

SO YOU THINK YOU
KNOW THE
PELICAN STATE?

A Story of
Louisiana
Told in
100 Buildings



CRUDEN BAY BOOKS

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A STORY OF LOUISIANA TOLD IN 100 BUILDINGS**

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INTRODUCTION

If those walls could talk...this is what they would say. A story about Louisiana.

Pre-historic mounds... military maneuvers... pralines... iron horses... sugar... oil derricks... football... French souvenirs... Huey Long... the CCC... Art Deco stunners... kit houses... the golden age of motor-ing... canals... the Chitlin Circuit... The Banana Man... aviation... pi-rates... slave quarters... Creole culture... Carnegie libraries... grave houses... Bonnie and Clyde... horse racing. This book will have you telling stories like a native in no time.

The photos and stories collected here are a fast and fun way to learn the explanations behind the quirks, the traditions and the secrets that make Louisiana uniquely Louisiana. What Louisiana building was constructed as a residence for Napoleon Bonaparte? Solved. What Louisiana architect had an ultra popular design style named for him? A mystery no more. What Louisiana lighthouse was selected for a United States Postal Service commemorative stamp? Identified. Where can you find original examples of United States "parkitecture?" Revealed.

Imagine a group of settlers arriving in an undeveloped location. First come shelters in which to live and then structures in which to work and shop. There are buildings for worship and education. As the community grows government buildings are required. With prosperity comes places in which to spend leisure time. And each step along the way builds a story only Louisiana can call its own. A story told in 100 build-ings. Almost all of the selections within are open to the public, or at least visible from public spaces. So, if you haven't seen these land-marks in person, fire up your GPS and get out and see the story of the Pelican State standing in plain sight on Louisiana streets!

LSU Campus Mounds

Baton Rouge

prehistoric



Artificial mounds are the souvenirs left behind by ancient cultures in the continental core of the United States. Some 800 have been identified in Louisiana but a pair of man-made conical earthworks on the heart of the Louisiana State University campus have been dubbed the oldest architectural relics in the Americas. Core samples have dated one of the mounds to 11,000 years ago. Unlike other pre-historic mounds there is no evidence of habitation or burials here but it is surmised the structures were meeting places as they stand near where the Mississippi River flowed eons ago. These revelations about ancient origins are of recent vintage and differ substantially from campus lore that the 20-foot mounds were simply the result of digging out a swimming pool for flamboyant Louisiana governor Huey P. Long back in the 1930s. For many years most LSU students associated the mounds not with long-lost civilizations but tailgate parties during Tiger football weekends.

Poverty Point

Epps prehistoric



More is not known than is known about Poverty Point, Louisiana's only UNESCO World Heritage Site along the western side of the Mississippi River. What can be seen is a 72-foot high mound sporting concentric ridges that dates back some 4,000 years and dwarfs any other earthworks from that era. Construction by the indigenous peoples of the Southeastern Woodlands was accomplished without the aid of wheeled conveyances and involved lugging soil in baskets to the site. It is not known how long the mound-building was carried out - some speculate that it could have taken only a

few generations with a large and energetic work force involving men, women and children; others peg the time frame at hundreds of years. Postholes have been unearthed so there may have been buildings at the site but no one can say for certain. Since the purpose of the earthworks is also unknown there is no consensus on the functionality of any buildings. Why the site was abandoned 3,000 years ago is another mystery. The Poverty Point culture was one of hunting and gathering and it may have just been time to move on. A more recent mound - much smaller - was constructed in the area 1,300 years ago. The first American observations of the handiwork of prehistoric engineers were made in the 1820s but organized archaeological excavations were not undertaken until well over a century later. The work continues today, hoping to unlock the secrets of this ancient world conundrum.

Ursuline Convent

New Orleans

1751



Apparently governor of French Louisiana was a pretty comfy gig. Of the 13 men who held the title for the 70 years of French rule in the 18th century six lived into their 80s, quite a record of longevity for the times. French naval officer Perier the Elder was one governor who made it into his ninth decade of life. In his first year of office in 1727 Perier requested a contingent of nuns from France to set up a convent to care for and educate young girls. A timber building was raised as the first convent on plans drawn by François Broutin who held the title of Captain of Engineers of the King in the Province in colonial Louisiana. Broutin followed up with a brick replacement covered in stucco after salvaging (perhaps) a cast iron handrail and serpentine cypress staircase from the original. This second building is a rare physical souvenir from the first period of French rule in Louisiana and widely regarded as the best representation of French colonial public architecture extant in America.

