the room, which encompasses part of the original south gallery, are sawn; those on the north side are hewn. The original cypress flooring remains intact, overlaid with 5¼" pine floors installed in 1953.

Walls: The east and north walls are *bousillage*, the west wall is wood- framed, and all three walls are paneled with 3"- wide, beaded, tongue- and- groove boards. It is not known what, if any, earlier finish material may survive beneath these boards, which were installed around 1880. The south wall is not conventionally framed but composed of plain 5"- wide tongue- and- groove boards installed vertically. Above the mantle, the chimney breast has been enclosed by modern drywall.

Ceiling: Ceiling is paneled with plain, 3"- wide, tongue- and- groove boards that were probably added as part of the 1880s renovation.

Doors: The room can be entered through a door from the hall (208) on the south, a door from the gallery on the north, or the French doors on the east wall. The hall door is 2'- 10" by 7'- 0", six panel with applied panel molding and hung with two- knuckle, butt hinges, 3" by 3".

The French doors on the east wall are 3'- 8" by 7'- 0", hung with two- knuckle, 3" by 3", butt hinges. Each leaf has eight lights and there is a five- light transom. These French doors differ somewhat in their details from the other French doors in the house. While all of the French doors have raised panels, these are the only French doors that also have an applied molding around the panel. This treatment is similar to that used on the six- panel doors be-

tween Rooms 212 and 208 and between Rooms 202 and 210, indicating that they may all have been installed at the same time.

The door opening on the north wall dates to the late nineteenth century. The opening is 2'- 3" by 7'- 0" with a solid, three- panel, wooden shutter hung as a door on the exterior. On the interior is a late- nineteenth- century screen door, 2'- 2" by 6'- 10" which uses the same style of decorative handle and spring- loaded hinges found on the front and other screen doors in the house.

Windows: The room has one window, located on the north wall, 3'- 1" by 5'- 7" with double- hung, twelve- over- twelve sash, and a sliding half- screen similar to those found in the windows on the south side of the house and elsewhere.

Trim: The original door and window casings are intact (see HABS Sheets #22, 26, 27, and 28,for details of moldings). On the north, east, and west walls, the room is trimmed with a 5" baseboard plus 1¼" molded base cap and ¾" shoe molding. No baseboard appears to have ever been installed on the south wall, but a 5" band of paint at the bottom of that wall "ghosts" the absent baseboard. Three- quarter- inch quarter round trims the juncture of the walls and ceiling.

Lighting: A single- light gasolier, adapted for electricity, hangs from the center of the ceiling. It is finished with an antique- copper plate and has an etched glass globe like the other gas light fixtures in the house.

Figure 81 View of French doors in Room 207, which are of a different era from the other French doors in the house. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

Figure 82 View of mantelpiece in Room 207, one of two antebellum mantles remaining in the house. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

Figure 83 View west of central hall (208), created around 1880 by addition of wall at right. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

Figure 84 View east of hall, with view blocked by temporary partition. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

Fireplace: This fireplace was presumably constructed like the one in Room 209, that is with out the stepped- back chimney breast typical of French Creole architecture. There is a brick hearth, but the firebox is covered with plywood and could not be examined. An early twentieth- century gas space heater sits on the hearth. As noted above, the over- mantle area has been covered with dry wall. The mantelpiece dates to the room's original construction in the 1830s. (see HABS Sheet # 30 for details of this mantle).

Hall (208)

French Creole raised cottages typically had a door or doors opening to the outside galleries from almost every room. While one might be used more than another and even serve as a primary entrance, they were all similar in design and size. The same was true at Oakland, until the Prud'hommes created this passage in the 1880s, reportedly because Elise Lecomte Prud'homme (1838- 1923) disliked the foot traffic through her parlor (Room 206). In fact, construction of this hall was also part of a larger trend toward specialized uses for different rooms as well as an increasing concern for privacy in the last half of the nineteenth century. The hall's construction took almost a quarter of the floor space on the south sides of Rooms 207, 209, and 212. Yokum noted that patent dates on associated rim locks show that the hall was built after 1873 and, based on interviews with the family, she suggested a date of c. 1880 for the hall's construction, around the same time that the "stranger's room" (Room 211) was constructed on the north gallery.

Floor: The room is 4'- 4" by 45'- 5½" or about 197 square feet. Pine flooring, 5¼" wide and running north and south, was installed in the early 1950s, covering the original cypress flooring.

About 10½' from the west end of the hall, a trap door in the floor, about 3' by 4', opens to a wooden staircase that descends to the "cooling room" (Room 104) in the basement. Alterations to the surrounding floor framing show that the opening was extended to the north by about a foot at an early date.

Walls: The south wall of the hall is the *bousillage* wall of the original four- room house. The east and west end walls are also *bousillage* while the north wall is unframed, board- and- batten. Walls are covered with sand- finished plaster, presumably over wood lath.

Ceiling: The ceiling is set at 11'- 1" and is finished with plain tongue- and- groove boards, 3¼" wide, dating to the original construction of this side of the house around 1825. A line of butt joints near the east end of the room approximates the location of the wall between Rooms 207 and 209 that was partially removed to create this hall.

Doors: There are eight door openings in this space, three each on the north and south walls and one each at the east and west ends. The front door was installed when the hall was created around 1880. The door is Italianate in design with double Roman- arched lights above a pair of molded panels. The front door is 3'- 0" by 7'- 10", hung with three- knuckle, loose- pin

Figure 85 View of front door, installed as part of 1880s renovation. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

hinges, 3" by 4". There is also a top- hinged transom with frosted and etched glass, the only operable transom in the house. The door is fitted with a mortise lock and porcelain knobs. The 1½" panel molding on this door has a profile similar to that of the 1¼" molding used on the westernmost door on the north wall of the dining room (210). The profile is also similar to the 1¼" molding used on the doors between the hall and Rooms 207 and 209 and on the door (now in storage) on the south wall of the kitchen (Room 214). (See HABS Sheet #21, for configuration of this door.) The glass in the two, Roman- arched lights in the door itself is machine- made, stamped in a star- burst pattern, similar to that used in the aluminum awning window in the bathroom (203). It

Figure 86 View southwest in bedroom (209), showing closet added in 1950s. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

probably replaced frosted and etched glass like that which remains in the transom.

Three doors open into the hall on the south: the parlor door (see above) and two doors from the dining room (Room 210). A fourth door once opened into the dining room, but was closed by installation of shelving between the jambs on the dining room side of the opening. All doors have six panels and are hung from fixed- pin, butt hinges, 4" x 4", with four screws in each leaf. Both of the usable dining room doors are 2'- 11" wide; but the westernmost door is 6'- 11" high while the other door measures 7'- 1". A third door opening into the dining room from the hall has been closed but the opening is 7'- 0" high. The parlor door is 2'- 9½" by 6'- 11" Stiles and rails are molded on all but the westernmost door to the dining room.

On the north side of the hall, doors open into Rooms 207, 209, and 212. The doors to Rooms 207 and 209 doors are six panel, 2'- 10" by 7'- 0". The door to Room 212 is 2'- 11" by 7'- 0". All three doors have applied panel molding. The doors to 207 and 209 are hung with two-knuckle, fixed- pin, butt hinges, 3" by 3". The door to 212 is hung with five knuckle, fixed- pin, butt hinges, 2½" by 4".

The door at the west end (rear) of the hall is 2'- 11" by 7'- 0" with a four- light transom. It has a rim lock, but the knob is missing; the door is closed by a wrought- iron latch.

Trim: The original door casings are intact (see HABS Sheets #27 for details of moldings). The room is trimmed with a plain 4½" baseboard with a broadly chamfered top instead of a molded base cap. One- inch quarter- round is used at the juncture of the walls and ceiling.

Lighting: Two ceiling hung, single burner, gas fixtures provide light for the room. Both fixtures have an antique- copper plate and etched glass bowls similar to the rest of the fixtures in the house.

Bedroom (209)

This room was part of the first expansion of the house in the 1820s and there is some evidence that it was originally divided into two separate rooms. Although there is no clearly visible evidence in the existing room, Yokum's materials analysis found differences between the painted finishes at the east and west ends of the room. In addition, alterations to the floor framing (visible from underneath in Room 105) suggests the location of a partition wall about 9½' from the room's present west wall. After their marriage in 1924, Alphonse and Lucille Keator

Prud'homme used this room as a bedroom, and in the early 1930s, they replaced one of the windows on the north wall with the present door to the stranger's room, which was used by the children. When Pierre Phanor Prud'homme II died in 1948, Alphonse and Lucille moved into the master bedroom and this room became the bedroom of their sons—Al, Kenneth, and Mayo.

Floor: A large sill runs east and west near the center of the floor and marks the outside of the original north gallery. Floor joists are generally 3½" by 8", running north to south. Those on the north side of the center sill are hewn; those on the south side are sawn.

The existing flooring is 5", tongue- and-groove, pine flooring installed in the early 1950s. Beneath it is the original cypress flooring. The western half of the original flooring is made up of tongue- and- groove boards generally 5½" to 7" inches wide. The boards on the eastern half are generally around 5" wide; many of them have paint on the underside, indicating that they were salvaged from another location.

Walls: The north wall, which is *bousillage*, is finished with plain tongue- and- groove boards, 9" to 12" wide. The west wall, the framing of which can be glimpsed on the east wall of the closet in Room 212 and which was originally *bousillage*, is finished with the same boards, 6", 9", and 12" wide. The east wall, which is wood-framed, is paneled with 3", beaded, tongue-and- groove boards, installed horizontally. The south wall is finished with plain, 5" tongue-and- groove boards, installed vertically.

Figure 87 View west in bedroom (209); door to stranger's room (211), partially visible at right, was added in early 1930s. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

Figure 88 View east in bedroom (209). Mantle is obscured by office equipment. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

Ceiling: The ceiling is finished with plain, 3", tongue- and- groove boards, running east and west.

Doors: The six- panel door to the hall is 2'- 10" by 7'- 0". It has applied molding, is hung with

Figure 89 View to northeast in dining room. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

two- knuckle, butt hinges (3½" by 3"), and has a 3¼" by 5" rim lock with porcelain knobs. On the west wall, another six- panel door opens to Room 212 and is 2'- 11" by 7'- 0", hung with 3½" by 3", double- knuckle, fixed- pin, butt hinges. The added door on the north wall to Room 211 is 2'- 8" by 6'- 8" with five horizontal panels and Colonial Revival hardware typical of the 1920s and 1930s.

Window: Two windows are located on the north wall. Both measure 3'- 1" by 5'- 7" and have twelve- over- twelve sash and sliding half screens.

Trim: The original door and window casings are intact (see HABS Sheets #27 for details of moldings). There is a 5" baseboard with a 1¼" cap and a ¾" shoe molding. Three- quarter- inch quarter- round molding trims the juncture of the walls and ceiling.

Lighting: The ceiling- mounted gasolier, now wired for electricity, has three lights (the only three- light fixture in the house) and has the typical antique- copper plate and etched glass globes.

Fireplace: This fireplace was presumably constructed like the one in Room 207, that is without the stepped- back chimney breast typical of French Creole architecture. There is a brick hearth, but the firebox is covered with plywood and could not be examined. An early twentieth- century gas space heater sits on the hearth. The over- mantle area has been paneled with vertical tongue- and- groove boards, 5" to 6" wide. The mantle piece dates to the original construction of the room (c. 1825). See HABS Sheet # 31 for details of this mantle.

Dining Room (210)

This room has apparently always been used as a dining room. It was enlarged during the Prud'hommes' second major building campaign when the entire house was extended about ten feet to the west. The location of the room's original west wall is marked by the pilaster- like supports on the north and south walls of the room. The header for the house's original roof is visible at the top of the present west wall, marking the line of the outside of the original (c. 1820) west gallery.

Floors: The room is 18'- 9" by 26'- 2½" or about 491 square feet. Floor joists are hewn, around 3½" by 9"- 10" and run east and west. The original flooring was overlaid with the existing 5" cypress flooring in the late 1940s.

Walls: The north, west, and south walls are *bousillage*; the east wall is assumed to be timber- framed. The walls are plastered over wood lath (split not sawn), probably installed as part of the building campaign that expanded the house to the west.

Ceiling: The ceiling is set at 11'- 1" and is finished with the original tongue- and- groove boards, 5" to 6" wide and running north and south. The western portion of the ceiling, which is demarcated by ¾" bead molding, is slightly lower than the original eastern portion. The ceiling around the chimney breast is paneled in a manner similar to that in Rooms 202 and 205.

Doors: The room has six door openings. On the south wall, a six- panel door with rim lock and porcelain knobs opens to the bedroom (202). It is 2'- 11" by 7'- 0", has applied panel molding and is hung with three- knuckle, fixed- pin, butt hinges, 4" by 4". On the east wall are the folding doors to the parlor (see Room 206 for description of those doors). There are two door openings on the west wall, both 3'- 8" by 7'- 0" with double French doors and a five-light transom. Hinges are fixed- pin, three knuckle, 4" by 4". The French doors have 10" barrel bolts on one leaf, top and bottom, and a 6" barrel bolt at the top of the other leaf.

Three doors are located on the north wall. The westernmost door is 2'- 11" by 6'- 11" with applied molding. The center door is 2'- 11" by 7'- 1" with molded stiles and rails. The easternmost door opening was 2'- 11" by 7'- 0", also with molded stiles and rails, but was closed by installation of the present shelving after World War II. All are hung with fixed pin, three knuckle, butt hinges, 4" by 4".

Figure 90 View to southeast in dining room. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

Figure 91 View west in dining room. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

Trim: The original door casings are intact (see HABS Sheets #22 and 27 for details of moldings). On the north, east, and west walls, the room is trimmed with a 5" baseboard plus 1¼" molded base cap and ¾" shoe molding.

Figure 92 View of paneling at chimney breast in dining room. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

Figure 93 View east in stranger's room (Room 211). (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

One- inch quarter round trims the juncture of walls and ceiling except around the chimney breast where a 5" coved crown molding like that in Room 206 is used.

Lighting: The room is lit by a pair of two- light gasoliers, wired for electricity. They have the same antique- copper plating and etched glass globes found on the other fixtures from the period.

Fireplace: The fireplace here is similar to the other three original fireplaces. (See HABS Sheet #28 for details of mantle.) There is no ash dump or damper nor has the condition of the flue been evaluated. A mid- twentieth- century gas space heater is located on the hearth.

Miscellaneous Features: In the center of the ceiling is a punkha, a type of swinging fan that originated in India. Designed to be swung by a cord operated by a servant standing at one end of the room, its motion helped keep flies and other insects off the food while providing a little breeze for dining. The swinging frame is cast- iron; the fan itself consists of a cypress frame covered with canvas painted with the Prud'homme family's coat- of- arms.

Stranger's Room (211)

The construction date for this room has not been precisely documented; but materials analysis indicates that it was built in the third quarter of the nineteenth century, probably shortly after the Civil War. The room was originally entered only from the north gallery and was intended to provide overnight accommodations for travelers. In the early 1930s, the Prud'hommes created the door from Room 209 into this room. When the breakfast room (Room 214B) was constructed in 1964, the original window on the west wall of this room was closed.

Floors: The room is 10'- 4½" by 15'- 3½" or about 159 square feet. Flooring is 5" pine running east and west, installed over the original cypress flooring.

Walls: The south wall is the original *bousillage* wall of the house; the other walls are wood-framed. Walls are finished with 3", beaded tongue- and- groove paneling.

Ceiling: The ceiling is 11'- ½" high and is finished with plain, 5", tongue- and- groove boards running north and south. A typical aluminum air register is located near the center of the ceiling.

Window: The room's only window is on the north wall and is 3'- 1" by 5'- 7" with twelve- over- twelve sash. The exterior shutter is missing from this window, but the hinge brackets remain in place. The ghost of a second, similar window can be identified near the center of the west wall, where the opening was covered by 3¼", double- beaded, tongue- and- groove boards.

Door: The door to Room 209 is 2'- 8" by 6'- 8" with five horizontal panels and dates to the early 1930s. The mortise lock, glass knobs, and Colonial Revival escutcheons are typical of the period. The French doors are 3'- 8" by 7'- 0", similar to the other French doors (except those in Room 207). Each leaf has eight lights, a single raised panel, and are hung with five- knuckle, fixed- pin, butt hinges, 2½" by 4". Ten- inch barrel bolts are located at the top and at the bottom of the right leaf; an 8" barrel bolt is located only at the top of the left leaf.

Figure 94 View southwest in stranger's room, showing window that was closed when sitting area was created at north end of kitchen in 1964. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

Figure 95 View of water-damaged ceiling in stranger's room. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

On the exterior, there is a single wooden screen door, 3'- 8" by 7'- 0".

Trim: Door and window casings, which were salvaged from other locations in the house, are typical as is the 4½" base board, molded cap, and shoe molding. The original beaded header

Figure 96 View north of breakfast room, showing enclosure around attic stairs. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

Figure 97 View south, showing former location of 1920s bathroom. This room reached its present configuration in 1953. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

for the gallery is still visible at the top of the north wall and a 5" board and ¾" bead are used as a crown molding on the other walls.

Lighting: A two- light electrified gasolier, similar to others in the house but with globes missing, is centered in the ceiling.

Breakfast Room (212)

This room was constructed as part of the Prud'hommes' expansion of the house to the west in the 1830s. There has been speculation that this room was built as a kitchen; but, according to family tradition, the original kitchen was detached from the rear of the house. The room was partitioned in the 1920s and a bathroom created at its southern end. The partition was removed and the room remodeled as a breakfast room around 1953. Alterations in the attic framing show that the attic stairs were built after this room was constructed.

Floors: The room 15'- 3" by 10'- 3" or about 156 square feet. The existing floor covering is vinyl laid over a plywood underlayment on top of the original cypress flooring. A portion of the original cypress flooring is visible in the closet beneath the stairs, the only part of the original flooring which remains exposed on the main floor of the house.

Walls: The north and west walls are *bousillage*, which is still visible on the north wall of the attic stairwell and in the closet below. A portion of the timber- framed east wall is visible in the closet but the *bousillage* has been removed. Existing walls are finished with a 50"- high wainscot of 3", double- beaded, tongue- and-groove boards that appears to pre- date the partition that was installed in the 1920s. Above the wainscot, the walls are drywall with ¼" by 2¼" battens installed vertically at 12" intervals.

Ceiling: The ceiling is set at 11'- 1" and is finished like the walls with drywall and ¼" by 2¼" bat-

tens. A typical aluminum air register, 8" square, is located in the ceiling.

Doors: The room has five doors. The six- panel door on the south to the hall (208) is 2'- 11" by 6'- 11" by 1- 3/16", with applied molding. The door is hung with a fixed- pin, five- knuckle, 2½" by 4" butt hinge. There is a wrought- iron latch but no rim lock. The door opening on the west to the kitchen (214) is 3'- 4" x 7'- 0" with a five- light transom. The original French doors have been taken down and are stored in Room 216. The door on the east to Room 209 is 2'- 11" by 7'- 0", with six lights (filled with a modern translucent glass) above two vertical panels with applied molding. It is fitted with a rim lock and hung with fixed- pin, three- knuckle, 4" by 4" butt hinges.

The door to the closet beneath the stairs on the north wall is 2'- 4" by 7'- 0"; constructed with vertical 5", beaded, tongue- and- groove boards; and hung with three- knuckle, 3" hinges. The door has a wrought- iron latch and a knobless, Keil rim lock. The door to the attic stairs is 2'- 7½" by 7'- 1" with 2½" by 4", five- knuckle hinges. It is also constructed of vertical 5", beaded, tongue- and- groove boards and was salvaged from another location and widened to fit this opening.

Trim: The room is finished with a 9" baseboard capped with ¾" quarter- round.

Lighting: Lighting is provided by an antique kerosene lamp that has been wired for electricity. The lamp has a copper bowl and shade and is hung with a spring- loaded mechanism

Figure 98 View of attic stairs where one of the early *bousillage* walls is still visible. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

that allowed it to be easily lowered and raised to facilitate refueling.

Bathroom (213)

This room was created in 1953 out of part of the west gallery. It replaced an earlier bathroom in Room 212.

Floors: The room is 7'- 0" by 5'- 7" or about 39 square feet. The floor is ceramic tile, with the design created by 1" and 2" square tiles.

Walls: The east wall is *bousillage*; the other three walls are wood- framed. A 51"- high wainscot is created with 4", square ceramic

Figure 99 View west of bathroom created in 1953. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

Figure 100 View of 1920s-era toilet, reused when this bathroom was created in 1953.

tiles in white spattered with gold. The upper parts of the walls are finished with dry wall.

Ceiling: The ceiling is plaster board, set at 8'- 11" from the floor on 1½" by 3½" ceiling joists.

Door: The door, the swing of which has been reversed, was the back door installed with construction of the hall (208) around 1880. The door is 2'- 11" by 7'- 0" by 1- 3/8" with a four-light transom and is fitted with a rim lock (knob missing) and a wrought- iron latch.

Window: A single, steel, casement window, 3'- 0" by 3'- 0", is located on the west wall.

Fixtures: The sink is enameled cast- iron, wall-hung, and dates to 1953. The toilet is two- piece with a porcelain base and an enameled, cast-iron, wall- hung tank. The toilet, a "Standard" brand, dates to the 1920s and was salvaged from the old bathroom in Room 212. A built- in shower with ceramic tile walls and floor is located in the southeast corner of the room. It is fitted with an aluminum- framed door with full- length translucent glass.

Miscellaneous: Three porcelain towel holders are mounted on the north wall. Above the sink on that wall is a built- in medicine cabinet with a mirrored door and a pair of 20" chrome, and fluorescent light fixtures mounted vertically on either side of the cabinet.

Kitchen (214A)

This room was created in 1953 by enclosing a portion of the original west gallery. It was ex-

panded to the west by the creation of a sitting area (214B) in 1964.

Floors: The room is 13'- 7" by 13'- 8" or about 185 square feet. Floor joists are original hewn joists, 4"- 4½" by 8½"- 9". Floor covering is vinyl on plywood underlayment, probably installed over the original cypress flooring.

Walls: The west wall is the original east end of the kitchen; the south wall is a conventional stud walls; the east wall is *bousillage*; the other side is open to Room 214B. Walls are finished with ¼" plywood paneling.

Ceiling: The ceiling is set at 8'- 11" on 1½" by 3½" joists and is finished with dry wall.

Doors: The room has three door openings. The opening on the east wall to Room 212 is 3'- 4" x 7'- 0" with a five- light transom. The original French doors have been taken down and are now stored in Room 215. They are typical of the other French doors in the house but were re-hung as swinging doors, probably in 1953. The door opening on the south wall to the gallery is 2'- 5½" by 7'- 0", presently fitted with a temporary plywood door. The original door, which is stored in Room 215, has six lights over two vertical panels with applied molding. The door is fitted with a 3" by 3¼" rim lock and was hung with 3" by 3", five- knuckle hinges. The door opening on the west wall to the hall (217) was created in 1953. The door is 2'- 6" by 6'- 8" by 1¼" with three horizontal panels and hung as a swinging door. It appears to date to 1953.

Figure 101 View to west in kitchen, with door to west gallery at extreme left and door to old pantry and old kitchen left of center. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

Figure 102 View to east in kitchen, showing connection to Room 212. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

Window: The room has a single window on the south wall. It is a two- light, aluminum, casement window, 1'- 6" by 3'- 0".

Trim: The room has a plain 3½" baseboard at the floor and 2" bed molding at the ceiling.

Figure 103 View to north in kitchen showing connection to expanded sitting area created in 1964.

Figure 104 View north of sitting area on north side of kitchen. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

Lighting: Lighting is provided by a 24"- long, ceiling- mounted, fluorescent light fixture.

Miscellaneous Features: Cabinets, dating to 1953, line the east and west walls. Base cabinets are metal with yellow, gold- flecked, formica counter tops. Wall cabinets are pine and feature cast iron pulls and hinges.

Sitting Area (214B)

This space was created in 1964 by enclosing the north end of the original west gallery and removing the north wall of the kitchen (214A) that was built in the late 1940s.

Floors: The room is 12'- 9" by 10'- 4" or about 132 square feet. Floor joists are the original hewn joists, 4" to 4½" by 8½" to 9". Floor covering is vinyl over plywood underlayment, installed over new 5" cypress flooring.

Walls: The north and west wall are conventional stud walls; the east wall is *bousillage*. Walls are finished with ¼" plywood paneling.

Ceiling: The ceiling is set at 8'- 11" and finished with drywall. A typical aluminum air register, 8" square, is located on the ceiling.

Windows: Three- light, aluminum- framed, awning windows, 4'- 4" by 4'- 1", are located on the north and on the west wall.

Trim: There is a plain 4" baseboard and ¾" shoe molding.

Lighting: A ceiling- mounted, keyless, porcelain fixture lights the room.