Lafitte's Blacksmith Shop

New Orleans

1770s?



This may - or may not - be the oldest building in the Mississippi Valley. It also may - or may not - have been a front for selling goods plundered on the high seas by Jean Lafitte and his older brother Pierre in the early 1800s. Pierre was at least a blacksmith by trade. Jean was a privateer operating out of the island of Barataria dealing in smuggled goods until that pursuit proved too dull and the brothers took to piracy on the high seas. His exploits caught the attention of the popular press where he was described as having "captured one hundred vessels of all nations, and certainly murdered the crews of all that he took, for no one has ever escaped him." The Lafittes eventually served with distinction in the American victory in the Battle of New Orleans before moving their operations to Galveston, Texas. Whatever its notoriety, the building has survived in its original condition, reflecting the architectural influence of French colonials who escaped St. Domingue in the late 1700s. - legitimate enough to have been named a National Historic Landmark.

Evergreen Plantation

Wallace

1777



Evergreen Plantation, still a working sugar cane operation, is considered the country's most intact plantation complex. Christophe Heidel established the plantation and constructed a Creole-style main house that was replaced in 1790 after a hurricane. Subsequent owners in the 1830s gave the structure a Greek Revival makeover with its signature double winding staircase. Its slave village with 22 cabins is the only place such a collection still exists. The cabins are spaced at 50-foot intervals in a double row, a configuration born in Haiti and adopted in Louisiana. Typically a family of four or five would occupy each two-room building. Under Spanish and French rules slaves could cultivate small gardens and accumulate money to buy themselves out of slavery - that possibility ended with the sale of Louisiana to America in 1803. After the Civil War many of the French-speaking former slaves stayed on in the cabins to work for meager wages and everyday life changed little. There was still no running water or electricity in the dependencies when preservation began in the 1940s. The National Historic Landmark took a star turn in Quentin Tarantino's *Django Unchained* in 2011.

Oakland and Magnolia Plantations

Derry

1780s



The Creole culture is unique to Louisiana and in colonial times referred to anything born of the New World that originated in the Old World. It could apply to food, architecture, and even people. In the French and Spanish eras anyone born in Louisiana was identified as Creole, whether their parents hailed from Europe, Africa, the West Indies or in American Indian tribes. The Cane River Creole National Historical Park interprets Creole life in two plantations, Oakland and Magnolia, where families kept the land intact through seven and eight generations, respectively. Dozens of buildings and thousands of artifacts preserve the tale of plantation life for both the owners and the slaves, later sharecroppers.

Madame John's Legacy

New Orleans

1788



This structure was once thought to be a contender for the oldest building on the Mississippi River but more careful research revealed that only a few parts of the 1726 original survived a fire in 1788 and were used in its reconstruction. Its first owner was a ship captain who died in the 1729 Natchez Massacre; upon his death, the house passed to the captain of a Lafitte-era smuggling ship. It has had no fewer than 21 owners since. The present structure is a fine example of a French "raised cottage." The above-ground basement is of brick-between-posts construction (locally made bricks were too soft to be the primary building material), covered with boards laid horizontally. The hipped, dormered roof extends out over the veranda. Its name comes from George Washington Cable's fictional character that was bequeathed the house in the short story "Tite Poulette." In Cable's telling the legacy was far from a prize. Now a part of the Louisiana State Museum complex, it's open for tours.

St. Louis Cemetery No. 1

New Orleans

1789



When an epidemic struck New Orleans on the heels of two fires in 1788 concerned Spanish authorities shut down the existing St. Peter Cemetery and ordered a new one constructed outside the city walls and away from the population. St. Louis Cemetery No. 1 was supposed to provide a temporary solution but today it is the oldest extant cemetery in Louisiana. In 1803 an ordinance decreed that burials should be in above-ground tombs, a nod to European tradition and the city's troublesome high water table. The burial grounds grew with the region's expanding population under American control and additions were installed for Protestants and African-Americans. Thousands are buried in the vaults including influential early Louisiana cheerleader Bernard de Marigny; Benjamin Latrobe, architect of the United States Capitol; Dutch Morial, the first Black mayor of New Orleans; and, one day, Academy Award-winning actor Nicolas Cage who has bought a tomb here.