Miscellaneous Features: A counter backs up to the cabinets on the north side of the kitchen and continues along part of the west wall of this room. Wooden, it is finished with the same yellow, gold- flecked formica used for the kitchen counter tops.

Pantry (215)

The kitchen wing originally contained two rooms, a kitchen (216), which was converted to a washroom after World War II, and a pantry (215). Both rooms were heated by fireplaces, both of which were removed after World War II, leaving only part of the foundation in place. In 1953, the original pantry was partitioned by construction of an east- west wall that created the present pantry (215) and a hall (217) through to the old kitchen (216).

Floors: The room is 8'- 6½" by 13'- 4" or about 113 square feet. The original tongue- and-groove cypress flooring, 10¼" to 11½" wide, remains in place.original 1" by 8" tongue- and-groove boards. The west wall is the original board- and- batten wall that separates the pantry from the wash room (216).

Ceiling: The ceiling consists of the exposed joists (2" by 4½" to 5") and decking of the attic floor.

Door: The door from the hall into this room is 2'- 8" by 6'- 7" by 1¼", with three large panels, similar to the one between the hall and the new kitchen (214). The door has an antique rim lock, 4¼" by 7½".

Window: A single window is located on the north wall. The original opening is 3'- 0" by 5'- 7"; the original wooden sash have been replaced by an aluminum casement window, 3'- 0" by 4'- 0".

Figure 105 View west of old pantry (215). (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

Lighting: A single modern keyless fixture predates the south wall and is centered in the ceiling of the larger space.

Miscellaneous Features: A modern 400- amp electrical panel is located on the east wall. Also located on this wall is a 7½" sheet- metal flue for the now- missing hood over the kitchen stove.

Wash Room (216)

This room functioned as the kitchen for the Big House from the time it was constructed shortly after the Civil War until construction of the new kitchen in 1953. At that time, it was converted into a wash or laundry room.

Floors: The room is 13'- 7" by 15'- 8" or about 213 square feet. The floor is concrete, 2" to 3" thick,

Figure 106 View east of old kitchen (216), used as a wash room after new kitchen was built in 1947. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

Figure 107 View south in old kitchen. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

poured over the original wood flooring and 2" by 10" floor joists. Presumed to date to the early twentieth century, the concrete has been patched, most recently when the fireplace was removed from the east wall.

Walls: Walls were originally open stud walls. In the late nineteenth century, the north, west, and south walls were finished with the present3¼", double- beaded, tongue- and-groove boards. The east wall is the original partition of vertically- placed boards, 10" to 12" wide, infilled with similar lumber where the fireplace was removed on the east wall. These walls were painted white initially and then repainted with a black "wainscot" to about 27".

Ceiling: The ceiling is set at 9'- 3" and was originally open like the pantry (215). It was later finished with the present 3¼", double- beaded, tongue- and- groove boards. In the eastern portion of the ceiling is a rectangular opening about 10" by 24" in the ceiling. Covered now by the attic floor, its original purpose has not been determined.

Doors: The door to the hall (217) is 2'- 8" by 6'- 3" made from vertical, tongue- and- groove boards, 4½" to 7½" wide. It is fitted with a rim lock, 3¼" by 6½", with the knobs missing. French doors, in poor repair, open to the south gallery. They are like the doors from the hall (Room 217), 3'- 8" by 7'- 0", four lights over a single panel with applied molding on both sides of each leaf. They are hung with five- knuckle hinges.

Windows: Three windows light this room. The south window is 3'- 0" by 5'- 7", twelve- over-twelve sash, with a sliding half- screen on the interior. The west window is also 3'- 0" by 5'- 7" with an unusual configuration of six- over- six sash, indicating the sash may have been salvaged and installed sideways in the opening. The north window has the same size opening as the west window, but the original wooden

sash have been replaced by a 3'- 0" by 4'- 0" aluminum casement window.

Trim: All door and window casing and baseboard are simple 1" by 3" boards installed flush with the surrounding wall surface.

Lighting: A single, ceiling- mounted light fixture, minus its globe, is centered in the room.

Miscellaneous Features: An enameled cast- iron sink, 18" by 30", is hung on the north wall at the northwest corner of the room. A wooden counter is mounted next to it on the west wall and features circular openings that presumably held cooking pots or other containers. The original fireplace on the east wall was taken down after World War II. The framed opening for the chimney, 5'- 0" by 1'- 2", can still be identified on the ceiling at that end of the room.

High on the north wall near the east end of the room is a small opening, about 12" by 16" with the lower jamb of the opening sloping down at a 45- degree angle. The opening appears to have been closed when the beaded paneling was installed. The opening is located just under the exterior eaves and was probably intended to provide ventilation during cold weather when the windows were not open. A modern, forty- gallon, gas- fired water heater was recently installed in the northeast corner of this room and is vented through the opening in the north wall just described. Also of interest is a paneled recess at the east end of the south wall. Measuring 1'- 8½" by 8'- 5½", its original purpose is not known but appears to have related to water supply from the cistern located under

Figure 108 View of southeast corner of old kitchen; paneled inset to left of window may have contained a water-heating apparatus. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

Figure 109 View of wooden shelf for pots next to kitchen sink. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

Figure 110 View of hall from east toward old kitchen. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

Figure 111 View from west toward "new" kitchen. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

the west end of the old kitchen gallery. A length of 1" galvanized steel pipe remains at the bottom of the recess, descending through the sill to an abrupt termination just beneath the floor. A 3", circular hole in the outside wall is located at the bottom of the recess but is now covered with metal on the outside.

Hall (217)

This space, which provides a passage between the kitchen (214) and the wash room (216), was created by construction of the existing north wall in 1953.

Floors: The room is 4'- 6" wide and 13'- 4" long, containing about 60 square feet. Flooring is pine, tongue- and- groove, 3" wide, laid over the original cypress flooring.

Walls and Ceiling: Dry wall was used to finish the walls and ceiling of this room.

Doors: In addition to the doors from the new kitchen (214), to the pantry (215), and to the washroom (216), a pair of French doors, 3'- 8" by 7'- 0", opens on the south wall of this room. Each door has four lights over a single panel with applied molding on both faces of the panel. There is no transom.

Windows: On the south wall is a single wooden window, 3'- 0" by 5'- 7", double- hung with six- over- six sash. It appears to date to 1953 but may have replaced earlier sash.

Trim: Door and window casing and baseboard are plain 1" by 6" boards.

Lighting: A single keyless porcelain fixture is mounted on the ceiling.

Figure 112 Top, view of nineteenth- century kerosene light fixtures and, below early twentieth-century gas light fixtures, all of which were converted to electricity in the late 1930s.

Utility Systems

Electrical System: The first electrical system was installed in the house around 1936 or 1937. That system included switched overhead lighting in most rooms but very few convenience receptacles. The chandeliers in 205, 207, 208, and 209 and the pair of wall sconces in 202 were all part of the gas- lighting system installed by the Prud'hommes in the early 1900s. These were electrified along with two kerosene chandeliers (in 206 and 212) in the 1930s. Note that the irregularity of the color of the gasoliers was an intended feature of the fixtures' original antiqued copper finishes.

Some of the historic electrical system has already been removed during NPS stabilization. Now missing are the fuse boxes, conduit, and other equipment on the south gallery that were installed by the Prud'hommes in the 1930s. Many of the original (1930s) switches and outlets remain in place on the interior.

Plumbing System: The existing plumbing system serves two bathrooms (203 and 213) and the kitchen (214A). All of the existing fixtures- - - lavatories, tub, and toilet- - - date to 1953, except for the kitchen (Room 214A) sink, which probably dates to 1948; the sink in the washroom (Room 216), which is nineteenth or early twentieth century; and the toilet in Room 213, which also dates to the early twentieth century. Waste lines are generally cast- iron and feed into a septic tank located in the rear yard off the southwest side of the house.

HVAC System: The building is currently heated and cooled by two heat pumps installed about 1986. The gas- fired furnace is located in the closet (Room 204) off the southeast bedroom (Room 205); compressors are located in the yard on the north and south sides of the house. Modern duct work is routed through the attic with conditioned air delivered through small, 8"- square aluminum vents located in the ceiling of all major rooms in the main block of the

house. The three spaces (215- 217) in the old kitchen wing are not heated or cooled. The HVAC is operative and appears to keep the house comfortable for occupancy throughout the year. However, the system does not allow for monitoring or direct control of relative humidity within the building.

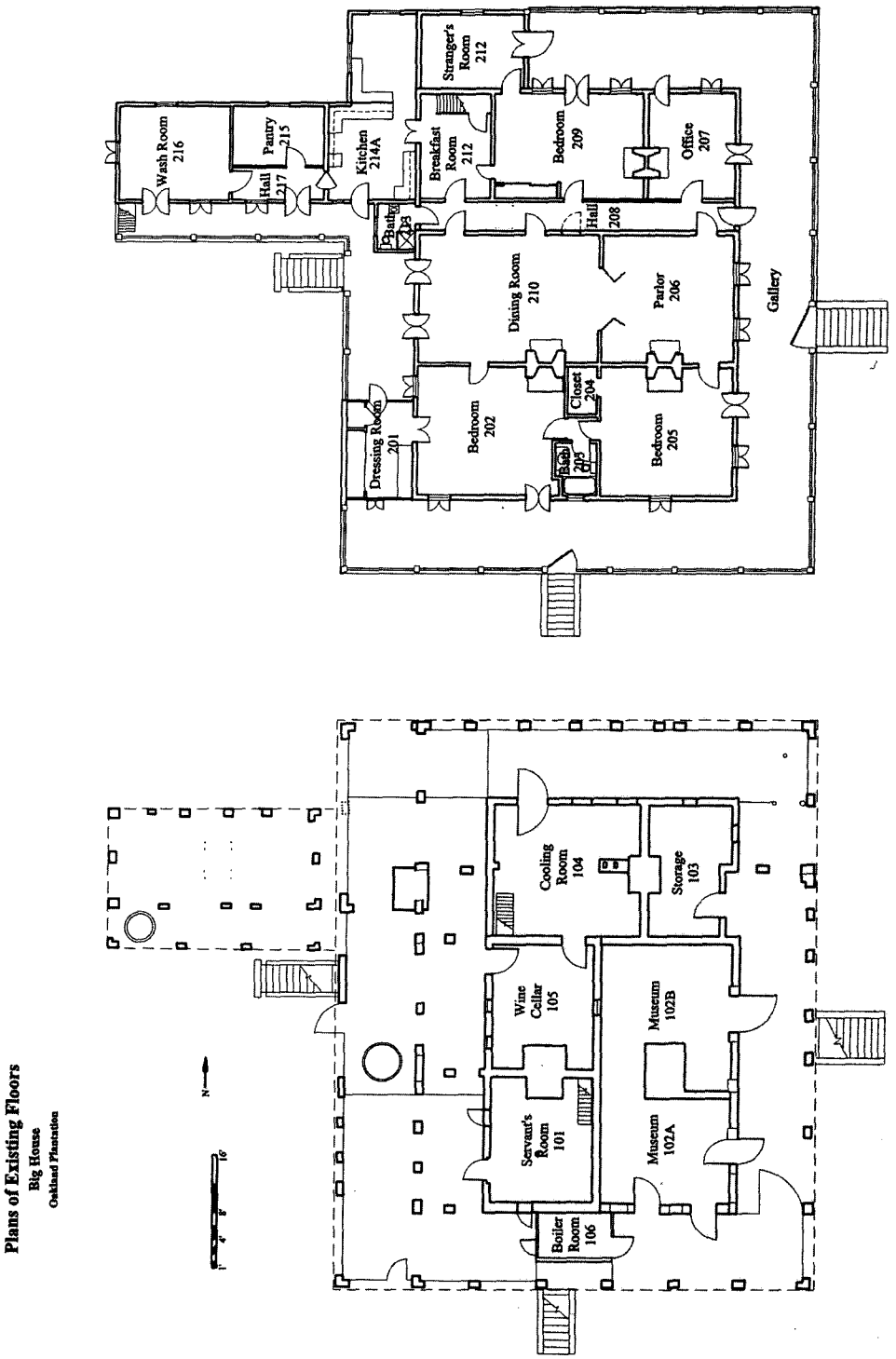

Figure 113 Plans of existing basement and main story of house. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

PART 2
TREATMENT & USE

Introduction

The Big House is an outstanding example of a French Creole "raised cottage," and the architectural significance of the house formed the basis of the site's original listing in the National Register of Historic Places in 1979. In 1988, Oakland joined the list of the country's Bicentennial Farms, honoring two centuries of continuous operation, and the following year, the National Register listing was amended "to elevate Oakland to the state level of significance in agriculture." In January 2001, Oakland Plantation was designated a National Historic Landmark as "one of the nation's most complete expressions of the rural French Creole building tradition" and "one of a very limited number of large plantation complexes in the South."

Long before these designations, however, Oakland Plantation was noted for its exceptional collection of extant historic structures and artifacts, and as early as the 1920s, the plantation was a tourist destination of sorts. As the women of Natchitoches organized the local historic preservation movement in the 1950s, the Prud'hom-

mes were enthusiastic supporters, offering tours of Oakland, including a museum of plantation artifacts that Mrs. Prud'homme displayed in the basement of the Big House.[1] Even John Ford's use of Oakland for filming of *Horse Soldiers* in 1958 reflected a growing appreciation for the unique way in which the Prud'hommes had managed to preserve their historic plantation. As the recently- completed General Management Plan (GMP) for Cane River Creole National Historical Park notes, Oakland reflects a "completeness" in terms of setting, structures, and artifacts that is seldom encountered elsewhere in the South.[2]

Like the rest of the plantation, the Big House as it exists today is the product of a long evolutionary history that has taken it from the simple four- or five- room house that the Prud'hommes completed in 1821 to the seventeen- room house that exists today. Most of the spaces in the main block of the house were constructed before the Civil War, but there were later major additions as well, including the entire kitchen wing at the rear of the house. There were alterations, too, as the Prud'hommes adapted the house to changing technology and lifestyles; like the plantation as a whole, the Big House reflects the entire continuum of the Prud'hommes' occupation from 1821 until the last descendants moved out in 1998.

This section of the historic structure report is intended to show how a plan for preservation of the Big House at Oakland can be implemented with minimal adverse affect on the historic building while still addressing the problems that exist with the current structure and its proposed use. The first section addresses issues surrounding anticipated use of the building, followed by a section that addresses legal requirements and other mandates that circumscribe treatment of the building. These are followed by an evaluation of the various treatment options before describing detailed recommendations for treatment.

1. Association of Natchitoches Women for the Preservation of Historic Natchitoches, *Natchitoches* (Natchitoches *Times*, 1958), p. 46.
2. National Park Service, *Cane River Creole National Historical Park Draft General Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement, Louisiana*, (NPS, 2000), p. 21, referred to as "Cane River GMP" below.

Ultimate Treatment & Use

The primary use of the Big House will be as a museum, presumably with recreated historic interiors as well as other exhibits that aid in interpretation of the building's architecture and the broad range of the site's history.[1] Most visitors will only take a tour of the main floor of the house; but the basement and the attic both offer rich interpretive opportunities, particularly in relation to the materials and technology that went into the building's construction and which are a primary reason for its landmark status. Although steep stairs and low ceiling heights will limit access to these areas, both the attic and the basement should ultimately be made available for special tours and interpretation. Before any work commences on the house, the numerous artifacts that remain in both areas should be catalogued and inventories. Decisions about which items should remain in the attic and in the basement should be addressed in an overall furnishing plan for the house and within the context of good housekeeping and the demands of object conservation.

Since the building will be staffed and an on- site rest room will always be necessary, the rest room (213) at the end of the hall should be maintained in working order. The kitchen sink would also re-

1. GMP, p 43.

main useful to park staff in the building and should be maintained in working order. Waste and supply lines to the other bathroom (203) should be capped in order to reduce maintenance and aid in its preservation.

The old kitchen/laundry room (216) might be the best location for a tour office. Accessible from the outside as well as from inside the house, the room has a concrete floor and board walls that would not suffer undue damage from such use. The sink, shelves and other such artifacts should remain in place, since an appropriate desk or table and chairs would not preclude interpretation of the room's use as a kitchen and, later, as a laundry by the Prud'hommes. Storage space for the tour program, ladders, and other housekeeping supplies should be limited to the closets in 201 and 209. The old pantry (215), where the main breaker panel for the house's electrical system is already located, should not be used for storage since additional equipment, including the standpipe for a fire- suppression system, will have to be located in that room.

If an HVAC system is maintained in the house (see below), the closet (204) where HVAC equipment is now located could continue to be used for that purpose. If the system is rehabilitated or replaced, the amount of space utilized for ductwork in the attic should be minimized, with special attention to leaving floor space open and free of obstructions. Under no circumstances should any of the basement rooms be used for equipment or routing ductwork.

The ultimate treatment of the Big House at Oakland Plantation should be to preserve the building as it exists today while making those changes that are necessary to meet the Park's program of use for the site. This approach would include:

- preservation and repair of the building's *existing* features and material;
- rehabilitation of the building's electrical system to comply with modern building and life safety codes;
- rehabilitation of the building's plumbing system;
- adaptations to improve handicapped accessibility to the building while negotiating a plan of compliance alternatives where full compliance would destroy the building's integrity;
- adaptations to more effectively control the interior climate (temperature and relative humidity) of the building in order to properly preserve the furnishings, decorations, and other interpretive artifacts which will be displayed in the house;
- installation of systems to provide fire-detection and security alarms;
- installation of a fire suppression system to protect the building and its contents from destruction.

Requirements for Treatment & Use

The Big House will always be the center of most visitors' experience of Oakland and its use as a museum house has been assumed from the park's inception. The GMP outlines a series of "Visitor Experience Goals," some of which are relevant to the Big House. Visitors should "experience the plantations [Oakland and Magnolia] that reflect the continuum of their associated history . . . and in a manner that instills an honest and realistic understanding for the working and human dimensions of the plantations." The park, including the Big House, would allow visitors to "understand the relationship of various plantation features to the broad range of the site's history."[1] The GMP also established the "intent . . . to return many of the historic furnishings to the house and also provide new [but unspecified] exhibits."[2] Even devoid of historic furnishings, however, the Big House offers a fascinating study in traditional building technology and craftsmanship in the French Creole architecture of Louisiana. Because its evolution since the Civil War can be easily interpreted, the building itself can be one of the park's best tools for helping visitors gain a broad understanding of the long history of the site. A well- researched recreation of the house's historic furnishings, decorations, and other

1. Cane River GMP, p. 22.
2. Cane River GMP, p. 43.

artifacts would also be a valuable tool for interpretation of the great patterns of change in American society and culture during the 175+ years that the Prud'hommes lived in the house. As pointed out in the GMP, the plantation, is "the result of the adaptations of various peoples to the natural environment, to available technologies, and to each other"; and, perhaps, nowhere is that more evident that in the Big House.[3] Plans for furnishing and interpreting the house are beyond the scope of this report; but treatment recommendations have been developed that seek to maintain the rich layers of interpretive possibilities that exist in the house today, especially in terms of its historic architecture. Until a historic furnishings plan for the house has been developed, recommendations for treatment of the building's HVAC and electrical systems must remain tentative.

The GMP calls for at least one interpreter to be at the house to provide interpretive services and resource protection. This will require that one of the two rest rooms remain operative for staff use.[4] The GMP also states that "[s]ome staff office and storage space would also be necessary to support the interpretive program."[5] These spaces have the potential to be disruptive to the visitor's experience of the house and should, therefore, be carefully controlled. Clearly, none of the rooms in the main block of the house, the attic, or the basement should be used for these purposes, since all of those spaces have a role to play in the building's interpretation. However, the stranger's room (Room 211), the sitting area (Room 214B), or the old kitchen (Room 216) could be adapted for office use without seriously disrupting tours of the house, especially if office furnishings were kept to a minimum so that the spaces could still be properly understood by visitors.

Convenient storage space is available in the closets in Rooms 201 and 209, but the closet under the attic stairs should not be used for storage since it is the only place in the house where some of the building's earliest finishes remain visible. Mechanical and electrical equipment is already located inside the house in the old pantry (Room 215), where the main electrical panel is located, and in the closet (Room 204) off the southeast bedroom, where the furnace and security system control panel are located. Use of these two spaces for such equipment will probably always be necessary. Certainly, however, should interpretive goals change for the site and there is the desire to present the house and plantation as they appeared before World War II, all of this equipment would need to be relocated, since neither of these rooms *as presently configured* existed until after World War II. Finally, a significant number of architectural elements and materials can be found in various parts of the house, especially in Rooms 103 and 215 and in the attic. These should be carefully catalogued and retained on site, for use both in interpretation and in making repairs.

In the final draft of the Cane River Creole National Historical Park GMP in January 2001, the

3. Cane River GMP, p. 23.
4. Once the entry pavilion is constructed and other rest room facilities are available, visitors should be discouraged from using the bathrooms in the Big House.
5. Cane River GMP, p. 43.

preferred alternative for NPS management of the park puts an "emphasis . . . on preserving and rehabilitating the landscapes, structures, and artifacts of the two national park units [Oakland and Magnolia Plantations] . . . ."[6] The GMP also establishes a conservative approach to treatment of the park's historic structures which would "reflect the continuum of history up to about 1960." Such an approach "would result in few changes" to the existing buildings.[7] However, in its response to questions regarding the period of significance in the draft GMP, the NPS stated that "using a 1960 date . . . does not commit the National Park Service to perpetuating building treatments used during the 1950s that are damaging to the structure."[8] The final GMP also notes that "contemporary materials, (post- 1948) were used to clad some buildings to prolong their use as an alternative to the expense of repairing them" and allows for their removal and repair of "the base structure . . . to preserve the integrity of the scene."[9] It is important, however, to distinguish modern materials and treatments that were merely stopgap repairs, like boarded up windows and tin- patched siding, from modern materials and treatments that were seen by the Prud'hommes as improvements, which would include such materials as the asbestos siding on the Cottage; the asphalt brick siding on the slave cabins; and, at the Big House, asbestos roofing, plywood paneling, and vinyl floor coverings. These materials and features are an integral part of "the continuum of history" at Oakland and should be preserved wherever possible.

Legal mandates and policy directives circumscribe treatment of the Big House. Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) mandates that federal agencies, including the NPS, take into account the effects of their actions on properties listed or eligible for listing in the National Register and give the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation a reasonable opportunity to comment. NHPA regulations (36 CFR 800.10) mandate special requirements for protecting National Historic Landmarks. Section 110(f) of the Act requires that the Agency Official, to the maximum extent possible, undertake such planning and actions as may be necessary to minimize harm to any National Historic Landmark that may be directly and adversely affected by an undertaking. The NPS' Cultural Resources Management Guideline (DO- 28) requires planning for the protection of cultural resources "whether or not they relate to the specific authorizing legislation or interpretive programs of the parks in which they lie." The Big House should be understood in its own cultural context and managed in light of its own values so that it may be preserved unimpaired for the enjoyment of present and future generations.[10] To help guide compliance with these statutes and regulations, the Secretary of the Interior has issued *Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.*

6. National Park Service, *Cane River Creole National Historical Park Final General Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement, Louisiana,* (NPS, January 2001), p. 10.
7. Cane River Final GMP, p. 13.
8. Cane River Final GMP, p. 5.
9. Cane River Final GMP, p. 23.
10. "Cultural Resource Management Guidelines," (1997), p. 1

The National Park Service's *Preservation Briefs* also provide detailed guidelines for appropriate treatment of a variety of materials, features, and conditions found in historic buildings.

Recommendations for Treatment & Use

These recommendations have been formulated to help preserve the rich layers of interpretive possibilities that exist in the house today by sustaining the existing form, integrity, and materials of the historic building. The key to the success will be the judgement used in determining where replacement of a deteriorated building element is necessary. Deterioration in a portion of an element need not always demand total replacement of the element, since epoxy consolidants and fillers can often be used to repair the damaged area *in situ*. While total replacement of a damaged element is often recommended in rehabilitation projects, the success of a preservation project can be judged by the amount of historic material that remains. Even "replacement in kind" does not typically address natural processes that give the historic materials an aged appearance that cannot be duplicated except by the passage of time.

Note: A proposed plan for use of the existing building is included at the end of this section.

Few of the individual treatment recommendations below can be considered in isolation and, because they are interrelated, practical considerations of logistics and economy of scale will make it necessary to combine elements from the different treatment components in different ways to accomplish the ultimate result.

Site Considerations: A cultural landscape report for Oakland Plantation is under development. A critical issue within that context is site drainage in the immediate vicinity of the Big House. Historically, rain runoff from the roof was directed into a series of five cisterns; but only two of these remain intact and neither of these any longer collect water. Temporary drain pipes have been attached to the house's downspouts, but these do not always keep water away from the foundation. In addition, poor drainage across the entire site (which, of course, is within a flood plain) sometimes allows uncontrolled surface runoff under the house. Since ground water and resulting "rising damp" has been the source of most of the deterioration present in the foundation, a permanent solution to this problem must be developed. This may require additional hydrological investigation of the surrounding site to determine if dry wells or other methods of controlling runoff would be effective. In addition, re- establishment of a positive grade away from the building will probably be necessary, especially around the west and northwest sides of the house, which are the most poorly drained parts of the site.

- Investigate effectiveness of dry wells or restored cisterns in dealing with rainwater runoff from the roof.
- Re- establish positive grade away from house by selective re- grading of the site, especially around the west and northwest sides.

Foundation: The brick foundation of the house is in relatively good condition for a building of its age. However, flooding (mostly in the nineteenth century) and rising damp has taken a significant toll on the mortar in many areas and, in isolated instances, resulted in disintegration of the brick. Inappropriate mortars used for repairs have also led to some spalling of brick on the brick buttresses of the steps.

In 1998, Boyle Engineering conducted an investigation of soil conditions in the vicinity of the main house. Samples were taken from four borings up to sixty feet deep. The report of that investigation concluded that "near surface soils at the site are generally weak and potentially unstable." Because of the soil condition, the Big House has "undergone settlement, which has affected its overall structural integrity and the stability of the foundation." As evidence, the report notes settled and tilting piers and the use of shims along the north side of the building. The report concludes by recommending a new "deep foundation," installation of which would have a major impact on the integrity of the historic masonry foundation of the Big House.

However, the 1998 report did not have the benefit of our present understanding of the site and makes no consideration of the time period over which present deterioration of the foundation has occured, especially the probability that much of it occured during the first hundred years of the house's existence, before dams ended the floods that regularly inundated the site. The report also does not give any indication of the rate of deterioration that might be expected in the future if radical intervention is avoided, only noting that the soils are *potentially* unstable. Finally, the report assumes

widespread settlement on the north side of the building because of the presence of "shims . . . to close the gap between settled and tilted piers and the structural beams." A close examination of the foundation, however, reveals that this analysis is flawed. At least some of these "shims" were part of the building's original construction, which is readily evident at the double pier on the east side of the house where the expanded porch from 1835 was joined to the original porch. There, the difference in sill dimensions and not pier settlement is clearly the reason blocking was need to meet the masonry pier, a condition that is not at all atypical where the necessity of hewn timbers made regular dimensions all but impossible.

Certainly there is deterioration of the foundations after 180 years. A pier beneath Room 212 has been undermined and is tilting at a precarious angle. Some of the slender piers that support the south side of the gallery on the kitchen wing are significantly out of plumb as is the pier at the northeast corner of the house. Rising damp has also taken its toll and, in recent years, the pier at the junction of the north side of the kitchen wing and the main body of the house was destroyed when a nearby cistern collapsed.

If reconstruction of a pier is necessary, the historic character of the pier and its footing should be maintained. In making repairs, special attention must be given to appropriate formulation of mortars so that the texture, color, and general appearance matches the original. Refer to *Preservation Brief #2: Repointing Mortar Joints in Historic Brick Buildings* for guidelines for the appropriate treatment of historic masonry.

In making repairs, special attention should be paid to the north wall of Room 106, which contains the only example of the historic "pencilled" decoration of the masonry from the mid-1800s. Since that portion of the walls remains in good condition, no re- pointing or other repairs should be made in that area. A clear covering might be installed over that part of the wall that retains the pencilled decoration. The covering should not attempt to seal the area and care should be taken that it does not come into contact with the painted surface.

The existing wooden palings that enclose most of the foundation area should be preserved and maintained, taking care to maintain the distinction between the characteristics of each type of existing paling. As the paling enclosure is repaired, it should be repainted white and, at the same time, the exposed brick piers and the painted portions of the brick foundation walls should be repainted as well. The brick buttress walls of the gallery stairs should not be painted, nor should the brick foundation walls on the south, west, and north sides of the house be painted.

- Reconstruct missing pier under Room 214A, tilting pier under Room 212, pier at northeast corner of house, and piers under south gallery of kitchen and elsewhere if necessary.
- Repoint remainder of masonry, avoiding any treatment of north wall inside Room 106.

- Repaint paling enclosure around foundation and exposed brick piers; unpainted brickwork on the gallery stairs and on the south, west, and north sides of the foundation should not be painted.

Framing: The cypress framing of the house remains in excellent condition with only isolated areas of deterioration. Where repairs are necessary, which is principally on the galleries, every effort should be made to preserve individual framing members by utilizing epoxy consolidants and/or "sistering" of additional members, since the framing itself is one of the house's more distinctive architectural features.

The floor joists under each of the house's four original rooms (Rooms 202, 205, 206, and 210) have all been reinforced by the addition of a support beam at the midpoint of the span. Although these continue to serve their purpose and should be retained, none of the posts are completely protected from ground contact. Unobtrusive footers with termite shield and moisture barrier should be designed for each post. In Room 102, where the sill may date to the nineteenth century, the distinctive wooden post bases should be retained.

The *bousillage* walls are, perhaps, the most distinctive feature of the building's structure. Much of the north wall of the attic stair well in Room 212 remains exposed and is visible above and below the attic stairs. On the stair well wall, a clear protective covering should be installed that would allow the area to be viewed while protecting it from damage. The *bousillage* wall and adjacent timber- framed wall in the closet beneath the stairs need not be covered since they should not be exposed to heavy traffic. Since the only part of the original flooring in the house that remains visible is also in this closet, the area represents one of the best places for interpretation of the site's structure and distinctive materials.

- Repair framing as necessary, avoiding full replacement of framing members wherever possible.
- Design and install footers, termite shields, and moisture barriers for posts for floor support beams beneath Rooms 201, 205, 206, and 210.
- Install clear protective covering over *bousillage* wall along north side of attic stairwell.
- Protect and interpret closet beneath attic stairs.

Roofing, Gutters, and Downspouts: The existing cement- asbestos roofing on the main house was installed about 1951. While the vast majority of the tiles remain in good condition and can be expected to remain useful for many years to come, tiles are missing, especially from the hips on the west side of the roof, which has allowed some water penetration into the attic. The problem is especially pronounced over Room 212 where the ceiling has been damaged from water penetration. Because the existing roofing is a major character- defining element of the house and because suitable replacement materials are not readily available, every effort must be made to preserve this roof covering. This should include avoidance of any foot traffic on

the roof and the use of "cherry pickers" or other means to access the roof when repairs are necessary.

NPS staff have stopped leakage by application of unspecified protective coatings. Although these repairs are clearly visible from certain locations, the rear shed of the roof, where most of the leaks have occurred, is largely obscured from view. Therefore, continuation of this treatment might be considered if it does not require frequent reapplication. Full restoration of the roof would require installation of replacement tiles to replace missing tiles along the ridges. Color variations can be reduced by painting, since most cementious tiles readily accept paint. If cementious tiles cannot be located, metal ridge caps, which were present with the slate roofing that existed between about 1910 and 1951, may be an alternative.

The galvanized metal roof vents and some or all of the metal flashing at dormers and chimneys appear to date to installation of the slate roof prior to World War I. In order to prolong their life (and, thus, avoid major roof repairs), this metal should be kept painted.

The standing- seam metal roof on the kitchen wing (Rooms 215- 217) dates to the fourth quarter of the nineteenth century. It is in fair condition with no interior leaks evident. However, the wooden roof deck is exposed at the east end of the north shed of the roof and the entire roof (especially the north shed) is badly rusted. Repairs should be made and the roof kept painted.

Gutters and downspouts are essential to the house's preservation, both to prolong the life of the gallery floors, posts, and balustrades but also to insure that the building's foundation is not undermined. The date at which the present galvanized steel gutters and downspouts were installed is uncertain but photographs show them present in 1908. Round downspouts were typical in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but the semi- octagonal gutters are quite unusual. None of the downspouts have apparently been attached to the cisterns since the 1940s; but, except for removal after 1961 of a horizontal downspout that crossed from the southwest to the northwest corner of the west end of the kitchen, gutters and downspouts appear to retain their historic configuration. Gutters and downspouts are badly rusted; on the north side of the house, areas of the gutters have rusted through completely. Since repairs will necessitate custom manufacture of new gutters (round downspouts are readily available), these should be ordered in enough quantity to provide a stockpile for future repairs.

The horizontal downspout at the west end of the kitchen should be reinstated. Repairs should be made to gutters and downspouts that retain as much of the original material as possible. Gutters and downspouts should be kept painted, including the inside of the gutter trough. In conjunction with treatment of the historic landscape, a means for rapid drainage of the runoff from the downspouts away from the house must be devised. Until that has been

done, surface drains like the existing ABS pipe should continue to be used.

For information on appropriate treatment of historic roof coverings, see *Preservation Brief #4: Roofing for Historic Buildings*. Since the treatment of cementious roofing shingles is similar to that for slate, also refer *Preservation Brief 29, The Repair, Replacement, and Maintenance of Historic Slate Roofs*.

- Monitor effectiveness of roof current repairs and how frequently the coating requires renewal.
- If suitable replacements can be found, replace missing ridge shingles.
- Repair metal roofing and flashing; properly prepare both and repaint with appropriate silver- colored paint.
- Reinstate horizontal downspout at west end of kitchen wing.
- Repair existing gutters and downspouts, replacing only those portions that have rusted beyond repair.
- Keep gutters and downspouts painted, including the interior of the gutter trough. Exterior should be painted white; interior of gutter trough should be painted with appropriate rust-inhibitive coating.
- Insure rapid drainage of downspout run- off away from the house.

Windows: Except in the kitchen wing and the north side of the stranger's room, all windows are protected by the galleries, so that most of the original sash have survived in good condition, needing only minor repairs and repainting. A few window panes, most of which are antique blown glass, are cracked or missing. Where glass is only cracked, repairs should not be attempted. Where cracks or breakage allow air infiltration, panes should be removed, edge glued if possible, and reset. If panes are missing or otherwise require replacement, a variety of glass, some of which is antique, is stored in 003 and could be used for that purpose.

Galleries do not protect the windows on the west and north sides of the kitchen wing; and, for that reason, none of the original wooden sash have survived. Only the two twelve- over-twelve windows on the south side have survived. The sash on the north side were replaced with aluminum awning windows in the 1950s. The window on the west was replaced (probably before the 1950s) by six- light sash set sideways in the frame and now in generally ruinous condition. The metal windows on the north side should be retained. The sash in the west window should be repaired, if possible. If new sash are necessary, they should replicate the configuration of the existing six- light sash.

Sliding, half screens are mounted on the inside of most windows. Contemporaneous with the late- nineteenth- century screen doors, all of these screens should be preserved and restored to working order.

For direction in treatment of the windows, refer to *Preservation Brief #9: The Repair of Historic Wooden Windows*. For specific information on the treatment of antique glass, refer to *APT Bulletin* XIII #3, "Conservation of Historic Window Glass."

- Repair broken glass wherever possible; replace missing glass as necessary.
- Repair or replace window sash at west end of kitchen.
- Retain aluminum awning windows.
- Repair and preserve interior sliding screens.

Doors: Like the windows, most doors (interior and exterior) on the main story of the house are in excellent condition, needing only minor repairs, reglazing, and repainting. Hardware is mostly present, but some of it is in poor working order. In particular, many of the surface-mounted, barrel bolts at the French doors are inoperative. All hardware should be restored to proper working order, which will normally require only disassembly, cleaning, and oiling. Locks should be re- keyed wherever it is necessary to have a locked door. Installation of any new locks should be avoided.

The door from the kitchen (214A) to the rear gallery (which is in storage) should be reinstalled. Likewise, the doors between the old breakfast room (212) and kitchen (214A) should be reinstated. All screen doors should be retained and repaired as necessary, replacing screening only if it is significantly torn or otherwise damaged.

Most of the above- mentioned information relative to treatment of historic windows and glass is relevant to appropriate treatment of the doors.

- Repair doors as necessary.
- Restore all hardware to good working order.
- Reinstall stored back door and French doors in kitchen (214A).
- Repair and preserve screen doors.

Shutters: Except for the window in the bathrooms (203 and 213), windows and exterior door in the kitchen (214), and the Victorian front door, all of the window and door openings were originally closed by exterior shutters. Where they have been protected by the galleries, these shutters remain in place and, as with the windows, are in excellent condition. Shutters are missing, however, from the north sides of the stranger's room (Room 211) and the pantry (Room 215) and from the north and west sides of the old kitchen (Room 216). If the original shutters for these windows can be located, they should be repaired and reinstalled; if not, new shutters should be replicated. The window in 211 should have a shutter with full louvers; the windows in Rooms 215 and 216 should have shutters with half louvers above a solid panel, like the surviving shutters on the south sides of Rooms 216 and 217.

None of the shutters were repainted in 2000. Some peeling between paint layers is occurring, but generally not to bare wood. However, the painted surfaces are dirty and mildewed and should be thoroughly cleaned. The exposed shutters that will be replicated on the north and west sides of the house will require frequent repainting; for those under the galleries, repainting may be delayed. When shutters are repainted, care should be taken to insure that tilting louvers remain fully operable, which may

require removal of paint along the inside edges of the stiles. As with other painted surfaces on the house (see below), complete stripping of paint should be avoided.

Attention should be given to restoration of the hardware for all of the shutters. Mostly this would involve a thorough cleaning of built- up paint to return the shutters to working order. In isolated instances, replacement of hinges, interior hooks, or shutter dogs may be necessary.

- Repair and reinstall original shutters wherever possible.
- Replicate missing shutters.
- Repair all hardware so that shutters are fully operative.
- Wash all existing shutters; then evaluate for repainting.

Galleries: As might be expected, the galleries, especially their floors, have been repaired on numerous occasions. Serious deterioration of the floor framing at the west end of the south gallery, for example, has been recently repaired by park staff; and the posts and balustrades were repainted in 2000. Future repairs of the floor framing should be limited and should not necessitate replacement of framing elements. Epoxy fillers and consolidants may not be effective in areas that are exposed to repeated water penetration, which would include sills and any joists within three or four feet of the perimeter of the galleries. While the epoxy filler itself is waterproof, rot can quickly resume in the surrounding wood if the entire surface is not routinely painted, which most framing material is not.

The rear gallery flooring is relatively new and remains in good condition. Several areas of the gallery flooring on the other sides of the house are dangerously deteriorated, however, especially along the south side and at the northeast corner. Since flooring has been replaced on previous occasions around the perimeter of the galleries, repairs can be made without removing any more of the original cypress floor boards. Even then, replacement of boards, original or not, should be done only if absolutely necessary. The flooring should, of course, never be painted, stained, or sealed.

Posts around the perimeter of the galleries are in good condition. Except on the west side of the house, however, the lower six inches of all of the original posts have been sawn off and replaced. Although these repairs duplicated the original detailing, every effort should be made to preserve intact the complete posts that remain around the rear of the house.

Because the house was repainted only infrequently, the exposed cypress balustrades, which date to the 1830s, were often left without protective coatings. This has resulted in significant deterioration of the surface of the wood, due to a combination of water and UV degradation. If the balustrades and posts are to be preserved, they will require regular repainting in the future. On the top sides of both upper and lower railings, where surface erosion has created areas that retain water, exterior spack-

les may be effective in restoring a smooth surface.

Preservation Brief #26: The Preservation and Repair of Historic Log Buildings contains information relevant to appropriate repair of the porch floor joists and sills. Also refer to *Preservation Brief #10: Exterior Paint Problems on Historic Woodwork.*

- Repair floor framing as necessary.
- Replace floor boards as necessary, replacing entire boards as has been done on previous occasions.
- Maintain protective coatings on balustrades and posts.

Wood Siding and Trim: Most of the cypress siding and trim on the house remains in excellent condition, with deterioration limited mainly to the west end of the kitchen wing. Significant repairs are necessary on that end of the building, especially in the area where honey bees have established themselves within the wall cavity. For longevity and effective retention of paints, quarter- sawn cypress should be used in making these repairs.

- Repair siding and trim at west end of kitchen wing, replacing only what is necessary to create a sound condition.
- Maintain protective coatings on all siding and trim.

Interior: During the course of this study, significant portions of the interior were obscured by temporary plywood flooring, installed to protect the historic cypress flooring, and by a large amount of furniture and other equipment that has been necessary for use of the building as temporary park offices. Once the building is emptied of its contents, and preparatory to work beginning on the interior, all surfaces should be examined again for features or characteristics not recorded by this HSR.

Flooring: Most of the original cypress flooring, which was never varnished, was covered by the existing cypress and pine flooring after World War II. The new flooring was varnished and is probably in excellent condition, although it may need to be refinished. Typically, refinishing includes sanding of the flooring with heavy machinery, which removes not only the varnishes but varying amounts of wood as well. In order to preserve the flooring and its patina if refinishing is necessary now or in the future, chemical strippers should be used to remove the old finish and sanding kept to a bare minimum. The extent to which the existing finishes are worn through to bare wood will determine how much refinishing is actually required. In most cases, the flooring can be thoroughly cleaned, lightly sanded, and one or two coats of sealant applied to bare areas. The entire floor area can then be re- coated with one or two coats of a traditional varnish. Maintenance of a waxed finish, the rigorous use of floor mats at all entrances, and regular cleaning of the floors will prolong the period between necessary refinishing.

In the closet beneath the attic stairs, the original cypress flooring remains exposed, the only place in the house where that is the case. In addition, the north wall of this closet is ex-

posed *bousillage* and the east wall is exposed timber framing, neither of which are readily visible to visitors anywhere else in the house. The features in this closet are critical to interpretation of the building's architecture and should be preserved (see below).

The vinyl floor covering in the kitchen (Room 214) dates to 1964, is badly worn, and will probably require complete replacement. The new floor covering should match the pattern and material of the old.

- Clean cypress and pine floors; refinish as necessary.
- Replace vinyl floor covering in kitchen, matching pattern and material of existing covering.

Walls, Ceilings, and Trim: All of the wall boards, ceiling boards, and interior wood trim remain in sound condition except in the stranger's room (Room 211) where there has been water damage to the ceiling boards. Even there the damage appears to be mostly limited to the painted finish, while the underlying wood remains in relatively sound condition. The beaded, tongue- and- groove paneling used on the walls and ceilings in the north rooms and elsewhere are not original features in most cases but are, nevertheless, important historic features of the house and should be maintained and preserved. If repairs or other intervention into the building's historic fabric necessitate removal of this paneling, the character and condition of earlier underlying finishes should always be investigated, photographed, and recorded. Throughout the house, variations in the dimensions of boards, in molding profiles, and in the types of fasteners used offer significant clues to the building's evolution. These variations should always be preserved.

The plaster walls in 205, 206, and 210 date to the 1830s and remain in reasonably sound condition. Every effort should be made to preserve them, making only those repairs that are necessary to prevent further deterioration and loss. For guidance, refer to *Preservation Brief #21: Repairing Historic Flat Plaster- - - Walls and Ceilings.*

- Repair plaster and woodwork as necessary.

Painted Finishes: One of the notable characteristics of the Prud'hommes' treatment of the Big House was the relatively long intervals between repainting and redecorating. As a result, the interior of the house has, for the most part, not been repainted since 1956. Once offices have been moved out of the house and it has been emptied of its present contents, interior surfaces can be completely evaluated to determine their condition and any necessary treatment. Because most of the paint used in 1956, including the flat wall paints, are oil- based, many of the present painted finishes can be cleaned and preserved. Mild detergents can be used; cleaners such as Spic- n- Span which contain trisodium phosphate should be avoided on glossy surfaces since they may dull finishes. In order to preserve the appropriate patina of age, surfaces should be repainted only where there is deterioration in the coating or where an unacceptable level of discoloration and surface de-

fects remain after the surfaces have been cleaned. Where repainting is necessary, oil-based or alkyd- resin- based paints should continue to be used since acrylic or latex paints would significantly alter the appearance of the interior even if colors are perfectly matched.

Throughout the house, both inside and out, the house's various historic color schemes should be exposed and interpreted. These exposures need not be large (a few square inches, perhaps, for each color) and should be carefully located so as to be accessible but not intrusive. Like exposed *bousillage* and original flooring, these exposures could greatly enrich interpretation of the house.

- Clean all painted finishes, using the gentlest means possible.
- Repaint ceiling in stranger's room (Room 211) and elsewhere only as necessary.
- As an aid to interpretation, make exposures of historic color schemes inside and outside the house.

Electrical System and Lighting: Electrical wiring is a historic feature in the building, having been installed in the late 1930s. The electrical service to the house has been upgraded and a new 225-amp main breaker panel has been installed in Room 215, replacing several historic fuse boxes; and temporary circuits have been run to accommodate continued use of the building by park staff. The historic system is entirely antiquated and, because of code- related issues, cannot be restored to working condition. Existing elements of the system should not be removed, however, but preserved *in situ*. In addition, missing exterior features of the system (above- ground exterior wiring and the meter and fuse boxes on the south gallery) should be reinstated, although not as functional parts of a new electrical system. The coming of rural electrification in the late 1930s was one of the most important events in twentieth- century rural America and the exterior wiring and other electrical equipment on the south gallery were the most- important symbols of that event.

New branch circuit wiring should be installed, distributed from the new panel box in the old pantry (215) to feed the historic lighting fixtures and receptacles in the building. In order to preserve the appearance of the historic wiring and eliminate unnecessary intrusion into historic interior finishes, lighting should be switched at the main panel with the historic wall switches left in place only as dummies (i.e., inoperative).

Historic light fixtures throughout the house should be completely rewired, matching the appearance of the historic wiring and lamping as closely as possible. Where bare bulbs have historically provided lighting (e.g., 201, 215, 216, 217), that type of lighting should be maintained, including restoration and retention of the porcelain lamp bases wherever possible. The historic "antique copper" finish of most of the light fixtures should be cleaned and preserved, without attempting to restore the original finish, which was probably substantially brighter than its condition after World War II (the target period for restoration). In those spaces which

historically have not had light fixtures (e.g., 101, 103, 104, and 105), new lighting should be designed that could provide the necessary illumination using concealed fixtures, although in general the house would be better presented in natural daylight or low- wattage electric lights.[1] Additional new wiring for lighting and convenience receptacles may be necessary in some areas. These should be kept to an absolute minimum. Conduit should be run exposed except where it can be conveniently hidden without disturbing existing finishes.

The building should have a complete fire- detection and security system. Smoke and fire detectors should be installed in every space throughout the building, including closets, attic, and basement rooms. Because of the number of window and door openings and the amount of intrusion into the historic fabric of the building that would be necessary to provide sensors at each opening, the security system should probably be limited to motion detectors. Conduit should be run exposed in the attic and elsewhere, except where it can be conveniently hidden without disturbing existing finishes.

- Install new branch circuit wiring to refeed historic outlets and to feed any new outlets that are deemed necessary.
- Restore and rewire historic lighting fixtures to working order, replacing missing elements as necessary.
- Recreate the historic meter, fuse boxes and associated wiring on south gallery.
- Install complete fire detection and security system.

Plumbing: In order to reduce maintenance and eliminate a potential source of damage to the structure and its contents, the bathroom (Room 203) on the south side of the house should not be used. Waste and supply lines should be capped. The other bathroom (Room 213) should be maintained in working order for the benefit of those staffing the building and for occasional visitor use. While this may place extra wear and tear on the historic toilet, the simplicity of its mechanics should facilitate its continued maintenance.

In order to protect the building and its contents, a dry- pipe sprinkler system should be installed in the building. The main valve can be located in the old pantry (Room 215). Piping for the system should be run through the attics with individual sprinkler heads inserted through the ceilings of every space in the house. Installation of water supply pipes and waste lines throughout the building should be designed to be reversible. Framing and finishes should not be cut or cored unless absolutely necessary, even if that means running exposed pipes on the interior or the exterior of the building.

- Cap water and waste lines to south bathroom (Room 203).

1. In 1998, the Association for Preservation Technology (APT) and the American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (AIC) published their "Guidelines for Light and Lighting in Historic Buildings that House Collections"; see *APT Bulletin* Vol. XXXI, #1, 2000, a special issue devoted to lighting historic buildings.

- Maintain water supply to rear bathroom (Room 213) and maintain toilet and sink for staff use.
- Install dry- pipe fire sprinkler system.

Heating, Ventilation, and Cooling: The installation of a central HVAC system has become an expected part of treatment of most historic commercial and residential buildings, especially in the South where "air- conditioning" is considered a necessity for living through the long, hot, Southern summers. Certainly that is the case in the humid climate of Natchitoches Parish, where the average high temperature in July and August is 93°. Yet the Prud'hommes did not install central air- conditioning in the Big House until 1987.