Old French Market

New Orleans

1791



The Spanish established a covered market here, steps from the Mississippi River, in 1791. The legacy of commerce on the site goes back even further, to its days as a Native American trading post. There have been renovations and rebuilds through the decades for what is America's oldest public market. Today's open air European-style market covers five blocks. Before being leveled by a hurricane in 1915 the Bazaar Market was a prominent landmark on the resume of Joseph Abeillard, a pioneering Black architect and builder. Plenty of New Orleans culinary history has originated at the French Market. Beignets, fried fritters bathed in powder sugar and brought to Louisiana by the Acadians, were popularized here at the Cafe du Monde - still a tenant today - in 1862. Legend has it that Bennie and Clovis Martin introduced po-boy sandwiches at the market in 1929 as sustenance for striking Electric Street Railway workers. The Martins, former streetcar workers themselves, offered the crisp French bread meals-to-go to the "poor boys" on the picket line for free.

Napoleon House

New Orleans

1797



You won't find a better example of French-influenced architecture in the country than this building - and for good reason. The story goes that Francophile Nicolas Girod, mayor of New Orleans at the time, offered to build Napoleon Bonaparte a residence next to his own when the French Emperor was sent into exile in 1814. Girod hired J.-H. Lacotte to design the three-story refuge while he got busy with a plot to extricate Napoleon from his banishment on the Atlantic island of Saint Helena. When it was finally go-time for the clandestine operation in 1821 word came that Napoleon, still only 51, had died. All true or not, Girod lived out the remainder of his life until 1840 in the house, without his hero and tending to his many business interests. The building has been a bar and restaurant for over a century.

The Cabildo

New Orleans

1799



The town council first met in its new hall, which it called the Casa Capitular (Capitol House), in 1799 and continued to meet there until Louisiana became an American territory. In the room called the Sala Capitular (Capitol Room) the Louisi-

ana Purchase transfers took place in 1803. American negotiators went to France looking to buy the port of New Orleans and West Florida with a budget of \$10 million. When the French countered with all their land in the central North America for \$15 million the startled Americans couldn't sign fast enough. The size of the country doubled overnight with the 828,000 square miles acquired for 4 cents an acre. A decade later the state of Louisiana was carved out of some 52,000 of those square miles. The Cabildo remained the principal meeting room for the now American city council until the 1850s. The Baroness Micaëla Almonester de Pontalba, the daughter of Almonester y Roxas and herself an infamous figure in Louisiana history, proposed renovations to the Cabildo in the 1840s to match new construction on neighboring land she had inherited from her father. At this time, an entire third story was added to the building, and massive cast-iron gates were erected at the main entrance. In the 1850s the Louisiana Supreme Court took up residence here and for more than a century it has done duty as a state museum.

Venus House

Opelousas

1800



Necessity, so says the old proverb, may be the catalyst for invention but some solutions in hard times just require a revisiting of the ancient ways. Such is the case with bousillage, a vernacular insulating technique that involves a mixture of clay and organic material such as Spanish moss or animal hair. In addition to filling gaps in wooden boards the layers of adobe can be used to form exterior walls. There was nothing pretty about the common use of bousillage in early French Louisiana architecture. The thick earthen walls were there to suck up humid moisture and cool the interior spaces of Creole houses. Little is known for certain about Marie Francois Venus, the earliest known occupant of this house. She may have been a freed Indian slave or may have descended from Europeans. Her house, however, is a rare survivor to testify to the methods of the Creole and Cajun builders in 18th century Louisiana. The house was moved to its current home in Le Vieux Village Historical Park in the 1970s.

The Presbytere

New Orleans

1813



The Presbytere, originally called the Casa Curial (Ecclesiastical House), derives its name from the fact that it was built on the site of the residence, or presbytere, of the Capuchin monks. It was designed in 1791 to match the Cabildo, or Town Hall, on the other side of St. Louis Cathedral. As with the Cabildo and the Cathedral, construction was financed by philanthropist Don Andres Almonester y Roxas. Spanish-born Almonester came to Louisiana in 1769 at the age of 45 as a notary public. Unlike modern notaries, the position under Spanish rule afforded plenty of perks, particularly the accumulation of vast swaths of real estate. The second floor, however, was not completed until 1813, when the Wardens of the Cathedral assumed responsibility for the final phase. The building initially was used for commercial purposes until 1834 when it became a courthouse. In 1847 the structure's mansard roof was added. The Presbytere was then used by the city as a courthouse until 1911 when it became part of the Louisiana State Museum.