The sensitive installation of modern HVAC or climate control systems is one of the most difficult challenges in historic preservation. Equipment alone can take up as much as 10% of a building's space and the installation of ductwork and equipment necessitates alteration to, destruction, and/or replacement of historic materials and features, much of which is irreversible for all practical purposes. Even the most sensitively designed and installed systems inevitably compromise the historic structure with the various system components. So it is with the Big House where there are compressors in the yard, air- handlers in the closet, and a labyrinth of ductwork throughout the attic. Moreover, these systems introduce electric motors, electrical connections, and even gas flames into confined spaces within the historic building, which can be a recipe for disaster if equipment is defective or poorly maintained.

In addition, a successful HVAC system requires a tight building envelope that will retain conditioned air and, at the same time, control the migration and condensation of water vapor. To create such a tight building envelope in a historic building, especially in a wood- framed building, requires extreme intervention, including removal and/or modification of interior and/or exterior finishes to install insulation and vapor barriers. If the vapor barriers are installed incorrectly, allowing moisture to condense on the inside wall cavities, severe damage can occur, including rusting of nails and other fasteners and, in extreme cases, rotting of internal framework.

While compromises that will allow installation of modern HVAC systems are routine in rehabilitation of most historic buildings, they become problematic in landmark museum buildings like the Big House, where preservation and interpretation of the historic building is of paramount importance. The impact of few other aspects of life in the South were more pervasive than climate and, until the 1960s, everyone adjusted their lifestyles to the long, hot Southern summers.[2] To introduce artificially cool air in the summer (or comfortably warm rooms in the winter, for that matter) would seriously diminish the interpretive power of the historic building and its ability to stimulate the visitors' imagination through their experience of authentic spaces.[3]

2. Raymond Arsenault, "The End of the Long Hot Summer: The Air Conditioner and Southern Culture," *The Journal of Southern History*, Vol. L, #4, November 1984.

Although modern HVAC and climate control systems carry the potential for significant physical damage to the structure and for significant compromises in the authentic presentation of the historic building, collection management standards have generally mandated some sort of climate control wherever significant museum objects are being displayed. In recent years, however, it has been recognized that those standards are often overly- rigid in their application, to the detriment of many historic buildings.[4] Concern for the coexistence of historic structures and the artifacts housed within them led the American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (AIC) and The Association for Preservation Technology International (APT) to jointly develop the New Orleans Charter which formally acknowledged, among other things, that historic structures and their contents "deserve equal consideration in planning for their care."[5]

An interpretive plan for the Big House has not been completed nor is there any collection list of objects to be displayed, thus making it impossible to know precisely what might be required for object conservation. In addition, there has been no real opportunity to evaluate the building's internal climate and assess its ability to maintain its own comfortable internal environment without HVAC. For those reasons, a phased approach to resolution of this issue is warranted.

Attic insulation is by far the most common energy- saving retrofit in historic buildings, being relatively easy to install with a minimum amount of damage to historic fabric and making the building easier to heat in winter while reducing heat gain in the summer. Since removal of attic floor boards will be necessary to install a sprinkler system, insulation might be also be installed at the same time.[6] If the attic floor boards do not need to be removed for sprinkler installation, they should not be removed simply to add insulation, since the loss of nails and other material in doing so make it an essentially irreversible change to the building. Newer reflective insulating materials specifically designed to reduce radiated heat gain through the roof might be beneficial between the rafters but that benefit should be weighed against the amount of historic material that would be obscured in the process. Floors at the rear of the house were insulated by the Prud'hommes but much of that insulation is in poor condition. If not replaced, it should be reattached, although there, too, a significant amount of historic material and information about the building is obscured by that insulation. While most visitors will not see these ar-

3. Wade Lawrence, "Preserving the Visitor Experience," *Historic Preservation Forum*, Vol. 12, #4, Summer 1998.
4. J. P. Brown and William B. Rose, "Humidity and Moisture in Historic Buildings: The Origins of Building and Object Conservation," *APT Bulletin*, Vol. XXVII, #3.
5. See http://palimpsest.stanford.edu/bytopic/ethics/neworlea.html for a copy of this Charter and APT *Bulletin* Vol. XXVII, #3, "Special Issue: Museums in Historic Buildings."
6. Even if the floor boards are replaced, the historic fasteners will be lost. If the attic flooring is removed for any of this work, the character and condition of all materials and features should be carefully investigated and documented before and as the work proceeds.

eas anyway, architects, historians, and other professionals and dedicated amateurs would benefit by having all parts of the building unobscured by modern materials. The mass of the *bousillage* walls have their own insulating value. Retrofitting the building's wood- framed walls with insulation is generally not recommended, due to the relatively small percentage of heat loss/gain that occurs through the walls and the severe damage to historic materials that is necessary for installation. Vapor barriers should not be used, since their installation requires wholesale removal of interior and/or exterior finishes.[7]

Windows, doors, and shutters should all be returned to working order and used as appropriate, including the dormer windows which were critical to full ventilation of the attic in the summer. This will require some more effort by park staff in opening and closing windows, shutters, and doors; but, at least in the short term while the house's historic contents remain in storage, the building's cooling system should not be operated so that the efficacy of the building's "natural" ventilation system can be determined. Once the building is repaired and selectively insulated and once the natural ventilation system is being operated to maximum advantage, a year- long climate study should be conducted to establish a baseline of data on temperature and relative humidity in and around the house. At the same time, the Park should develop a full interpretive plan for the house along with a list of objects suitable for display in the building. This list should be developed with the understanding that the internal climate of the building may never be suitable for display of objects that require careful control of temperature and relative humidity.[8] Once those activities are complete, a final determination of requirements for an HVAC system, if any, can be made.

Refer to *Preservation Brief #24: Heating, Ventilating, and Cooling Historic Buildings, Problems and Recommended Approaches.*

- Restore all windows, doors, shutters, and ventilators to good working order.
- Establish program for monitoring of internal temperature and relative humidity over a cycle of all four seasons.
- Develop interpretive plan and collections list with limitations of building in mind.

Handicapped Accessibility: Providing handicapped access to the historic building presents significant challenges. The elevation of the Big House above grade is the principal limitation on barrier- free access to the main story of the house. It is also high enough that a ramp to any entrance would be unacceptably long, as the park discovered when a ramp (now removed) was installed to the north gallery shortly after the NPS acquired the site. A mechanical lift is

7. Baird Smith, "Conserving Energy in Historic Buildings," *Preservation Brief #3*, NPS.

8. Jean Trudel, "Housing Museums in Historic Buildings: A Wise Solution for the Long Term?," *APT Bulletin* VOl. XXVII, #3. This entire issue of *APT Bulletin* is devoted to issues of collection care in historic buildings.

the only option for providing access to the main story without seriously compromising the building's historic character. The north gallery is the logical location for a lift. In the nineteenth century, steps to the north gallery provided one of the primary entrances to the house, since many visitors approached the house on foot from that direction. Although the steps to the north entrance to the gallery were removed prior to World War II, the opening in the balustrade remains in place along with a historic gate. In addition, tentative planning for rehabilitation of the landscape includes a pathway along the north side of the house, so that installation of a lift at the north gallery entrance would provide handicapped visitors with easy access to the front door of the house while requiring no alterations at all to the existing structure. Beyond that, rigid application of A.D.A. standards and code requirements would require significant changes to character- defining features; but a variety of compliance alternatives may be negotiated with the appropriate officials to prevent an unacceptable level of loss in the building's integrity as a historic structure while still accommodating those with disabilities.

- Install handicapped- accessible lift to original entrance at north gallery.
- Develop special programs to interpret the attic and basement, where handicapped accessibility cannot be readily achieved; develop special programs to interpret the entire house for the visually- impaired.

Notes

1. Use of this bathroom will be discontinued.
2. Air-conditioning equipment and telephone wiring are located in this closet. If possible, relocate to old pantry (Room 215).
3. This bathroom will be rehabilitated for continued use.
4. These spaces are appropriate for general storage purposes.

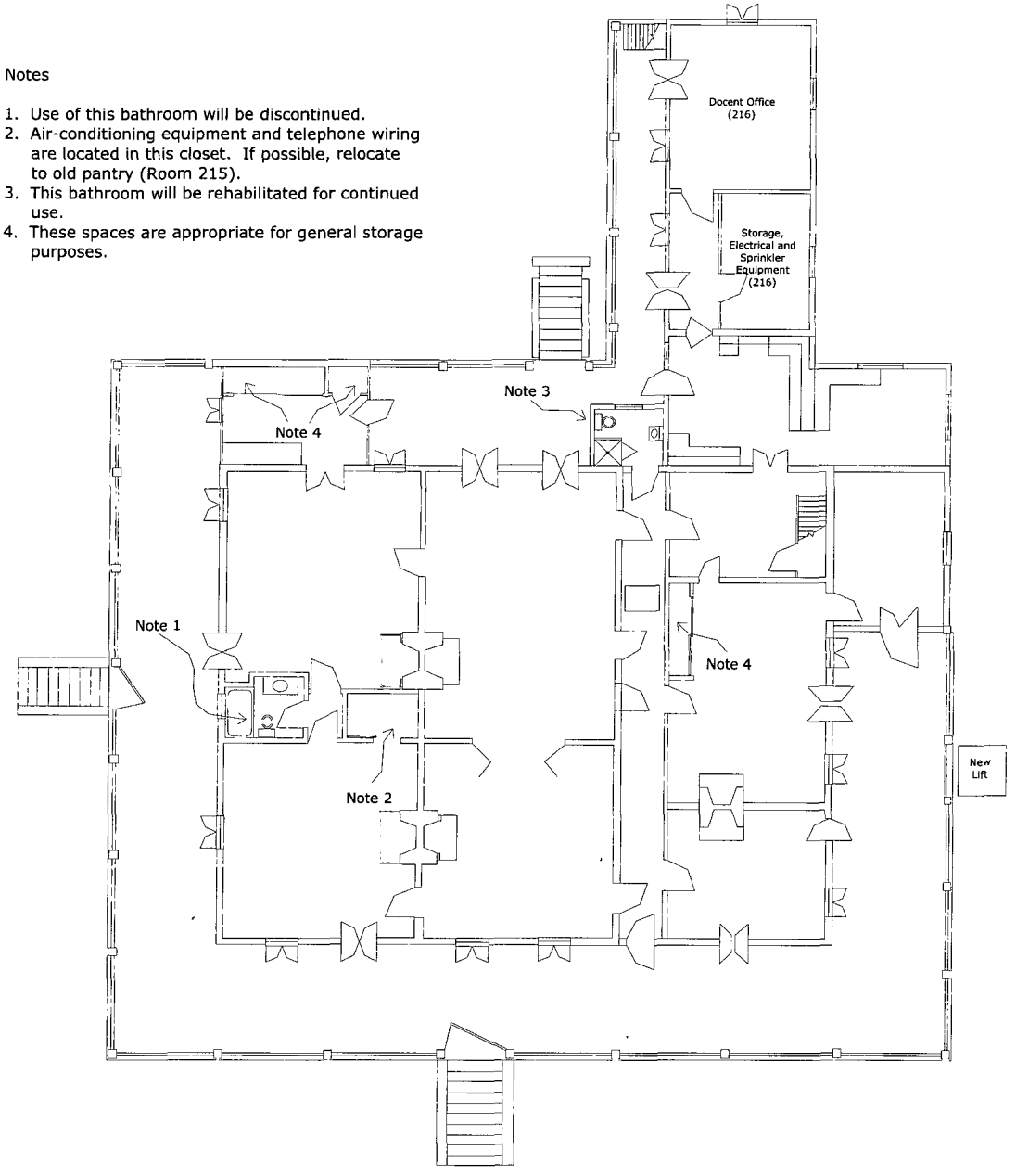

Figure 1 Proposed plan of use for Big House. (NPS-SERO-CRS, 2001)

Alternatives for Treatment & Use

The Big House is the heart of the historic plantation and the Cane River GMP calls for it to be one of the focal points for exhibit and interpretation. While some of the buildings on the plantation may be rehabilitated and adapted for contemporary needs such as office space, certainly no other use but exhibit and interpretation could be contemplated for the Big House. A large collection of furnishings, paintings, decorative objects, and other artifacts was acquired by the NPS along with the house, and from the beginning, the park's goal has been to return some or all of that collection to the house as an aid to interpretation. The historical integrity of the house's architecture and the central role that it plays in interpretation of the plantation's history require that use of the Big House be otherwise severely limited.

Given this kind of museum use of the Big House, it is possible to identify two broad alternatives for its treatment: (a) *preservation* of the existing building while making it safe for modern occupancy and use; and (b) *restoration* to any one of several significant periods in the house's long history.

Preservation is defined as the act or process of applying measures necessary to sustain the existing form, integrity, and materials of the historic building, with the treatment aimed at reflecting the

building's continuum over time through successive occupancies and various changes. Preservation projects focus primarily on conservation, maintenance, and repair rather than extensive replacement and new construction. Limited and sensitive upgrading of mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems and other code- required work to make properties functional are appropriate within a preservation project.

Restoration is generally defined as the act or process of making alterations to an existing historic building that would return it to an earlier appearance. Restoration focuses on the conservation and repair of materials and features from the most significant time in a property's history, while permitting the removal of materials and features from other periods. This approach also assumes reproduction or recreation of missing features and would allow more leeway in replacement of deteriorated material.

Restoration of the Big House to an earlier period is a compelling option, especially when viewed in light of the house's architectural significance as an exceptional example of a French Creole raised cottage. Restoration of the house to its appearance before the 1964 alterations can be readily accomplished, especially since family members are still living who could guide an accurate recreation of the 1953 kitchen. Restoration to that period would include removal of Room 214B, reconstruction of the gallery and north steps in that area, and reconstruction of the north wall of the kitchen proper (Room 214A). It would also include removal of the sheet paneling, vinyl floor covering, and wood cabinets in Room 214A; reconstruction of the original cabinets; and recreation of the pre- 1964 finishes and floor covering.

Restoration of the house to its appearance before World War II would also be relatively easy to achieve, although restoration to that period would require additional documentary research and building investigation as well as substantially more work and expense to execute. Restoration to the period between the wars would include removal of the existing kitchen and bathrooms, reconstruction of part of the rear gallery, recreation of the wing to the west of Room 201 and the bathroom that was in Room 212 (neither of which is well- documented either through physical or documentary evidence), and reconstruction of the slate roof. Restoration to that period would also include complete reconstruction of the three missing fireplaces and two missing chimneys as well as reinstatement of the above- ground cisterns that flanked the north and west sides of the house.

However, neither of these approaches enhance interpretation of the building's French Creole architecture, which would presumably be the rationale for considering restoration in the first place. To do that, restoration of the house to its appearance prior to the 1880s would be necessary. This approach would include removal of the existing kitchen and bathrooms as well as elimination of the central hall (208) and the stranger's room (211) on the north gallery. All of the existing light fixtures would also be removed, an action necessary for any restoration

that seeks to interpret the nineteenth century. It would also include reconstruction of the ill-documented wing to the west of Room 201 and, if a c. 1870 or antebellum appearance were the goal, reconstruction of Mrs. Prud'homme's office and of the *garçonniere*, for which there is virtually no physical or documentary evidence at all. An antebellum restoration would also require removal of the entire kitchen wing (Rooms 215, 216, and 217). Further physical investigation, including removal of existing finishes and extensive materials analysis, and exhaustive research of archival material at the University of North Carolina, Northwestern State University of Louisiana, and elsewhere might yield the information necessary to accurately restore the house to its appearance in the third quarter of the nineteenth century; but that is by no means guaranteed. The same is true for restoration of the house as it existed in the second quarter of the nineteenth century when the main block of the house reached its current size. Materials analysis has confirmed that the board ceilings and floors, the brick foundation, and the wood- framed *bousillage* structure are the only features that remain from the period prior to 1835, and the building's appearance prior to that time can only be conjectured.

Given the GMP's conservative approach to treatment of the site, restoration of the house to its appearance at any time prior to about 1960 is a moot point at the present time. Since continuity of ownership and operation of the plantation by the Prud'hommes for over two centuries is a primary theme in site interpretation, certainly all eras of the site's history as reflected in the house should be considered significant.

A strict preservation approach to the building's treatment would include retention, conservation, and repair of all of the existing features and materials in the Big House, including the few alterations that were made after the 1950s. These most- recent changes include enclosure of the small gallery on the north side of the kitchen to create a breakfast area; complete remodeling of the kitchen, including the addition of pine cabinets; partition of the old pantry to create a hallway (Room 217) to the old kitchen; and replacement of the deteriorated wooden windows on the north side of the old kitchen wing, all of which occurred in the early 1960s. In addition, a central HVAC system was installed in 1987, which introduced 8"- square aluminum registers into the ceilings of all of the main rooms in the house.

As made clear in the GMP, the intent of the National Park Service at Oakland is to avoid major alterations to the site or to its individual buildings, except as necessary to repair damage and deterioration that have occurred over the last thirty or forty years. Yet while emphasizing historic preservation and the continuity of the plantation's 200- year history, the GMP could be interpreted as allowing for removal of the alterations to the Big House, the Cottage, and other buildings that occurred after about 1960, in effect removing the evidence for the last chapter of the plantation's history. Atlas and Lucinda Helaire were the last of the Prud'hommes' sharecroppers at Oakland, moving away

in 1959, an event that symbolized a pivotal transitional period in the plantation's history as full mechanization displaced traditional methods of cultivation and operation that had characterized the plantation for a century. The date does not, however, symbolize the end of Oakland as a working plantation, since the Prud'hommes continued to farm Oakland for another twenty- five years after the Helaires left. Phonsie Prud'homme continued operation of the Oakland store until 1983 and, not until 1984, did his sons auction their farm equipment and quit farming for good. Even so, Oakland was still designated a Bicentennial Farm in 1988.

After World War II, the Prud'hommes began a series of improvements and alterations to the plantation that included alterations to the Big House in 1947, 1951, 1953, 1956, and 1964. As they had in the 1830s, the 1870s, and the 1920s, when the Prud'hommes also made significant alterations to their house, these alterations came in response to a changing world and changing lifestyles. The relatively modest alterations to the Big House in 1964 were the last significant changes to the structure prior to its sale to the NPS and, as such, represent the last chapter in the building's historical evolution. If one considers the Big House in terms of historical continuity, it is clear that the alterations that the Prud'hommes made to the house in 1964 represent the final "c. 1960" phase in the plantation's history and should be preserved.

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APPENDIX A

HABS Drawings

NORTH-WEST ELEVATION
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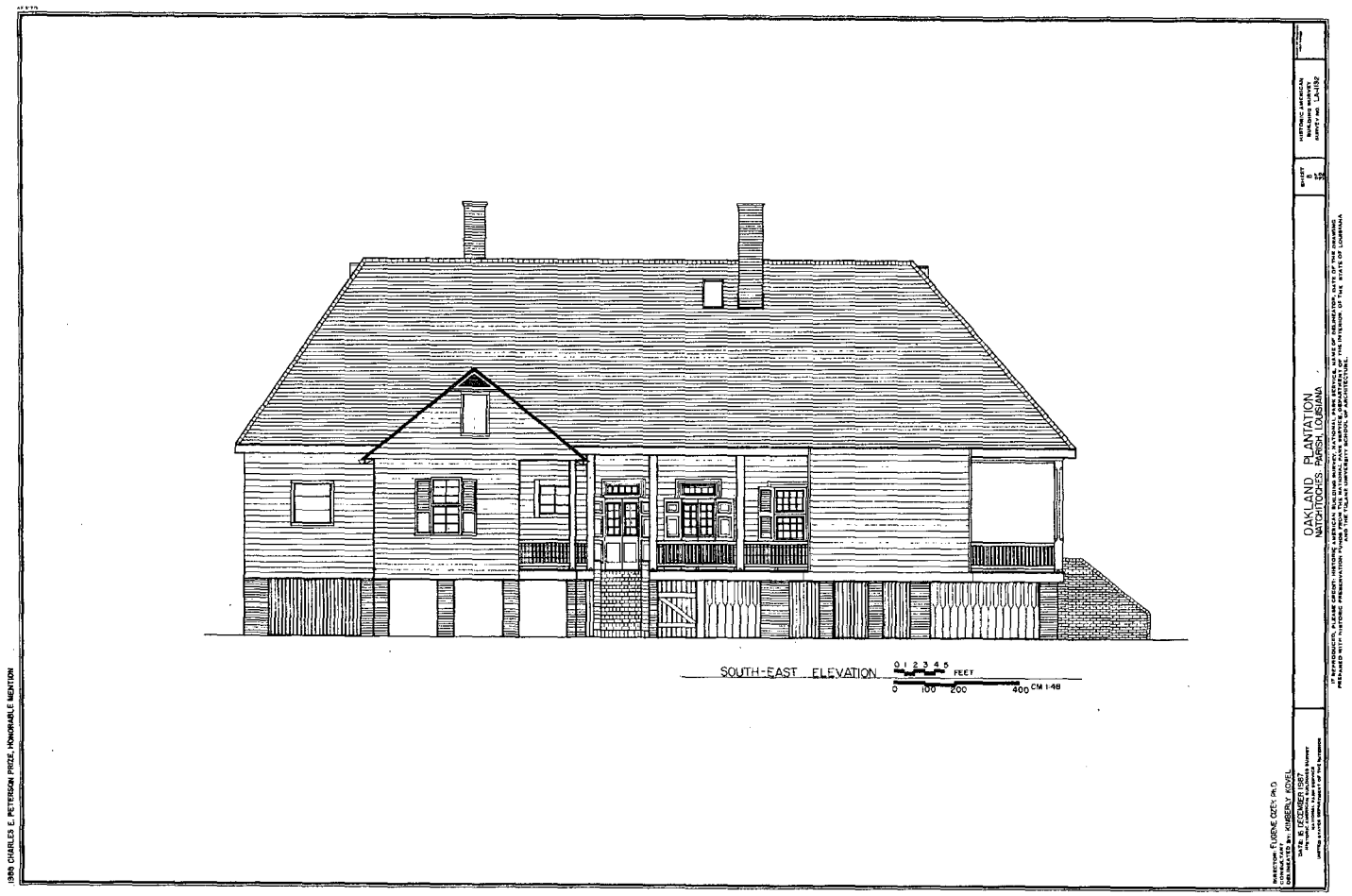
OAKLAND PLANTATION
NATCHITOCHES PARISH, LOUISIANA
HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
SHEET 1 OF 12
1988 CHARLES E. PETERSON PRIZE, HONORABLE MENTION

APPENDIX A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CONSULTANT
DELINEATED BY: KIMBERLY KOVEL
DATE: 16 DECEMBER 1987
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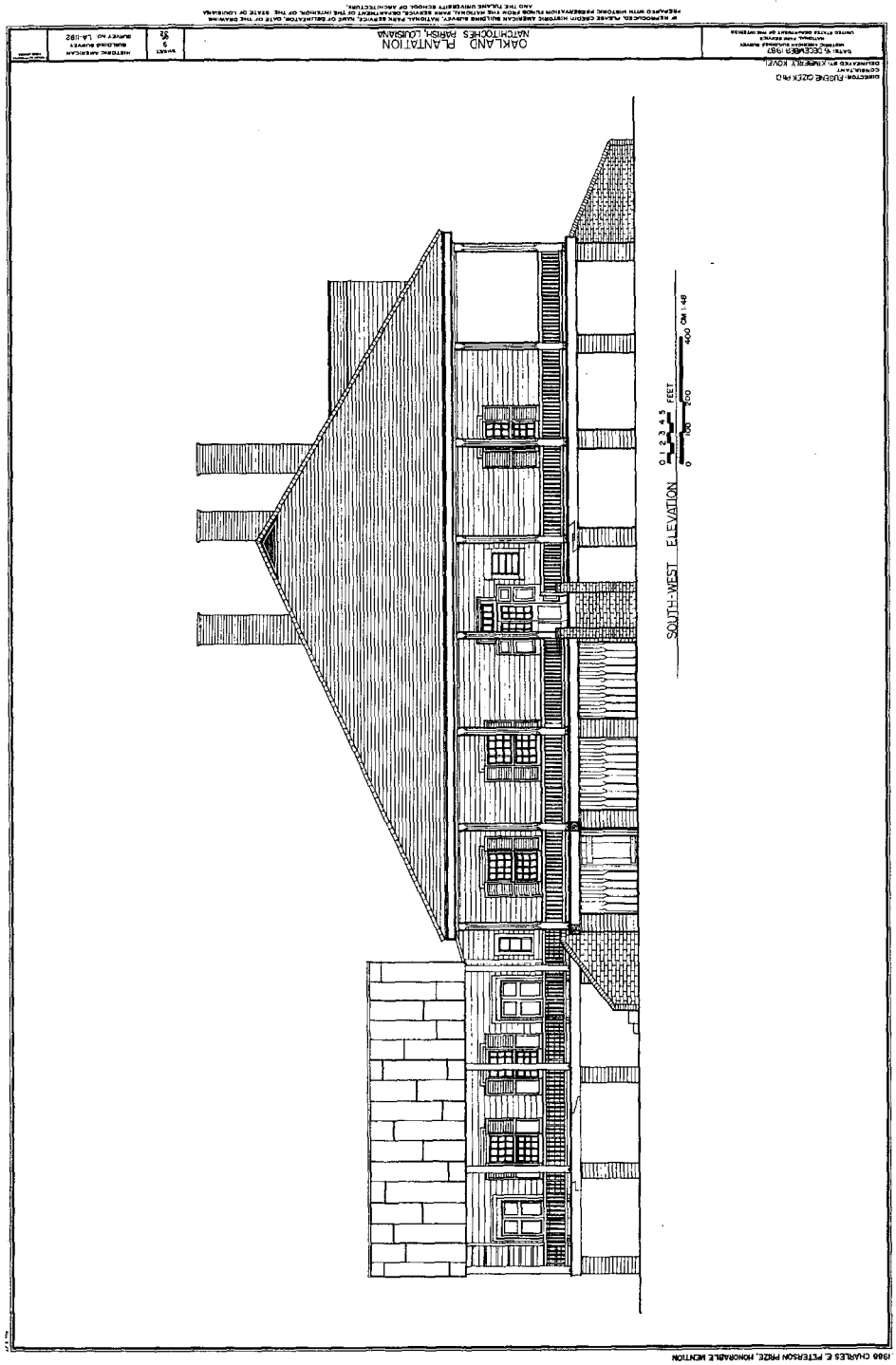
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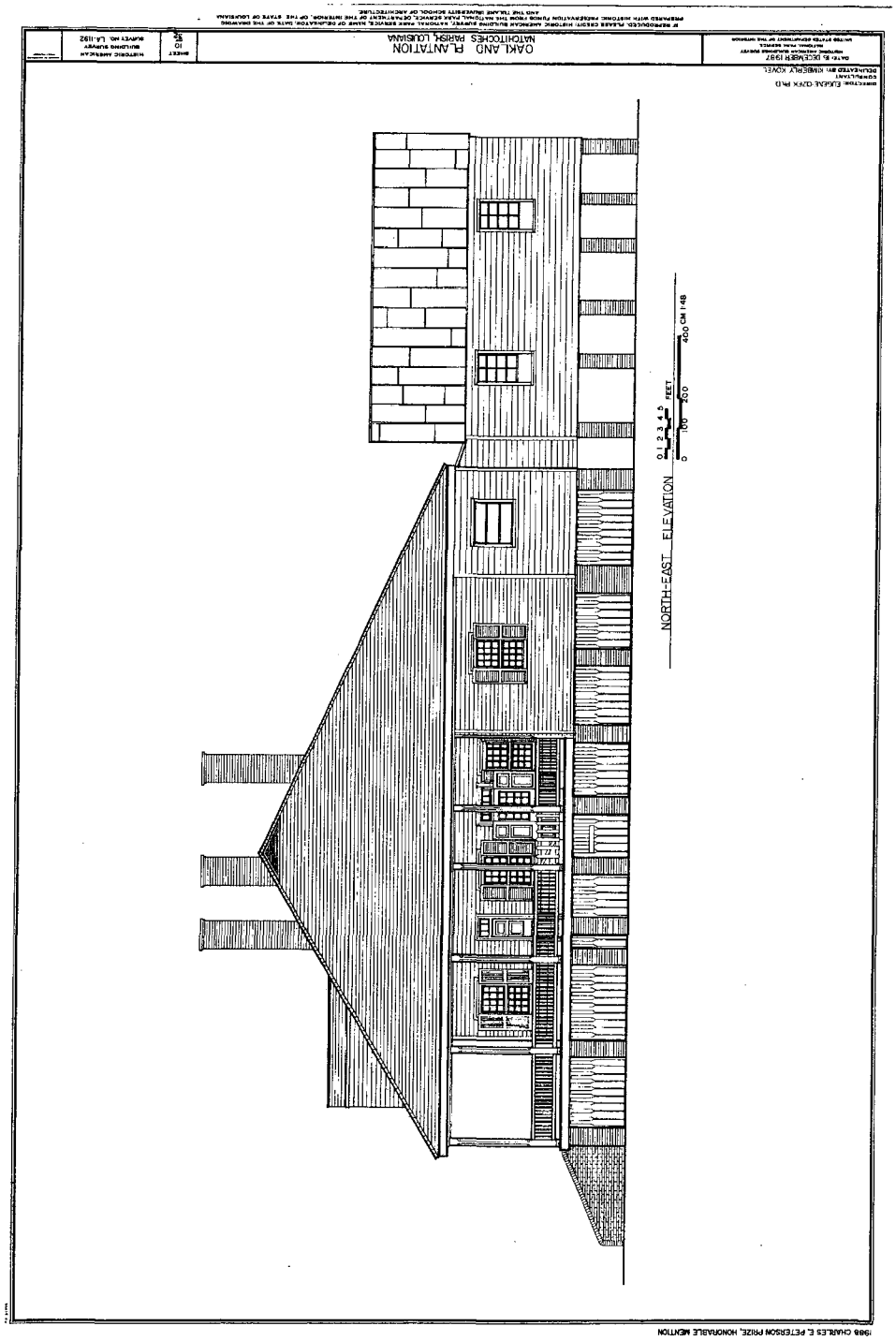
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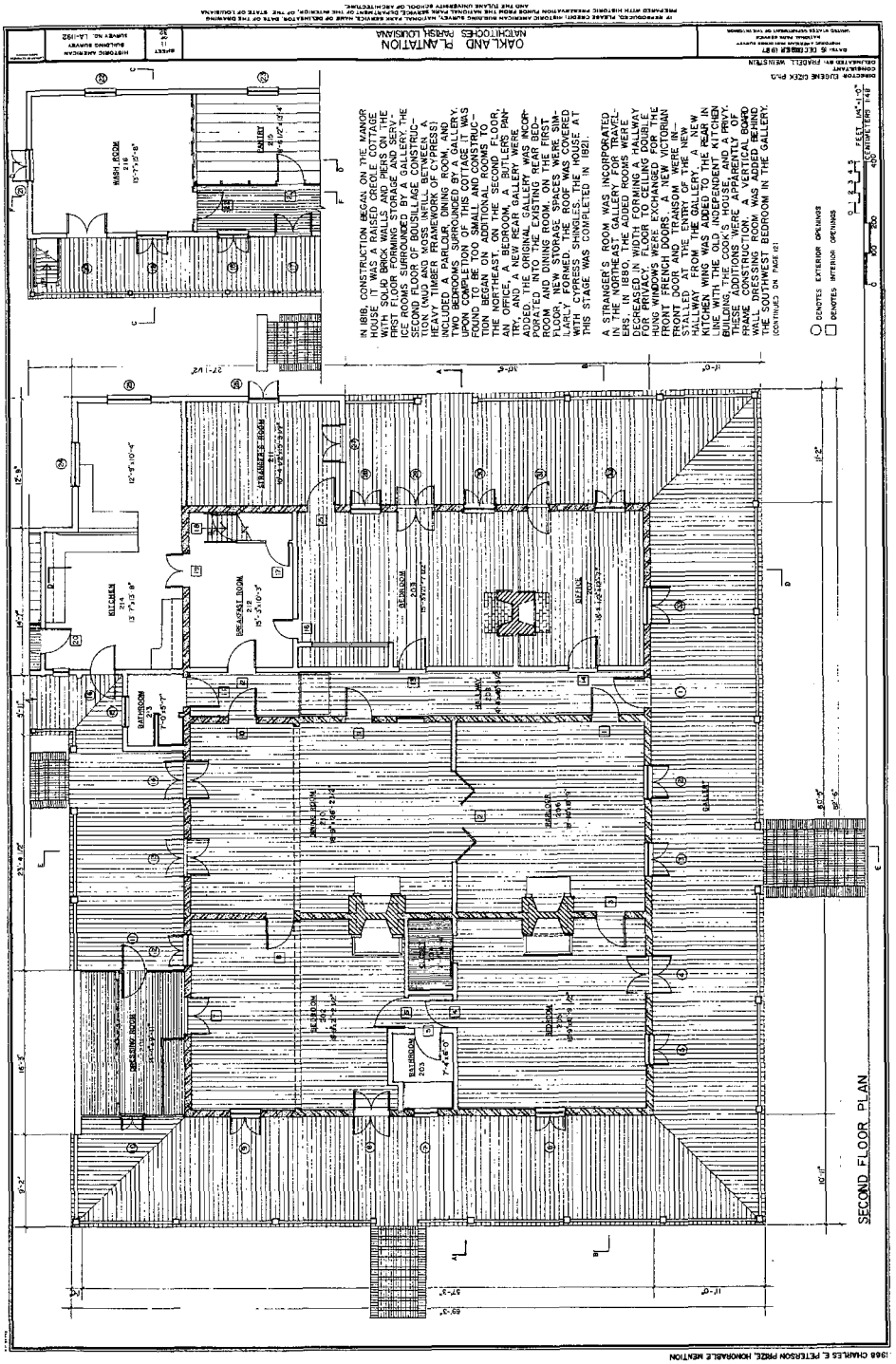
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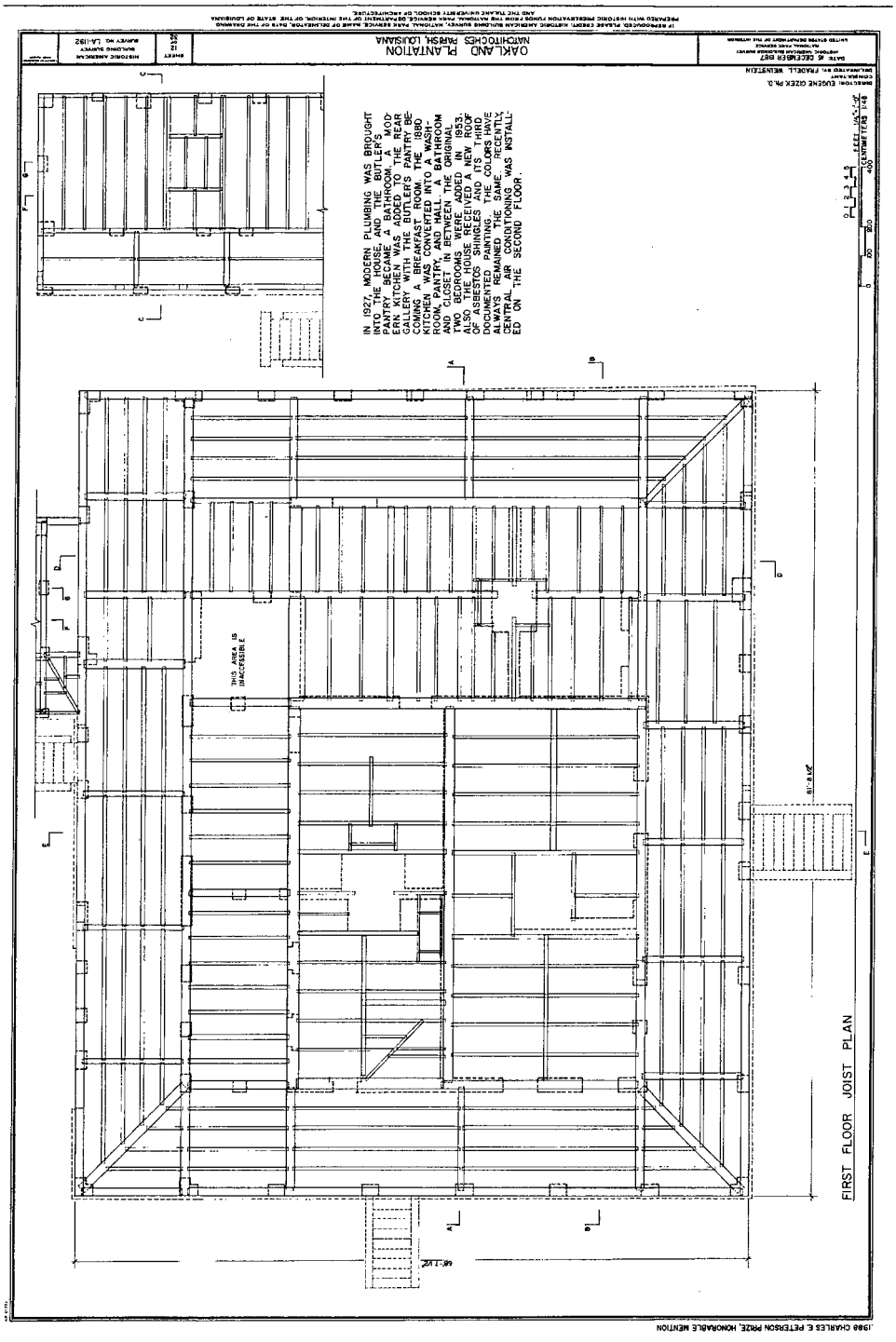
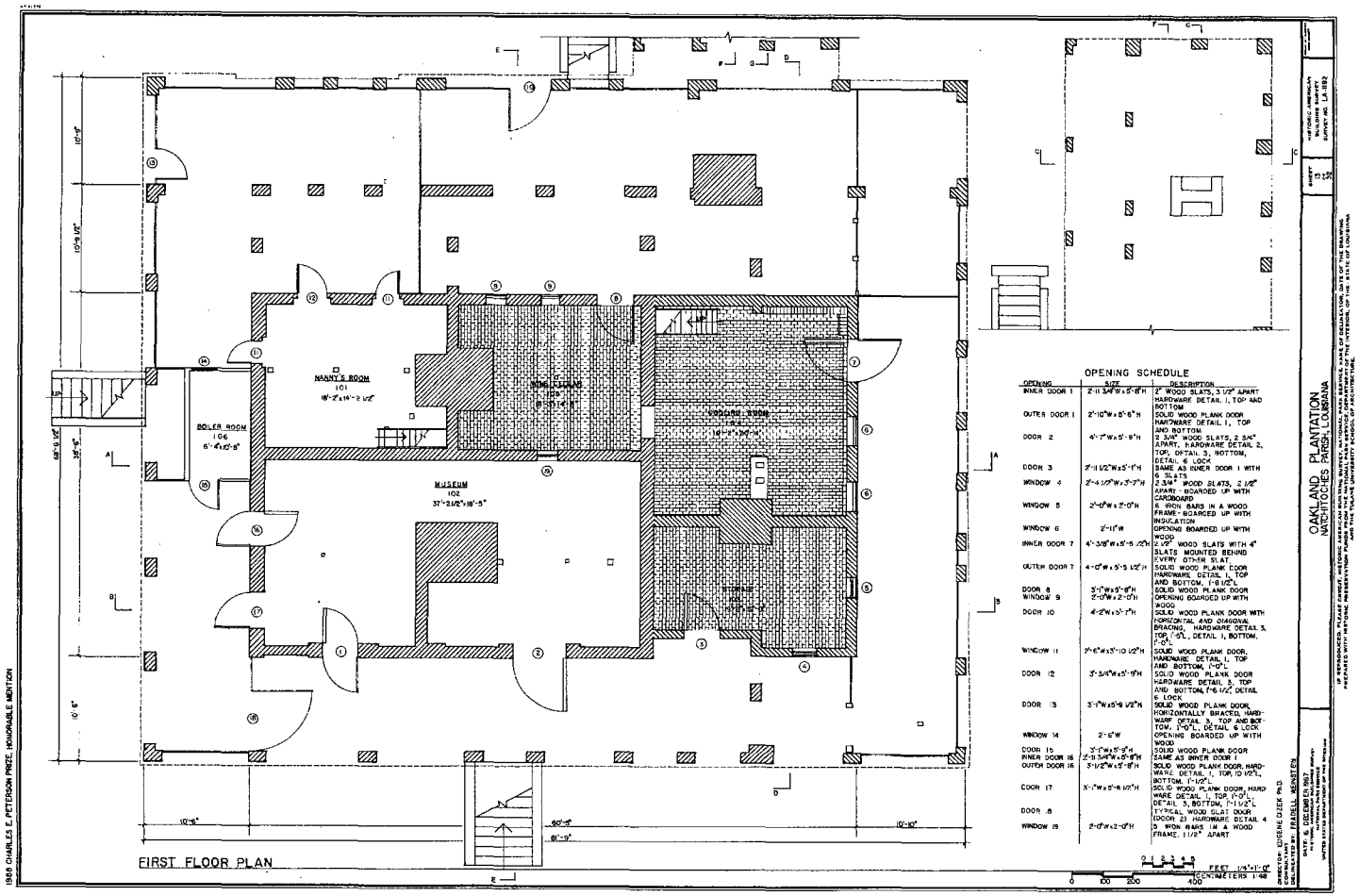
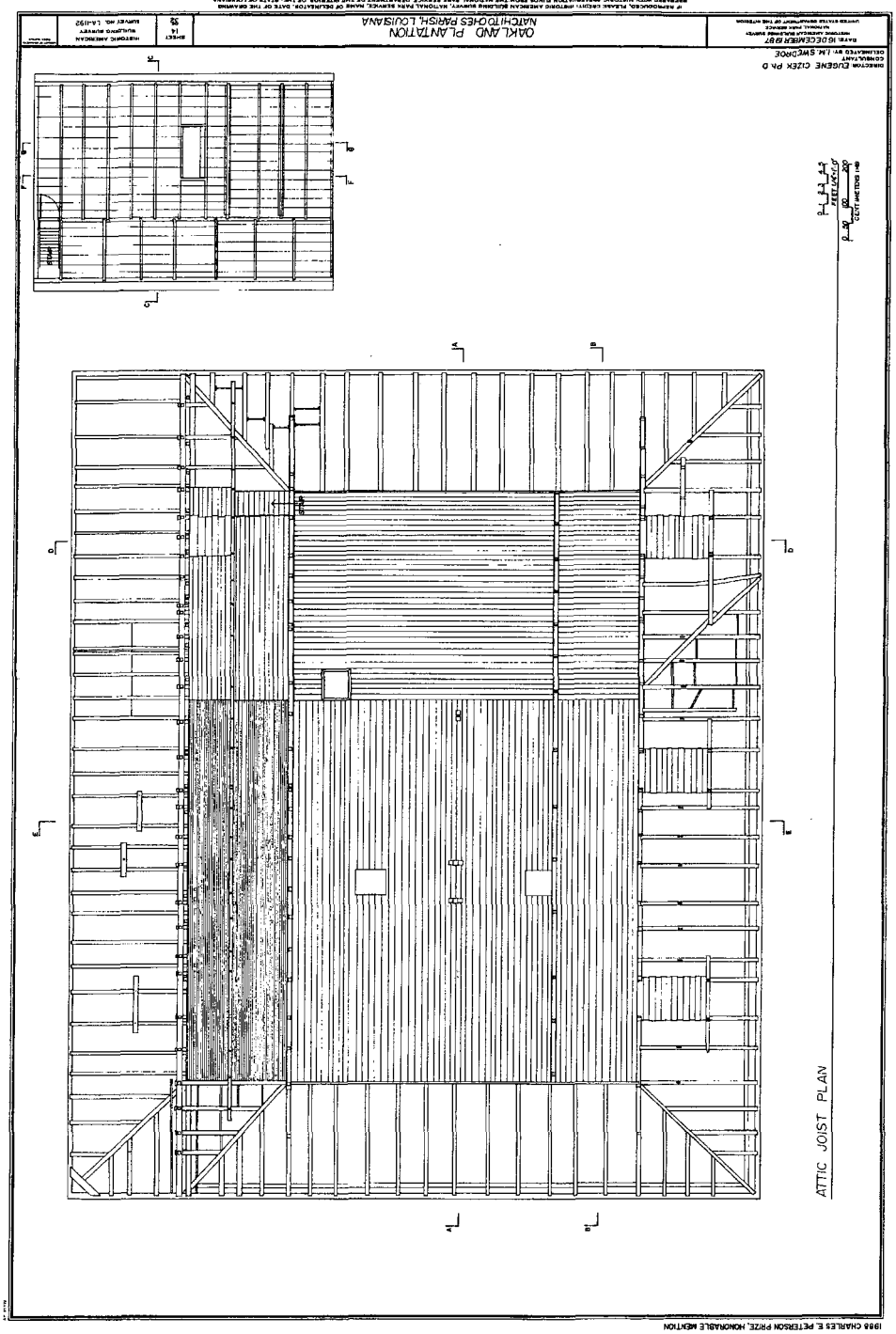

OAKLAND PLANTATION
NATCHITOCHES PARISH, LOUISIANA
IN 1927, MODERN PLUMBING WAS BROUGHT INTO THE HOUSE, AND THE BUTLER'S PANTRY BECAME A BATHROOM. A MODERN KITCHEN WAS ADDED TO THE REAR GALLERY WITH THE BUTLER'S PANTRY BECOMING A BREAKFAST ROOM. THE 1880 KITCHEN WAS CONVERTED INTO A WASHROOM, CLOSET, AND HALL. A BATHROOM AND CLOSET IN BETWEEN THE ORIGINAL TWO BEDROOMS WERE ADDED IN 1953. ALSO THE HOUSE RECEIVED A NEW ROOF OF ASBESTOS SHINGLES AND ITS THIRD COAT OF PAINT. THE CORPS HOUSE ALWAYS REMAINED THE SAME, RECENTLY ADDED CENTRAL AIR CONDITIONING WAS INSTALLED ON THE SECOND FLOOR.
THIS AREA IS INACCESSIBLE
FIRST FLOOR JOIST PLAN
1988 CHARLES E. PETERSON PRIZE, HONORABLE MENTION



OPENING SCHEDULE

OPENING	SIZE	DESCRIPTION
INNER DOOR 1	2'-11 3/4"W x 5'-8"H	2" WOOD SLATS, 3 1/2" APART HARDWARE DETAIL 1, TOP AND BOTTOM
OUTER DOOR 1	2'-10"W x 5'-6"H	SOLID WOOD PLANK DOOR HARDWARE DETAIL 1, TOP AND BOTTOM
DOOR 2	4'-7"W x 5'-9"H	2 3/4" WOOD SLATS, 2 3/4" APART, HARDWARE DETAIL 2, TOP, DETAIL 3, BOTTOM, DETAIL 6 LOCK
DOOR 3	2'-11 1/2"W x 5'-1"H	SAME AS INNER DOOR 1 WITH 6 SLATS
WINDOW 4	2'-4 1/2"W x 3'-7"H	2 3/4" WOOD SLATS, 2 1/2" APART - BOARDED UP WITH CARDBOARD
WINDOW 5	2'-0"W x 2'-0"H	6 IRON BARS IN A WOOD FRAME - BOARDED UP WITH INSULATION
WINDOW 6	2'-11"W	OPENING BOARDED UP WITH WOOD
INNER DOOR 7	4'-3/8"W x 5'-5 1/2"H	2 1/2" WOOD SLATS WITH 4" SLATS MOUNTED BEHIND EVERY OTHER SLAT.
OUTER DOOR 7	4'-0"W x 5'-5 1/2"H	SOLID WOOD PLANK DOOR HARDWARE DETAIL 1, TOP AND BOTTOM, 1'-8 1/2"L
DOOR 8	3'-1"W x 5'-8"H	SOLID WOOD PLANK DOOR
WINDOW 9	2'-0"W x 2'-0"H	OPENING BOARDED UP WITH WOOD
DOOR 10	4'-2"W x 5'-7"H	SOLID WOOD PLANK DOOR WITH HORIZONTAL AND DIAGONAL BRACING, HARDWARE DETAIL 3, TOP, 1'-5"L, DETAIL 1, BOTTOM, 1'-0"L
WINDOW 11	2'-6"W x 3'-10 1/2"H	SOLID WOOD PLANK DOOR, HARDWARE DETAIL 1, TOP AND BOTTOM, 1'-0"L
DOOR 12	3'-3/4"W x 5'-9"H	SOLID WOOD PLANK DOOR HARDWARE DETAIL 3, TOP AND BOTTOM, 1'-6 1/2", DETAIL 6 LOCK
DOOR 13	3'-1"W x 5'-9 1/2"H	SOLID WOOD PLANK DOOR, HORIZONTALLY BRACED, HARDWARE DETAIL 3, TOP AND BOTTOM, 1'-0"L, DETAIL 6 LOCK
WINDOW 14	2'-6"W	OPENING BOARDED UP WITH WOOD
DOOR 15	3'-1"W x 5'-9"H	SOLID WOOD PLANK DOOR
INNER DOOR 16	2'-11 3/4"W x 5'-8"H	SAME AS INNER DOOR 1
OUTER DOOR 16	3'-1/2"W x 5'-8"H	SOLID WOOD PLANK DOOR, HARDWARE DETAIL 1, TOP, 10 1/2"L, BOTTOM, 1'-1/2"L
DOOR 17	3'-1"W x 5'-6 1/2"H	SOLID WOOD PLANK DOOR, HARDWARE DETAIL 1, TOP, 1'-0"L, DETAIL 3, BOTTOM, 1'-1 1/2"L
DOOR 18		TYPICAL WOOD SLAT DOOR (DOOR 2) HARDWARE DETAIL 4
WINDOW 19	2'-0"W x 2'-0"H	5 IRON BARS IN A WOOD FRAME, 1 1/2" APART