Oakley Plantation

St. Francisville

1815



John James Audubon got off the boat in Louisiana in 1821 burdened by debt and without means, which took some doing since his father had been one of the wealthiest men in Saint-Lominique (today, Haiti) where he ran a sugar plantation and traded slaves. Audubon was 35 years old. His American odyssey began at the age of 18 when

he forged a passport to dodge the draft into Napoleon Bonaparte's army. He had no training in the natural sciences but he could draw a little and had always loved birds. When he received an offer to teach young Eliza Pirrie drawing at the family plantation in St. Francisville Audubon jumped at it. While staying at Oakley Audubon fleshed out his idea for improving on the existing avian catalogs then in circulation. He worked on 32 paintings, all life-size, depicting the birds in a natural setting. Audubon and his family would spend the remainder of the decade in Louisiana as he tried to interest the scientific world with his work. He found no takers in America but by 1826 he was able to sail from New Orleans to England with some 250 bird paintings where he found enough subscribers to continue his opus. There would be another half-dozen fund-seeking trips to England before the magisterial *Birds of America* was finished - 435 colored engravings printed on handmade paper 39.5 inches tall by 28.5 inches wide. Subscribers paid \$1,000 (about \$32,000 today) for a complete set distributed in 87 installments of which there were about 120 printed. Audubon's breathtaking achievement was feted by his election to several elite national scientific societies. The nation's foremost wildlife preservation society would eventually take his name, overlooking the inconvenient reality that the *Birds of America* required him to kill thousands of winged creatures to complete.

Olivier House

St. Martinville

1815



In the Antebellum South Massachusetts poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow was often regarded with scorn as a symbol of New England snobbery and hypocrisy. His epic poem *Evangeline, A Tale of Acadie*, published in 1847, however, resonated in Louisiana as a spotlight on the

injustices perpetrated on the Acadian peoples who had been forced from Canada by the English. Although Longfellow's tale of doomed lovers was wholly fictional Felix Voorhies, a local judge and author, crafted a series of stories "as told by my grandmother" of the real people the Evangeline legend had been based on in Louisiana. Thus Longfellow's name became attached to the raised Creole cottage built by slaves for Pierre Olivier Duclozel de Vezin. Fantasy aside, the property achieved landmark status for its fealty to the dominant form of southern Louisiana architecture. Creole cottages would typically feature one main story, regardless of height, with no hallways; exterior staircases; wide galleries; and organic infill set between wooden posts in the wall. In Louisiana, live oaks over 100 years old can be registered with the Live Oak Society; the Olivier property boasts 11 such specimens. While *Evangeline* is pure fiction the Evangeline Oak has become the repository for all things attached to her legend. When the Louisiana legislature created the States Park Commission in 1934 the Longfellow-Evangeline Historic Site became one of the state's three original state parks.

Fort Pike

Buras

1819



Zebulon Montgomery Pike Fort Pike was only 34 years old when he was killed in an otherwise successful attack in Canada in 1813 during the War of 1812. He had lived a rich enough life to be honored with two mountain peaks (one in Iowa and the more famous in Colorado), an island, and a score of towns and counties. He spent part of his military service as an inspector general in New Orleans and when a brick and masonry fort was built to guard the entrance to Lake Pontchartrain as part of the country's increased perimeter defenses it was named for Pike. Fort Pike saw action as a staging point for troops during the Seminole Wars of the 1830s and the Mexican War in the 1840s but during down times a single ordnance sergeant was charged with looking after the installation. Thus the fort was easily commandeered by the Louisiana militia at the start of the Civil War. It was also quickly abandoned when Federal forces seized New Orleans in 1862. When Fort Pike was officially abandoned in 1890 no cannon ball had ever been fired there. The ruins were acquired by the state of Louisiana in 1934 to become one of the trio of original state parks in the Pelican State and evolve into a popular tourist attraction.

Perseverance Hall No. 4

New Orleans

1820



The United States is scarcely a toddler on the international cultural stage and can claim only one truly original art form - jazz. "Hot music" - as jazz was known in Louisiana streets in the early 1900s - did not originate only in New Orleans but it incubated in the South's largest city where blues and gospel and the "Spanish tinge" melted into one energetic sound. In 1917 the Original Dixieland Pass Band cut the first jazz record but the real introduction of the New Orleans sound to America didn't happen for a few more years with the introduction of radio. Kid Ory's

Creole Orchestra became the first Black jazz band to lay tracks onto a record and New Orleans jazz musicians established beachheads in Chicago and New York clubs. Perseverance Hall began life as the first Masonic temple in Louisiana. The upper floor was where lodge business was conducted, which included dances. Here, in music-infused Treme, early jazz bands performed, both white and Black. The hall dodged the wrecking ball during the urban renewal craze of the 1970s and stands today in Louis Armstrong Park, part of the New Orleans Jazz National Historic Park, created in 1987 as an attempt to celebrate and preserve "a rare and valuable national American treasure."