APPENDIX A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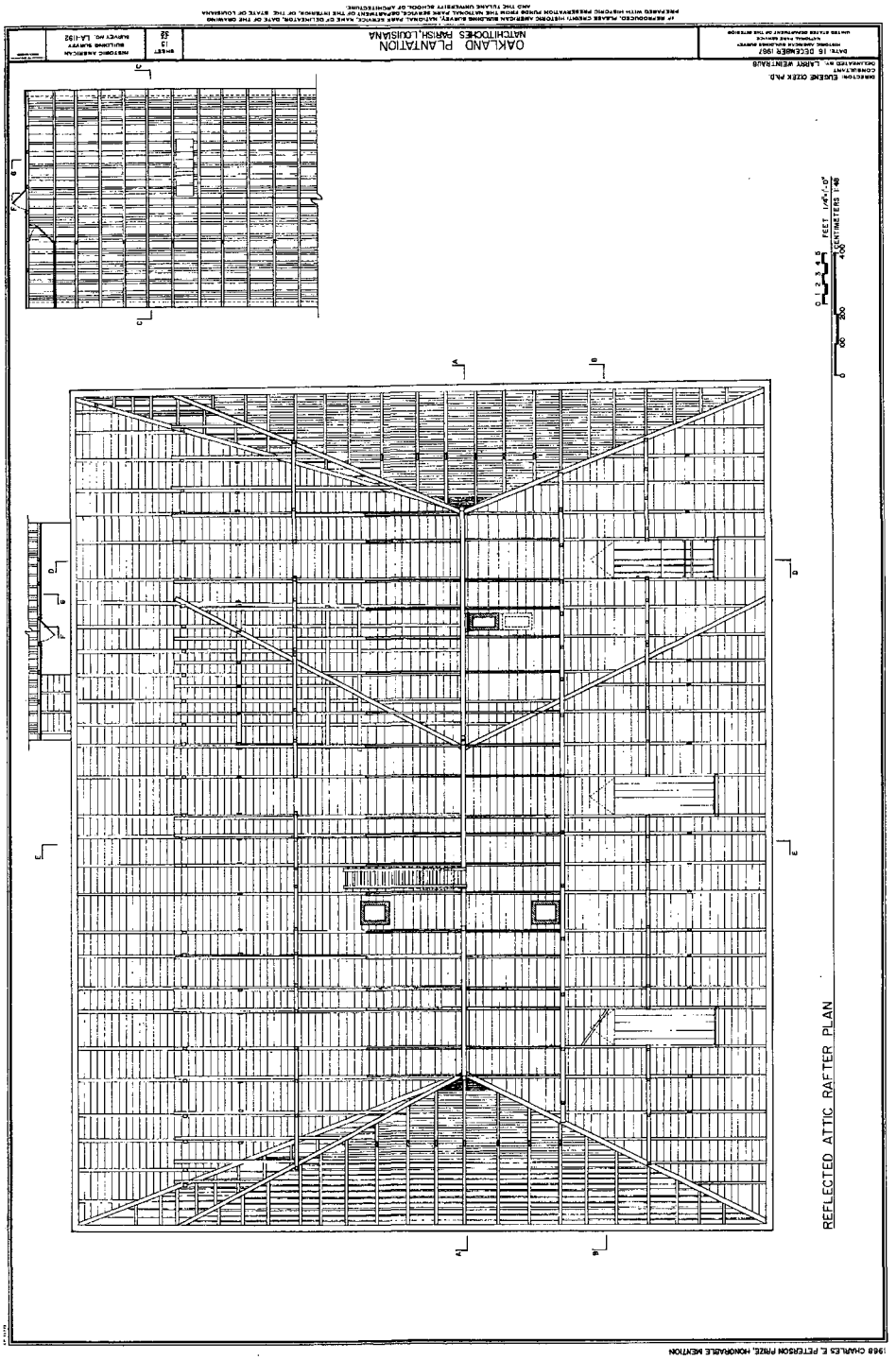
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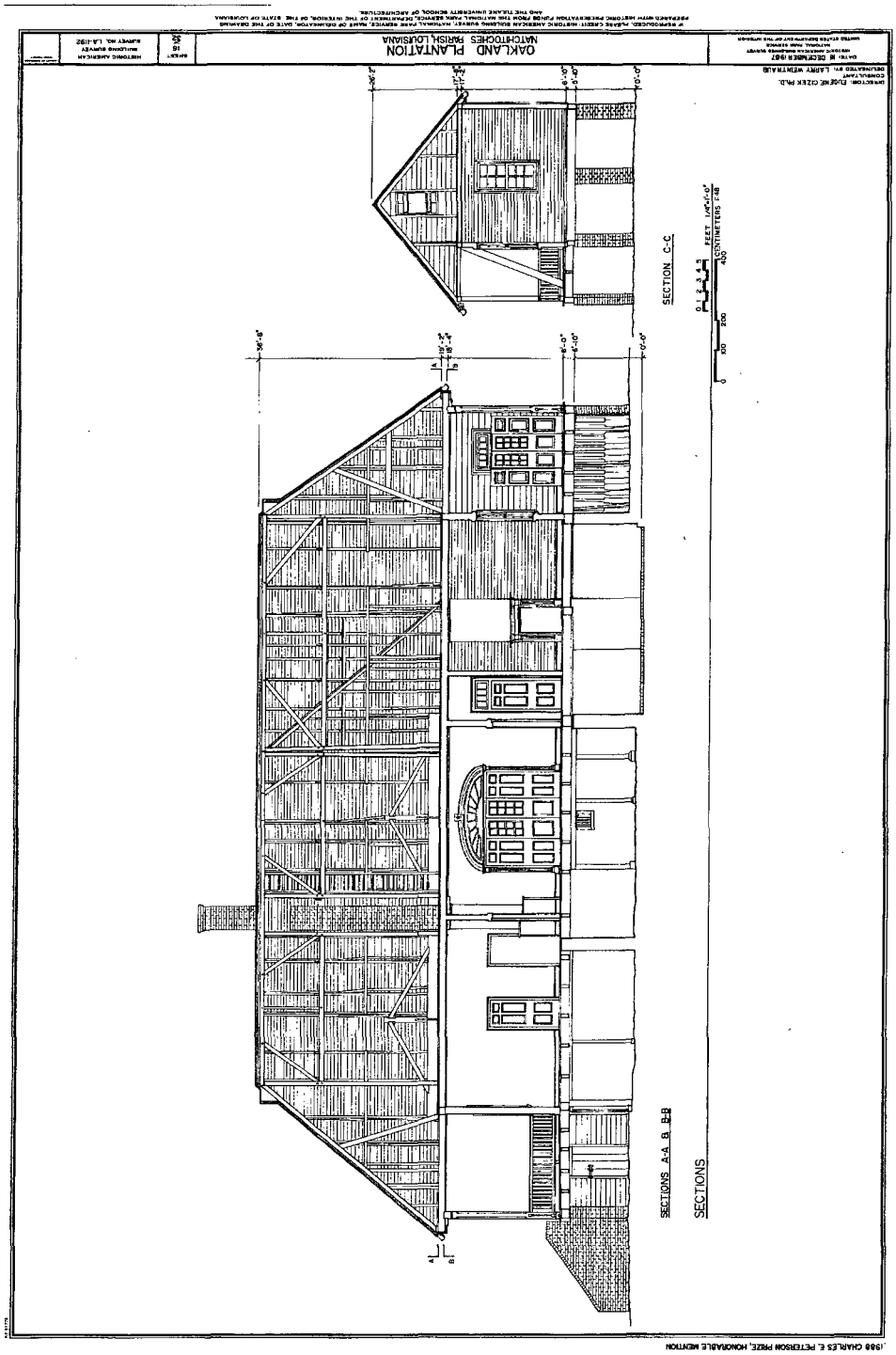
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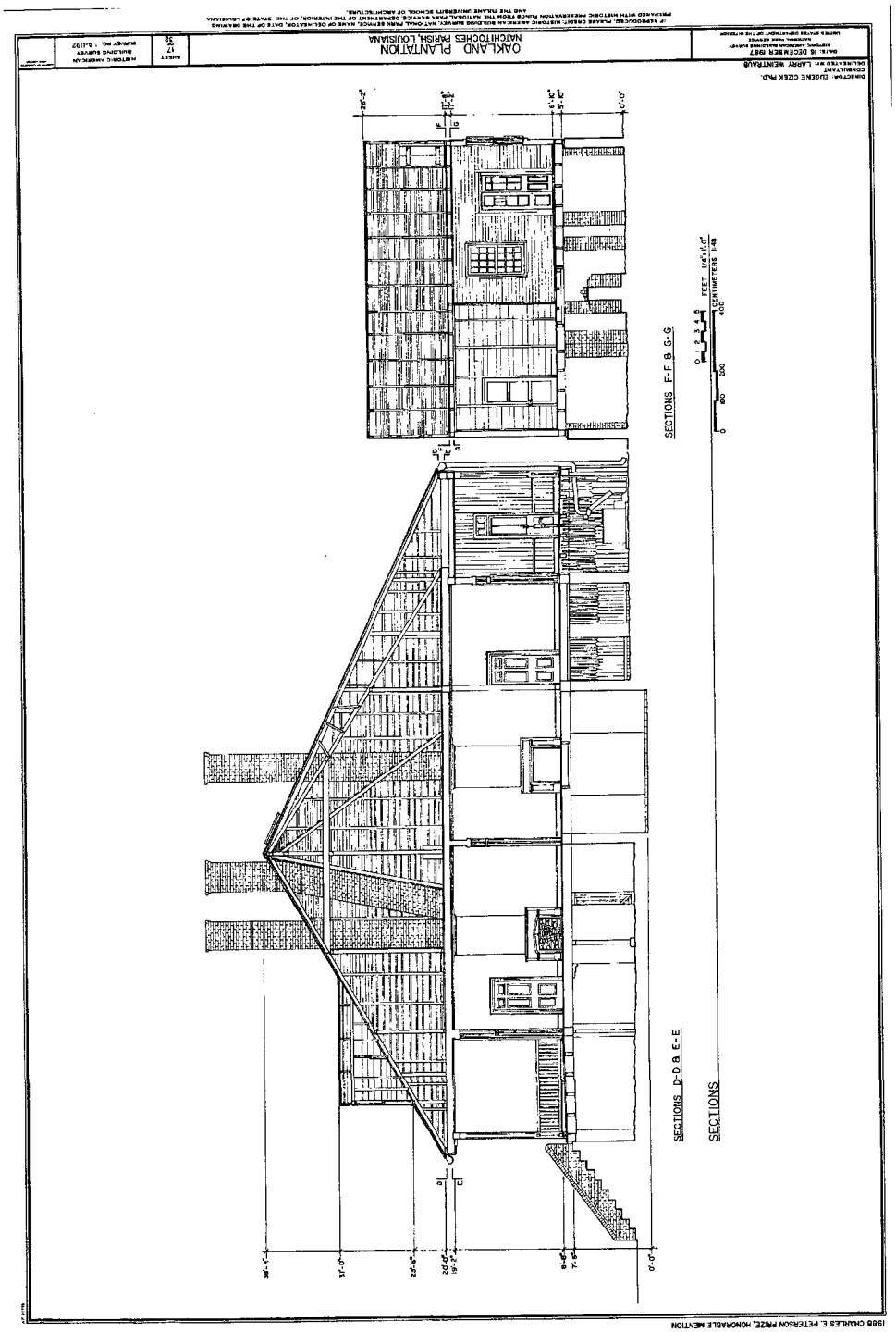
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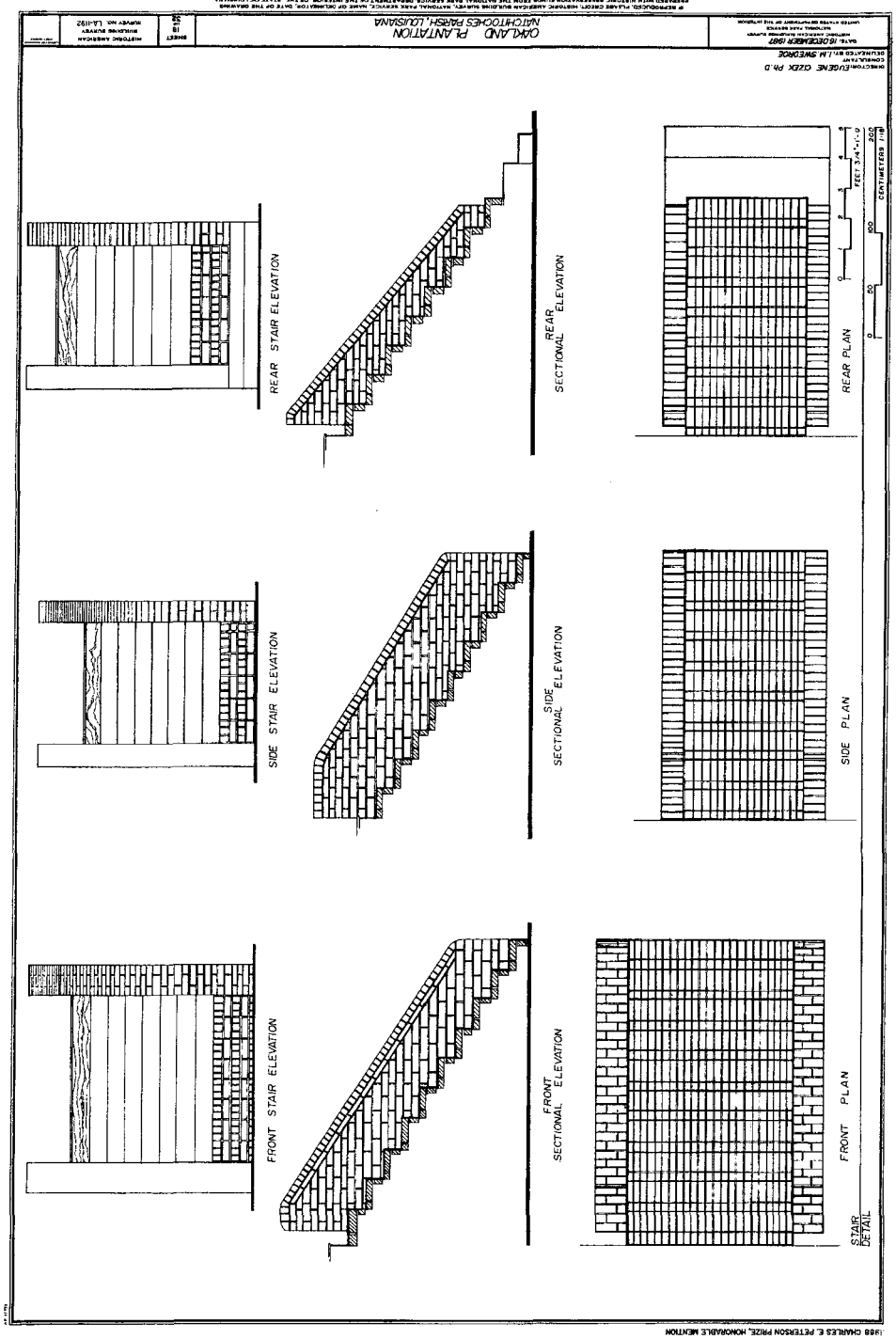
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REAR PLAN
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SIDE SECTIONAL ELEVATION
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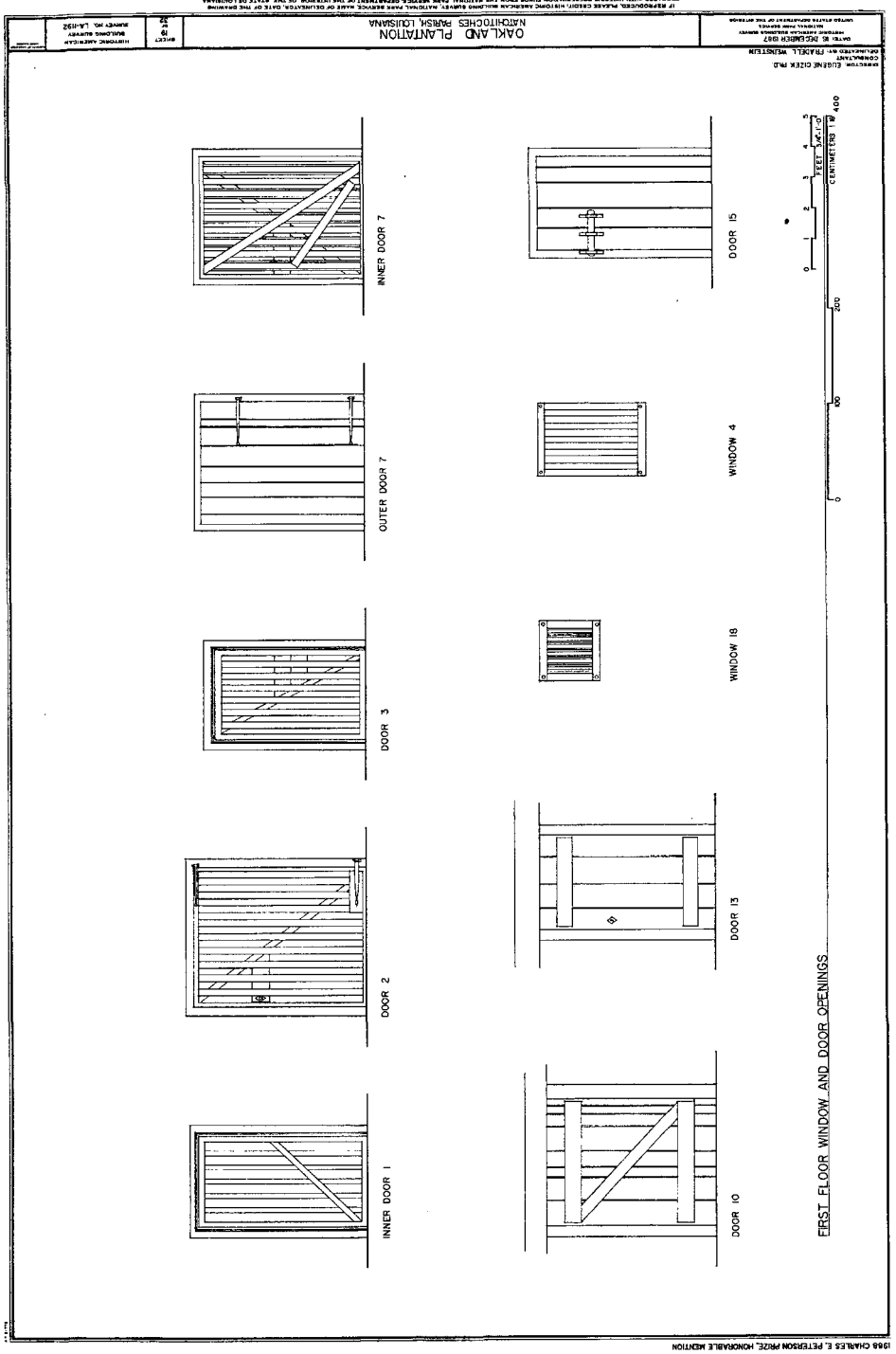
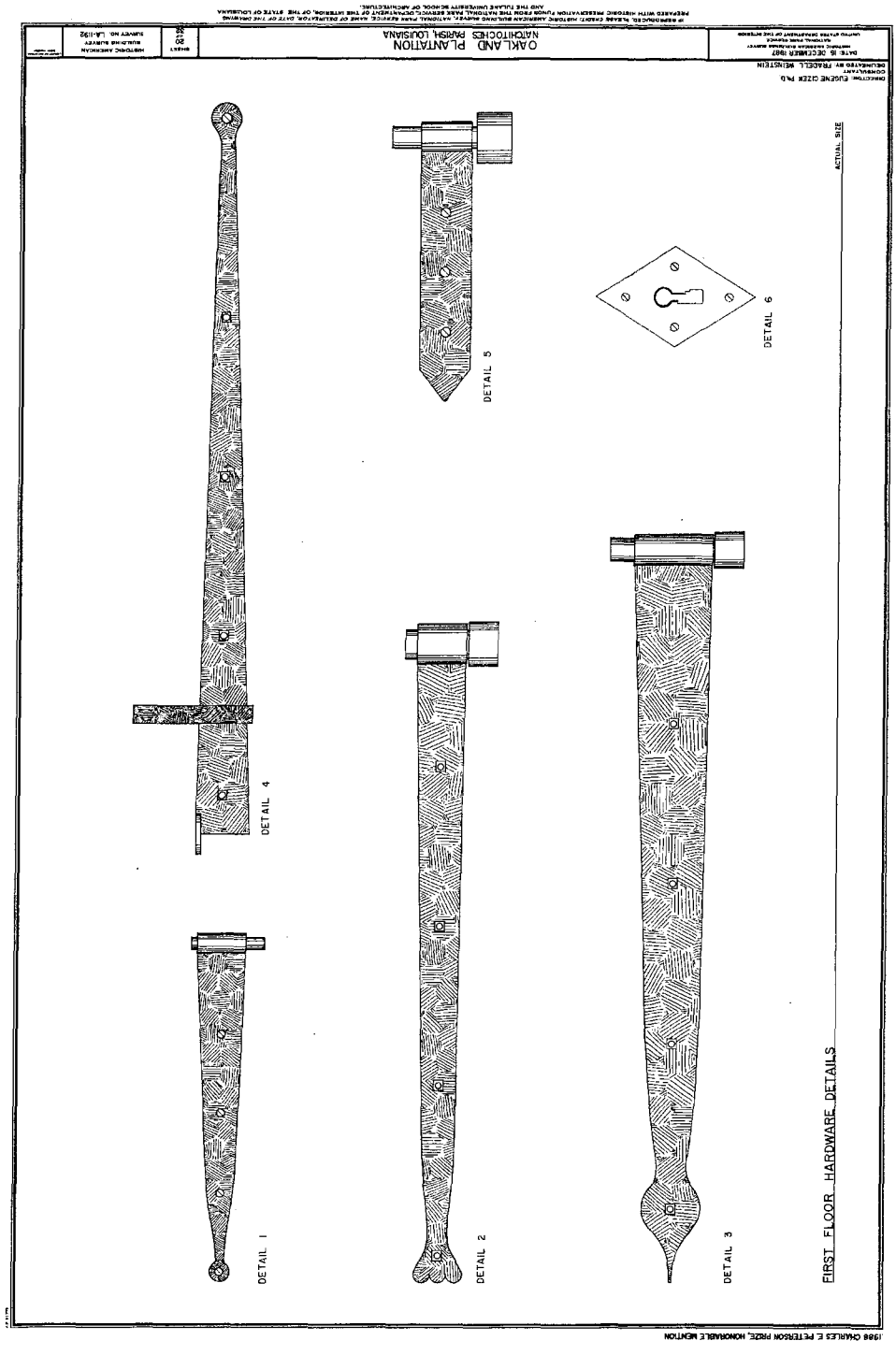
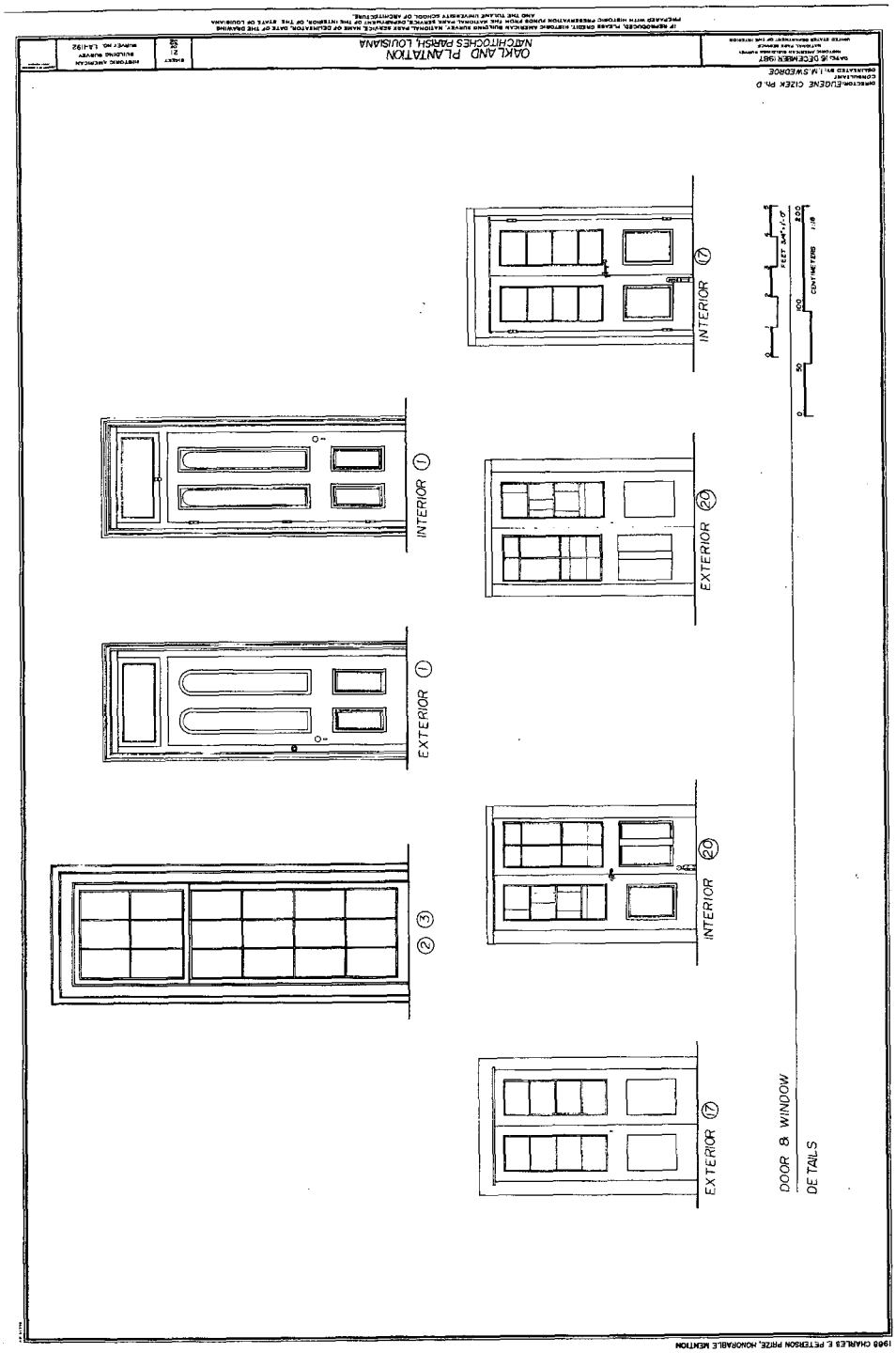
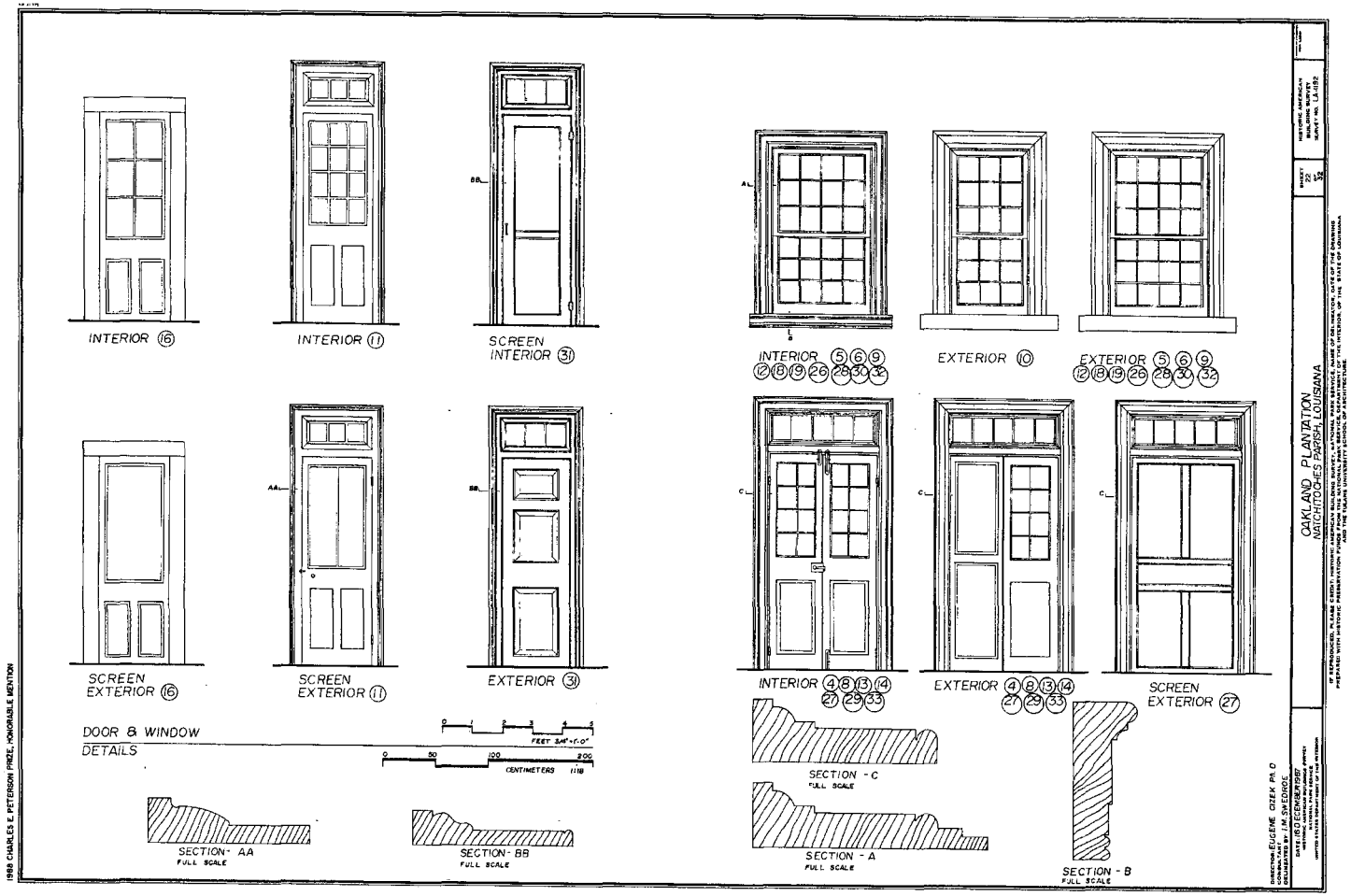
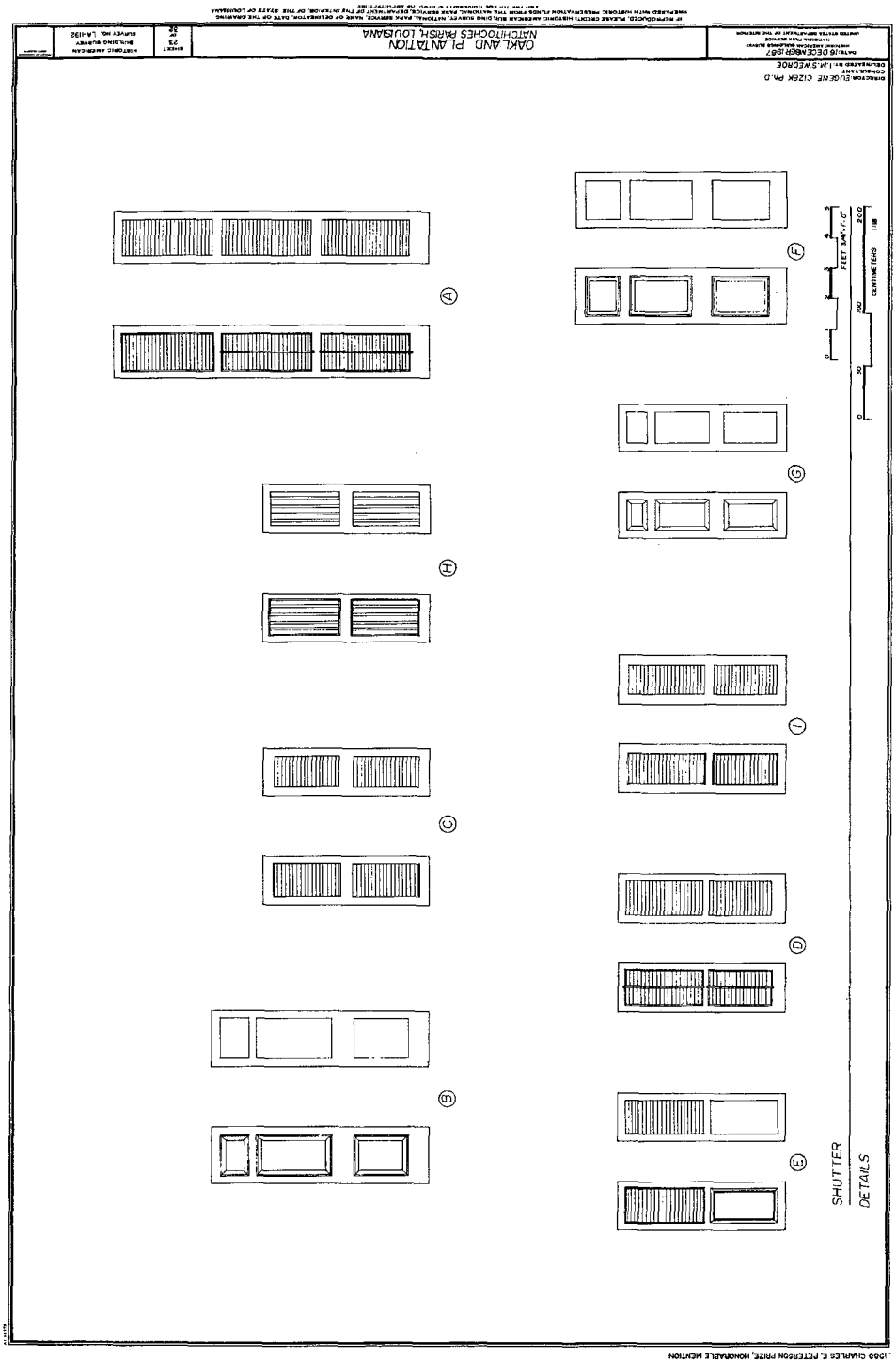
FRONT PLAN
STAIR DETAIL
1988 CHARLES E. PETERSON PRIZE, HONORABLE MENTION

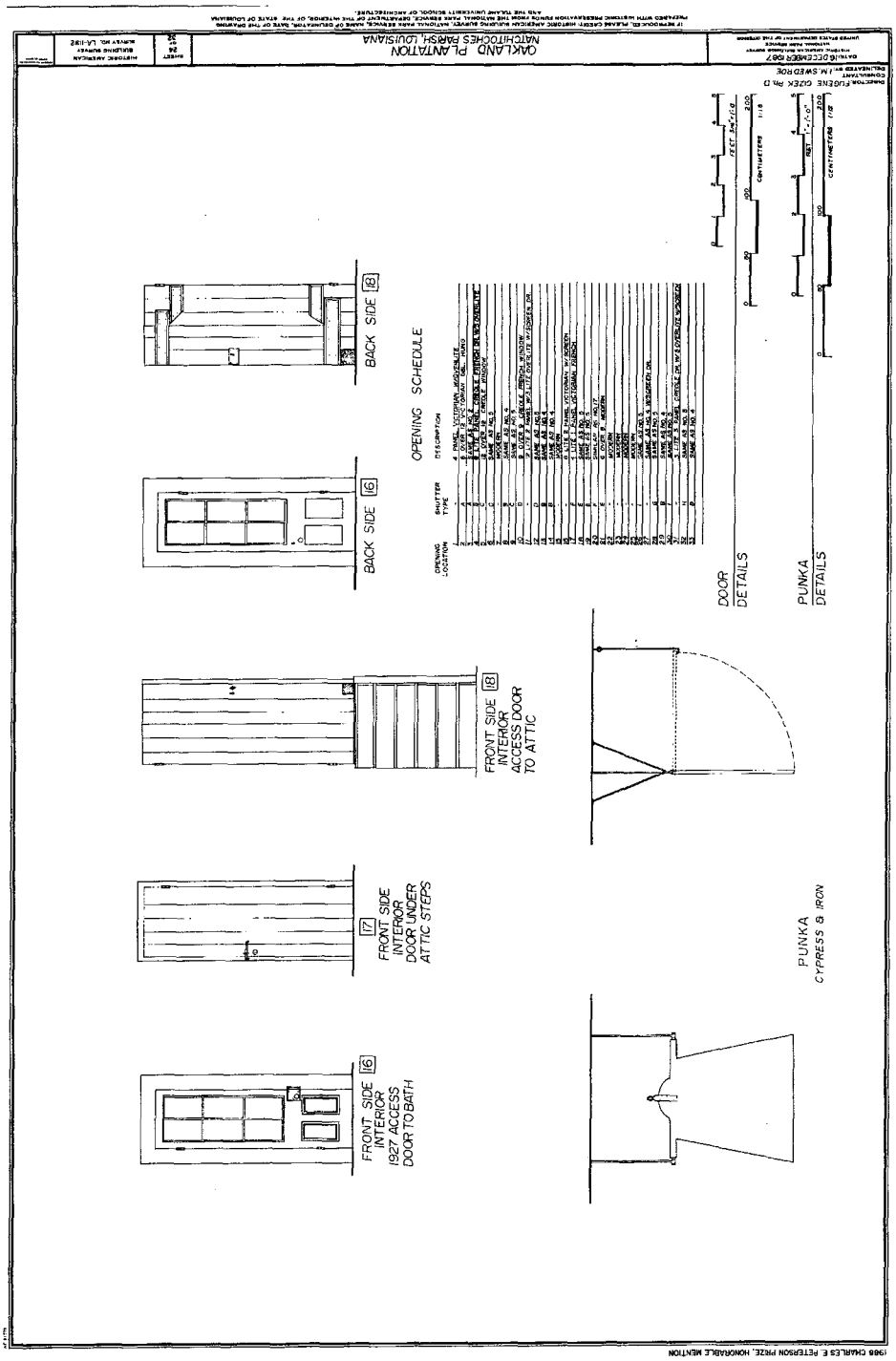

OAKLAND PLANTATION
NATCHITOCHES PARISH, LOUISIANA
FIRST FLOOR WINDOW AND DOOR OPENINGS
INNER DOOR 1
DOOR 2
DOOR 3
OUTER DOOR 7
INNER DOOR 7
DOOR 10
DOOR 13
WINDOW 18
WINDOW 4
DOOR 15
1966 CHARLES E. PETERSON PRIZE. HONORABLE MENTION

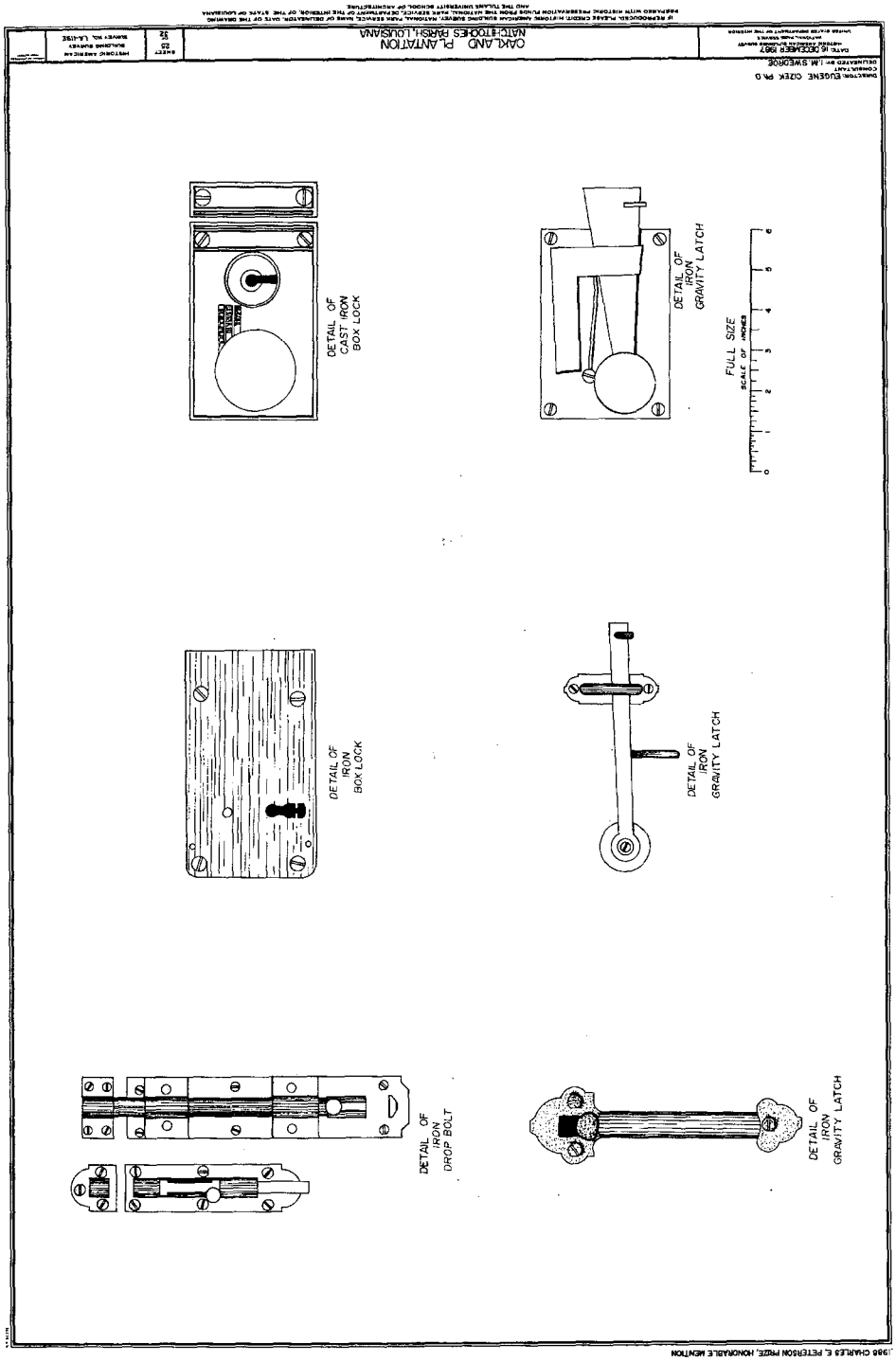

OAKLAND PLANTATION
NATCHITOCHES PARISH, LOUISIANA
DETAIL 1
DETAIL 2
DETAIL 3
DETAIL 4
DETAIL 5
DETAIL 6
ACTUAL SIZE
FIRST FLOOR HARDWARE DETAILS
1988 CHARLES E. PETERSON PRIZE, HONORABLE MENTION

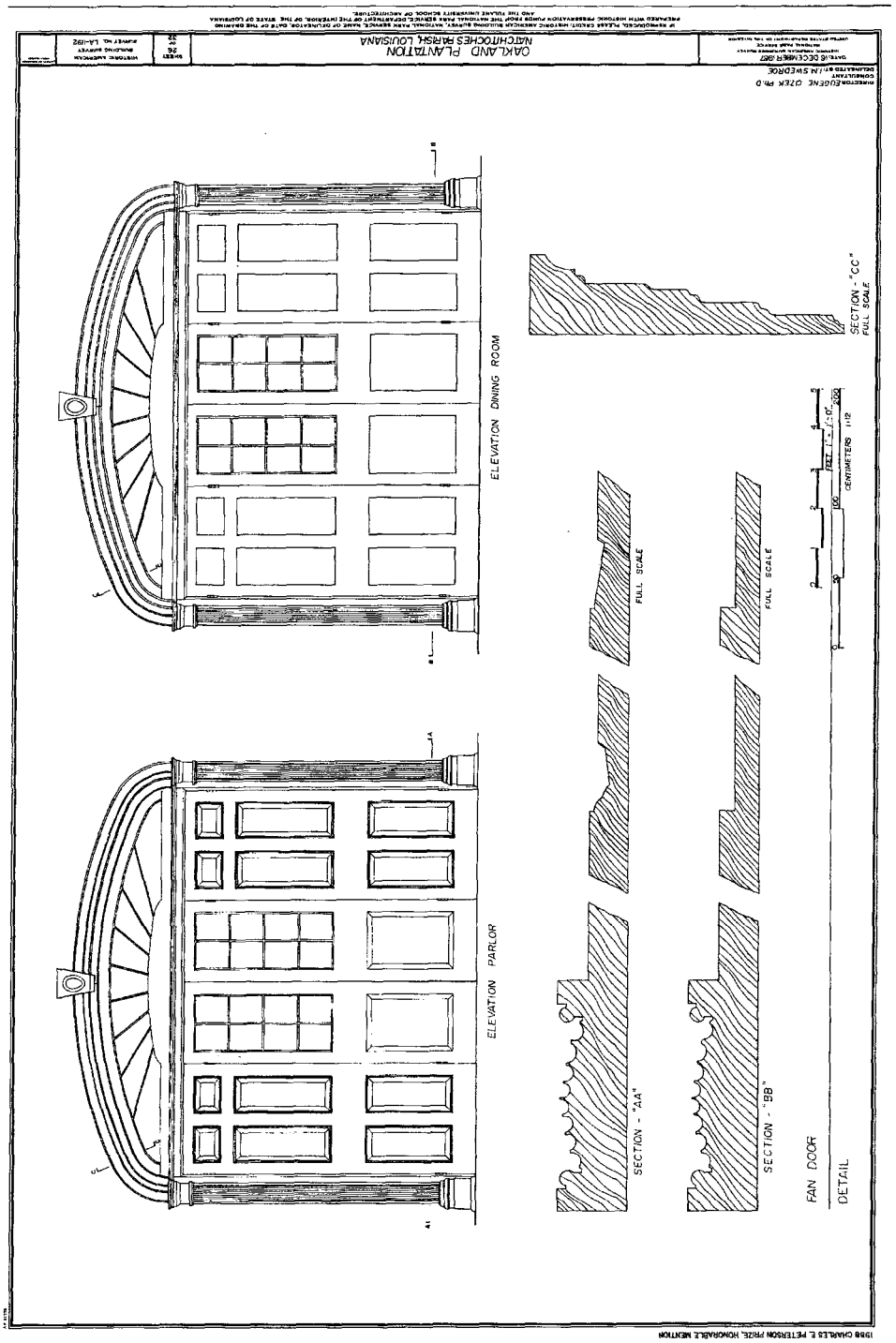

OAKLAND PLANTATION
NATCHITOCHES PARISH, LOUISIANA
INTERIOR (7)
INTERIOR (1)
EXTERIOR (20)
EXTERIOR (1)
INTERIOR (20)
EXTERIOR (7)
DOOR & WINDOW
DETAILS
1988 CHARLES E. PETERSON PRIZE, HONORABLE MENTION