State Bank Building

New Orleans

1822



Shortly after being acquired by the United States, New Orleans got its first banks. The Bank of Louisiana and a branch of the First Bank of the United States supplied capital to quickly establish the port as a critical player in its new country. When the original charter of the Bank of Louisiana expired in 1818 the legislature established the Louisiana State Bank that included five branches -

the first Pelican State banks outside New Orleans. Each was capitalized with \$100,000 and granted autonomy over their businesses. Job one was a new building for the main bank. A design competition was held and although no record exists of the entries or results Benjamin H. B. Latrobe emerged with the commission. The English-born Latrobe was one of the first professionally trained architects to work in the United States. He arrived in Virginia in 1796 at the age of 32 where he landed a job to build the state penitentiary in Richmond. Two years later he delivered the first Greek revival building in America for the Bank of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. The following decade he was supervising construction of the United States Capitol. Latrobe sold New Orleans on his design for a waterworks in 1811 and sent his son, Henry Sellon, to oversee the project. After Henry died of yellow fever in 1817 Benjamin came south to shepherd the pumping station to completion. He too would succumb to yellow fever, shortly after completing designs for the Louisiana State Bank; you can see the monogram "LSB" on the Creole-style iron balcony railing. The bank remained here for all but the final three years of its charter which expired in 1870.

Fort Jesup

Many

1822



You can imagine that when a country acquires 828,000 square miles with the flourish of a pen there are going to be border disputes. Such was the case with the Louisiana Purchase in 1803 and its western boundary. It would be 16 more years before that dividing line between Spain and Louisiana would be formally estab-

lished as the Sabine River. In between the region was simply known as the "Neutral Ground," its inhabitants answerable to neither nation. With the border dispute settled the United States built Fort Jesup and put future 12th President of the United States Zachary Taylor in charge of cleaning up the Neutral Ground for settlement. The military directed the building of roads, performed surveys and chased the occasional criminal crossing the border. After Texas was admitted to the Union in the last days of 1845 Fort Jesup was abandoned and America's border headaches would move from the Sabine River to the Rio Grande, which Mexico never officially accepted as the border between the two countries. A century later the site of Fort Jesup attracted the attention of preservationists and was purchased by the Louisiana Office of State Parks. The only building still standing was the kitchen of Enlisted Barracks 4, which has been restored.

Barthel Pigeonnier

Baton Rouge

1825



For hundreds of years in France it was illegal to breed, eat, or hunt pigeons unless one was a member of the royalty, clergy, or nobility. The birds were kept in pigeoniers, buildings on stilts that resemble modern beach houses in the surf. Pigeonniers signaled the status of the owner to the surrounding countryside - the fanciest and largest could house thousands of birds. Pigeon droppings from the elevated dormitories were

prized as fertilizer and spread on crops. After the French Revolution of 1789 laws catering to the privileged were abolished in every part of society, extending to the keeping of pigeons. Pigeonniers sprouted everywhere in France - including Louisiana where every Creole plantation had one or more constructed on the grounds. Pigeon was a prized staple of the dinner plates of the time. Squab eventually lost its appeal as an entrée and pigeoniers became less and less common. Few survived in Louisiana and this one was moved from Barthel Plantation in Sunshine to Magnolia Mound Plantation in 1983 where it was restored.

Land Office

Greensburg

1825



Fulwar Skipwith got his first taste of rebellion at the age of 16 when he joined George Washington's Siege of Yorktown that ended military action in the Revolutionary War. He became an American diplomat enmeshed in the French Revolution and helped negotiate the Louisiana Purchase before moving to Spanish West Florida in 1809 to plant cotton. The slice of Gulf

Coast land was disputed between England and Spain and then the United States and Spain for decades. The year after his arrival Skipwith took part in an insurrection against Spain and was installed as Governor of the new Republic of West Florida. Skipwith's reign lasted only 10 weeks before President James Madison was compelled to make a broad interpretation of the Louisiana Purchase and claim the land for the United States. The Republic of West Florida was happy to remain an independent state, thank you very much, but the government was persuaded to fall in line and sign on to becoming an American possession. A few years later Skipwith was the President of the Louisiana State Senate. Despite its short life the Republic of West Florida had a marching song for its army and its own flag - the lone star on a blue background that is one of six nations to have flown a banner over the Pelican State. Today the eight parishes that once comprised West Florida are known as the "Florida Parishes." The simple Greek Revival structure did not adjudicate land disputes in West Florida but it is one of the very few buildings remaining in the Florida Parishes from a time when its occupants could remember the breakaway republic.

Pentagon Barracks

Baton Rouge

1825



The flags of six different nations have flown over this defensive position on the banks of the Mississippi River. France claimed the land in the early 1700s before the British took control of the territory in 1763. The British army built the first fort here, a dirt bastion in 1779 during the American Revolution. The Spanish pushed the British out and they were similarly ousted in 1810 by an uprising of settlers who declared control of the fort in the name of their newly formed Republic of West Florida. The short-lived Republic turned over Baton Rouge after three months to the United States. The present set of two-story brick barracks were erected in 1825 to provide housing for the Baton Rouge Arsenal and Ordnance Depot. During the Civil War the arsenal became part of the Confederate States of America (flag number six) until the Union reclaimed the fort in 1862 during the Battle of New Orleans. The Civil War ended the fort's military life. Louisiana State University used the barracks for classes and remained until 1926. Since then the historic barracks have been used as offices and residential rooms for state legislators.

Fort Jackson

Triumph

1832



The original structure to guard the mouth of the Mississippi River was part of America's Third System of Coastal Forts and named for General Andrew Jackson. The Confederates re-fortified the position in 1861. Fort Jackson and its sister, Fort St. Philip, across the river, were entrusted with the protection of New Orleans during the war. It was considered impossible for wooden ships to oppose any shore defense, regardless of strength, so very little attention was paid to defending the city elsewhere. On the morning of April 18, 1862 Admiral David Farragut brought a Federal fleet of 24 wooden gunboats and 19 mortar schooners within striking distance of the forts, camouflaging the masts of his vessels with willow boughs. All that night and for four successive days the two forts were subjected to a hailstorm of bombs while the Rebels counterattacked fiercely, but with inferior powder which effected little damage. On the fifth day Farragut ran past the forts with 17 war vessels under continuous fire from the forts and harassment from Confederate gunboats. His ship, the USS *Hartford* burst into flames but the fire was brought under control and the Federals continued into New Orleans and took the city bloodlessly. The Crecent City remained in Union hands for the remainder of the war.

Melrose Plantation

Melrose

1833



Marie Thérèse, known along the Cane River as Coincoin, was a slave born into the household of Louis Juchereau de St. Denis, founder of Natchitoches, in 1742. She caught the eye of Pierre Claude Thomas Metoyer, a local merchant, who rented her when she was 26 years old. Over the next 19 years she bore Metoyer ten children before he bought her freedom and gave her 67 acres and a yearly stipend. Coincoin began raising tobacco and purchased slaves for her farm. By the time of her death in 1816 her estate included more than 1,000 acres land and 16 slaves. Coincoin purchased the freedom of her children by Metoyer and their children and her offspring prospered from the foundation she laid; they were considered the wealthiest free Black family in the nation. Her son Louis built Melrose Plantation that was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1974. The property operates as a museum with nine buildings interpreting slavery in the French, Spanish, and American eras.

Jackson Barracks

New Orleans

1834



By the time Andrew Jackson took the oath of office as the 7th President of the United States in 1829 New Orleans had evolved into the most prominent city in the Lower Mississippi Valley. Congress provided \$180,000 for the New Orleans Barracks to keep the vital port open. Construction was still taking place as troops assembled to deploy to the Seminole Wars in Florida. A decade later the facility became critical as a hospital to treat wounded soldiers returning from the Mexican War. After duty for the Union during the Civil War the complex was renamed for Jackson, still a hero in the city from his War of 1812 days. The Jackson Barracks was tabbed as a training center in World War I before the War Department transferred the facility to the Louisiana National Guard. There was one final call to service during World War II to house German and Italian prisoners before winding up on the National Register of Historic Places in recognition of its brick architecture, considered some of the finest military design to survive from the antebellum era. In addition to the Guard exercises on the base the Barracks also offers modern overnight lodging to Department of Defense employees in the historic buildings.