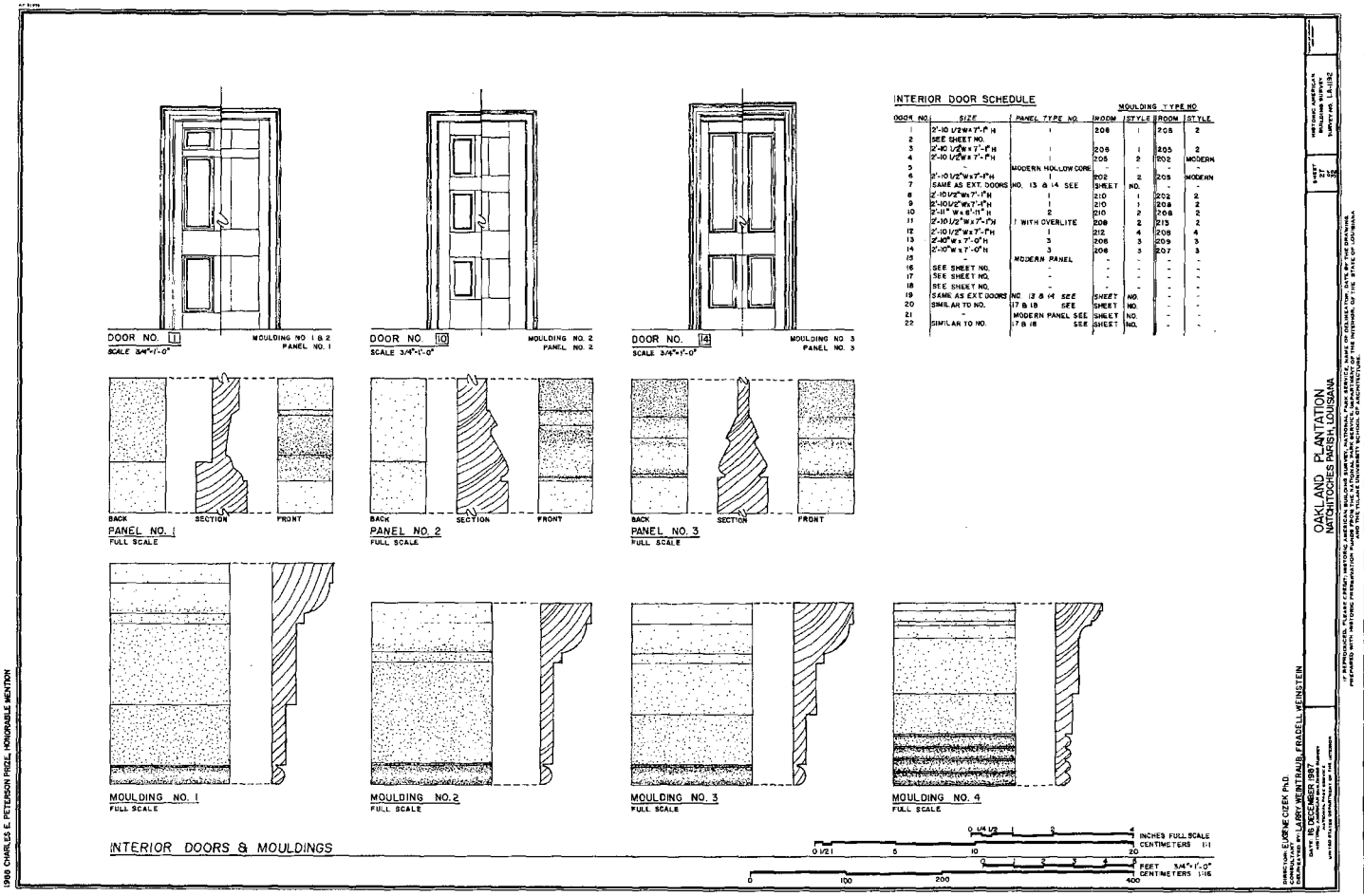

INTERIOR 16
INTERIOR 11
SCREEN INTERIOR 31
INTERIOR 5 6 9 12 18 19 26 28 30 32
EXTERIOR 10
EXTERIOR 5 6 9 12 18 19 26 28 30 32
SCREEN EXTERIOR 16
SCREEN EXTERIOR 11
EXTERIOR 31
INTERIOR 4 8 13 14 27 29 33
EXTERIOR 4 8 13 14 27 29 33
SCREEN EXTERIOR 27
DOOR & WINDOW DETAILS
FEET 3/4"=1'-0"
CENTIMETERS 1:18
SECTION - AA FULL SCALE
SECTION - BB FULL SCALE
SECTION - C FULL SCALE
SECTION - A FULL SCALE
SECTION - B FULL SCALE
OAKLAND PLANTATION
NATCHITOCHES PARISH, LOUISIANA
1988 CHARLES E. PETERSON PRIZE, HONORABLE MENTION


OAKLAND PLANTATION
NATCHITOCHES PARISH, LOUISIANA
SHUTTER
DETAILS
CENTIMETERS
1988 CHARLES E. PETERSON PRIZE, HONORABLE MENTION


OAKLAND PLANTATION
NATCHITOCHES PARISH, LOUISIANA
OPENING SCHEDULE
BACK SIDE 18
BACK SIDE 16
FRONT SIDE INTERIOR ACCESS DOOR TO ATTIC
FRONT SIDE INTERIOR DOOR UNDER ATTIC STEPS
FRONT SIDE INTERIOR 1927 ACCESS DOOR TO BATH
DOOR DETAILS
PUNKA DETAILS
PUNKA CYPRESS & IRON

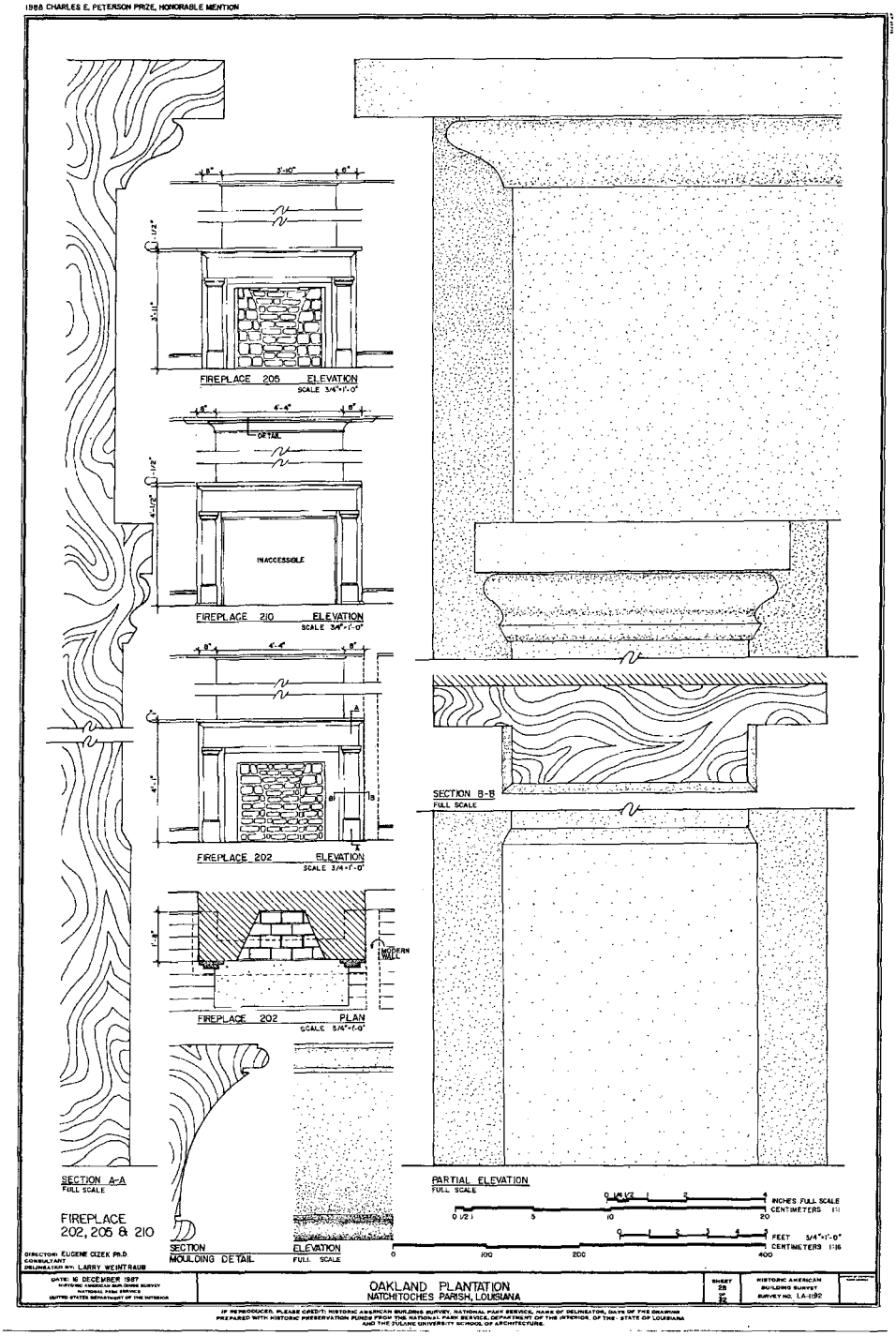

OAK ALLEY PLANTATION
VACHERIE, LOUISIANA
DETAIL OF CAST IRON BOX LOCK
DETAIL OF IRON GRAVITY LATCH
FULL SIZE
SCALE OF INCHES
DETAIL OF IRON BOX LOCK
DETAIL OF IRON GRAVITY LATCH
DETAIL OF IRON DROP BOLT
DETAIL OF IRON GRAVITY LATCH


OAKLAND PLANTATION
NATCHITOCHES PARISH, LOUISIANA
ELEVATION DINING ROOM
ELEVATION PARLOR
SECTION - "AA"
SECTION - "BB"
SECTION - "CC"
FULL SCALE
FULL SCALE
FULL SCALE
FAN DOOR
DETAIL
1988 CHARLES E. PETERSON PRIZE, HONORABLE MENTION



INTERIOR DOOR SCHEDULE

DOOR NO.	SIZE	PANEL TYPE NO.	MOULDING TYPE NO. ROOM	STYLE	ROOM	STYLE
1	2'-10 1/2"W x 7'-1" H	1	208	1	208	2
2	SEE SHEET NO.					
3	2'-10 1/2"W x 7'-1" H	1	208	1	205	2
4	2'-10 1/2"W x 7'-1" H	1	205	2	202	MODERN
5	-	MODERN HOLLOW CORE	-	-	-	-
6	2'-10 1/2"W x 7'-1" H	1	202	2	205	MODERN
7	SAME AS EXT. DOORS	NO. 13 & 14 SEE	SHEET	NO.	-	-
8	2'-10 1/2"W x 7'-1" H	1	210	1	202	2
9	2'-10 1/2"W x 7'-1" H	1	210	1	208	2
10	2'-11" W x 6'-11" H	2	210	2	208	2
11	2'-10 1/2"W x 7'-1" H	1 WITH OVERLITE	208	2	213	2
12	2'-10 1/2"W x 7'-1" H	1	212	4	208	4
13	2'-10"W x 7'-0" H	3	208	3	209	3
14	2'-10"W x 7'-0" H	3	206	3	207	3
15	-	MODERN PANEL	-	-	-	-
16	SEE SHEET NO.	-	-	-	-	-
17	SEE SHEET NO.	-	-	-	-	-
18	SEE SHEET NO.	-	-	-	-	-
19	SAME AS EXT DOORS	NO. 13 & 14 SEE	SHEET	NO.	-	-
20	SIMILAR TO NO.	17 & 18 SEE	SHEET	NO.	-	-
21	-	MODERN PANEL SEE	SHEET	NO.	-	-
22	SIMILAR TO NO.	17 & 18 SEE	SHEET	NO.	-	-



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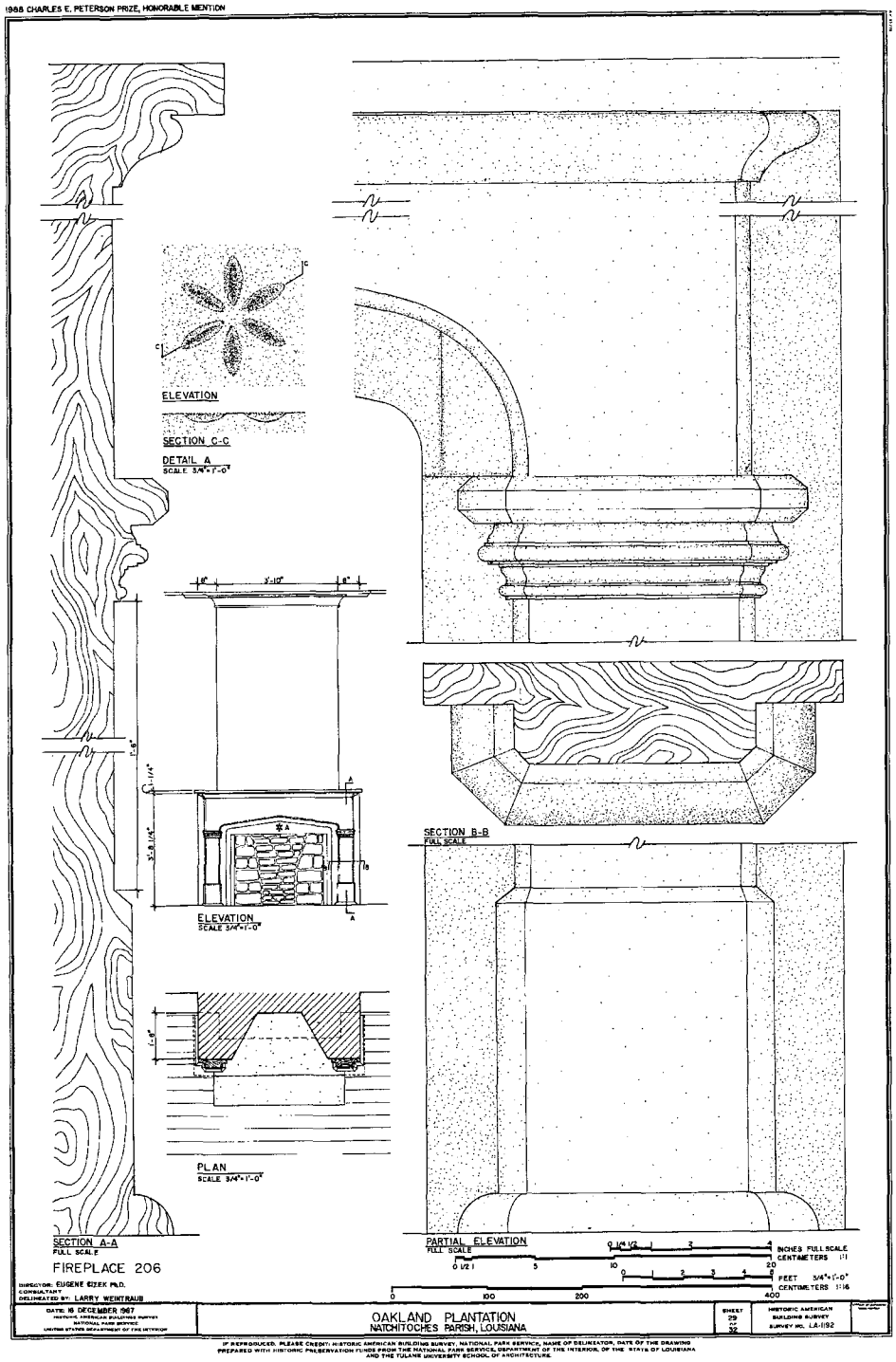
PREPARED WITH HISTORIC PRESERVATION FUNDS FROM THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, OF THE - STATE OF LOUISIANA
AND THE TULANE UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE


1988 CHARLES E. PETERSON PRIZE, HONORABLE MENTION
ELEVATION
SECTION C-C
DETAIL A
SCALE 3/4"=1'-0"
ELEVATION
SCALE 3/4"=1'-0"
PLAN
SCALE 3/4"=1'-0"
SECTION A-A
FULL SCALE
FIREPLACE 206
SECTION B-B
FULL SCALE
PARTIAL ELEVATION
FULL SCALE
INCHES FULL SCALE
CENTIMETERS
FEET 3/4"=1'-0"
CENTIMETERS 1:16
DIRECTOR: EUGENE ESTEK PH.D.
CONSULTANT
DELINEATED BY: LARRY WEINTRAUB
DATE: 15 DECEMBER 1967
OAKLAND PLANTATION
NATCHITOCHES PARISH, LOUISIANA
SHEET 29 OF 32
HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY
SURVEY NO. LA-1192
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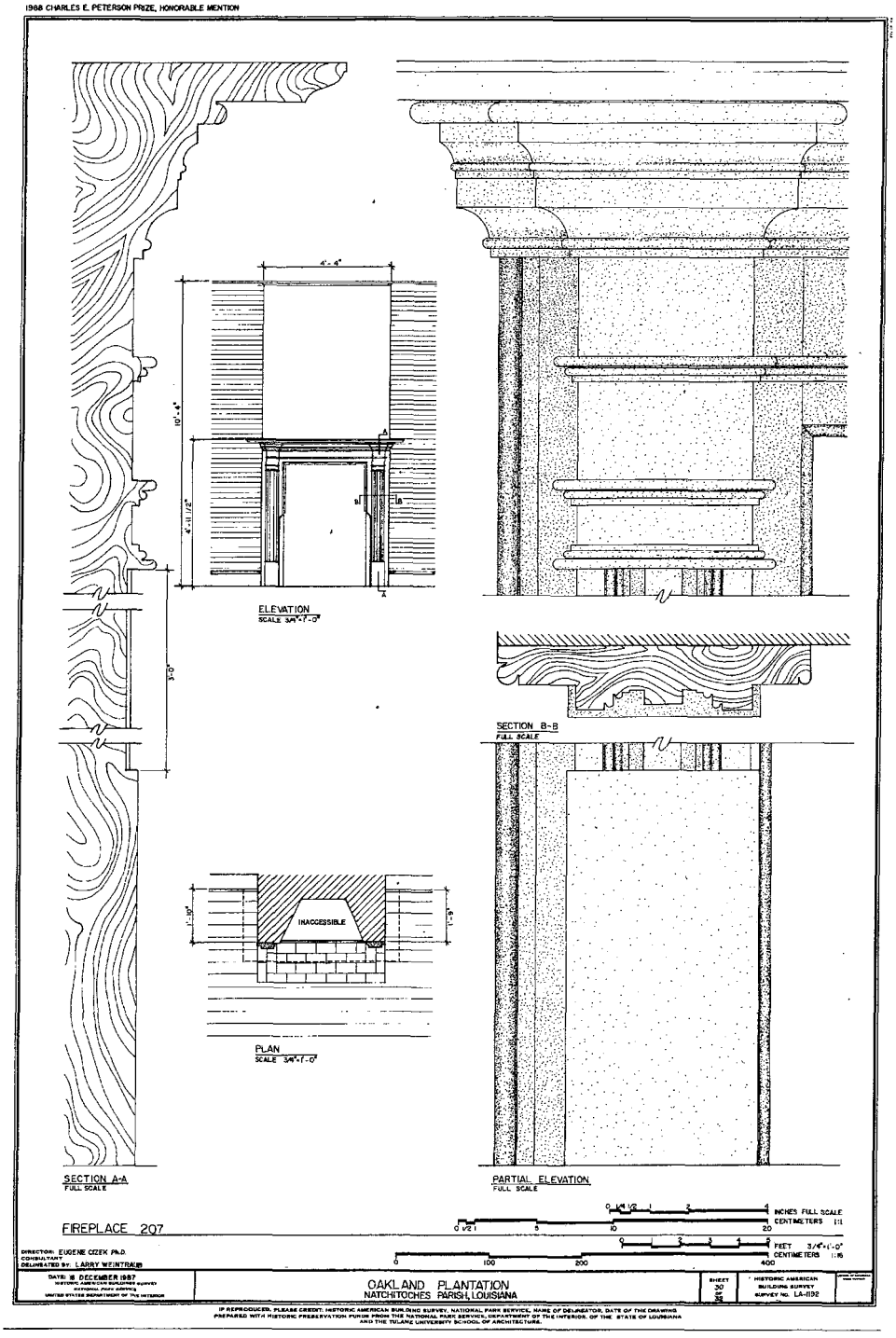
AND THE TULANE UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE


1988 CHARLES E. PETERSON PRIZE, HONORABLE MENTION
4'-4"
10'-4"
4'-11 1/2"
ELEVATION
SCALE 3/4"=1'-0"
5'-0"
INACCESSIBLE
1'-10"
1'-8"
PLAN
SCALE 3/4"=1'-0"
SECTION A-A
FULL SCALE
SECTION B-B
FULL SCALE
PARTIAL ELEVATION
FULL SCALE
FIREPLACE 207
INCHES FULL SCALE
CENTIMETERS 1:1
FEET 3/4"=1'-0"
CENTIMETERS 1:16
DIRECTOR: EUGENE CIZEK PH.D.
CONSULTANT
DELINEATED BY: LARRY WEINTRAUB
DATE: 8 DECEMBER 1987
OAKLAND PLANTATION
NATCHITOCHES PARISH, LOUISIANA
SHEET 20 OF 20 SHEETS
HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY
SURVEY NO. LA-1192
IF REPRODUCED, PLEASE CREDIT: HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, NAME OF DELINEATOR, DATE OF THE DRAWING
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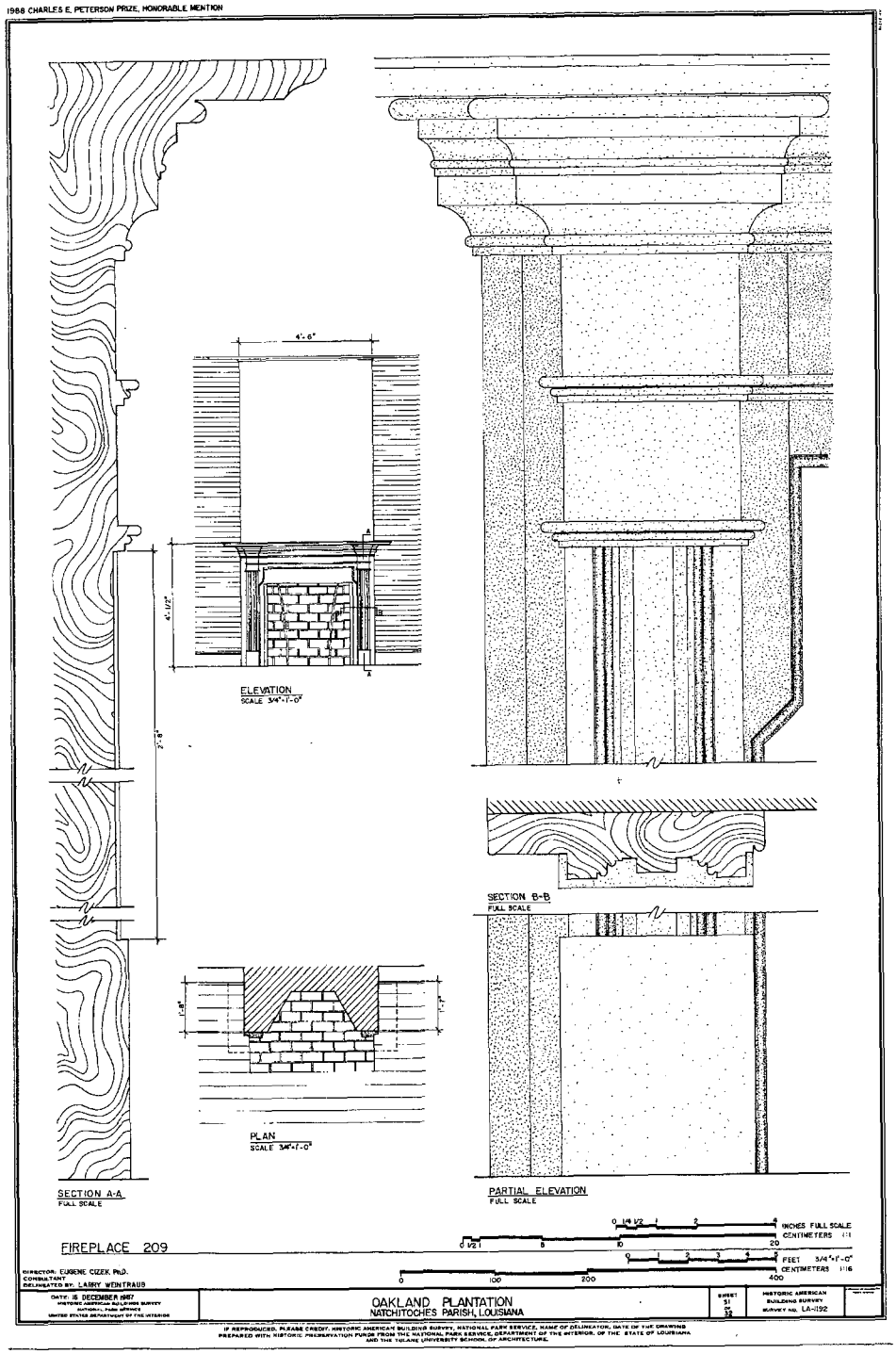
AND THE TULANE UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE.


1988 CHARLES E. PETERSON PRIZE, HONORABLE MENTION
4'-6"
4'-11/2"
ELEVATION
SCALE 3/4"=1'-0"
2'-8"
SECTION A-A
FULL SCALE
1'-8"
PLAN
SCALE 3/4"=1'-0"
SECTION B-B
FULL SCALE
PARTIAL ELEVATION
FULL SCALE
FIREPLACE 209
INCHES FULL SCALE
CENTIMETERS
FEET 3/4"=1'-0"
CENTIMETERS
DIRECTOR, EUGENE CIZEK PhD.
CONSULTANT
DELINEATED BY: LARRY WEINTRAUB
DATE: 15 DECEMBER 1987
OAKLAND PLANTATION
NATCHITOCHES PARISH, LOUISIANA
HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY
SURVEY NO. LA-1192
IF REPRODUCED, PLEASE CREDIT: HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, NAME OF DELINEATOR, DATE OF THE DRAWING
PREPARED WITH HISTORIC PRESERVATION FUNDS FROM THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, OF THE STATE OF LOUISIANA
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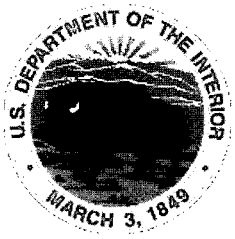
APPENDIX B

Materials Analysis



As the nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering sound use of our land and water resources; protecting our fish, wildlife, and biological diversity; preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical places; and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to ensure that their development is in the best interests of all our people by encouraging stewardship and citizen participation in their care. The department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in island territories under U.S. administration.

NPS D-433 January 1997