St. Charles Streetcar Line

New Orleans

1835



The Garden District owes its luxuriant vegetation to an 1816 flood caused by the overflowing Mississippi River. Although many plantations between Carrollton and the emerging American sector were destroyed, a rich deposit of alluvial silt created a very desirable feature for future development—higher ground. In the early 1830s Jacques Livaudais sold his sugarcane plantation, which was soon subdivided, later incorporated as the city of Lafayette and subsequently annexed to New Orleans, when it became known as the Garden District. Streetcars have been an integral part of New Orleans since the first half of the 19th century. The longest of New Orleans' streetcar lines, the St. Charles Avenue Streetcar, is considered the oldest continuously operating street railway system in the world. It runs on South Carrollton Avenue towards the Mississippi River, then near the river levee onto Saint Charles Avenue. It continues to the edge of the French Quarter, a distance of about seven and a half miles. Officially the St. Charles Avenue Line is designated as Route 12. Travelers have been commuting between here and the downtown business district since the early 1800s, first on a steam engine, then on mule-drawn carts, and since 1893, by electric streetcar. The line still has one of the 1890s vintage cars in running condition, although it is not used for regular passenger service. The bulk of the line's cars date from the 1920s.

New Orleans Mint

New Orleans

1835



For decades the original United States Mint established in Philadelphia in 1792 had the exclusive responsibility of producing American coins. Andrew Jackson entered the Presidency with a white hot hatred of the Bank of America and paper money. Late in his second term in 1836 Jackson

issued an executive order declaring that federal land could only be purchased with gold or silver - so-called "hard money." To facilitate this change three branch mints were planned and opened in 1838. Facilities in North Carolina and Georgia were established to coin gold from local discoveries. New Orleans was ideally situated to process gold flowing into the country from strikes in Mexico so the Crescent City received the largest of the new mints. New Orleans coins would feature an "O" mint mark. Greek Revival master William Strickland drew up plans for the new production facility, receiving \$300 for his trouble. From a government standpoint even that small sum was an overpayment. Strickland was used to massive buildings constructed on sturdy ground and the New Orleans Mint required decades of costly shoring up to keep from sinking into the muck. Coining continued until 1909 and after decades of inglorious use the landmark building was turned over to the State of Louisiana for use as a museum with the promise of renovation.

Oak Alley Plantation

Vacherie

1837



Avenues of long-lived live oaks, known by the French word *allée*, have come to define the antebellum Mississippi River Valley plantation. The double row of live oaks here sprouted in the early 1700s; when the plantation house was constructed a century later the Greek Revival design mimicked the 28 majestic trees with a colonnade of 28 Doric columns. But in the 1800s it was another

tree that brought Oak Alley notoriety. The pecan is North America's only native nut tree. It takes its name from the Algonquin word "pagan," translating roughly to a nut so tough it could only be cracked with a rock. At Oak Alley in the 1840s an enslaved gardener known as Antoine worked with pecan grafts and eventually bred a tree whose nuts could be broken open by hand. Antoine's grove became celebrated locally but the Civil War left Oak Alley in disarray. The pecans were eventually uprooted for sugar cane fields but some specimens of Antoine's original trees found their way to Philadelphia in 1876 for the Centennial Exposition where they won an agricultural award. The U.S. Department of Agriculture came calling at Oak Alley to investigate this "Centennial Pecan." Antoine was dead by this time and so were all but two of his pecan trees. But that was enough. Thanks to his pioneering work pecans could be grown commercially and the United States now accounts for 80% of the world's pecans. Louisiana is reliably among the nation's top five producers.

St. Patrick's Church

New Orleans

1838



Old St. Patrick's Church is one of the few early landmarks in the Lafayette Square area that parishioners from the 1840s would recognize. The parish was established in 1833, the first after people began leaking out of the boundaries of the original city. Many of the newcomers were fleeing the potato famine in Ireland and a new church was needed for the influx of non-French speaking Catholics. James Dakin was an immigrant to the city as well, an architect relocated from New York City where the Gothic revival style was beginning to flourish. Dakin presented St. Patrick's with one of America's best Gothic Revival churches. Unfortunately he was not yet acquainted with the city's capricious water table and as he struggled during construction Dakin was given his walkign papers. The tower of the National Historic Landmark tops out at 185 feet.

The Arsenal

New Orleans

1839

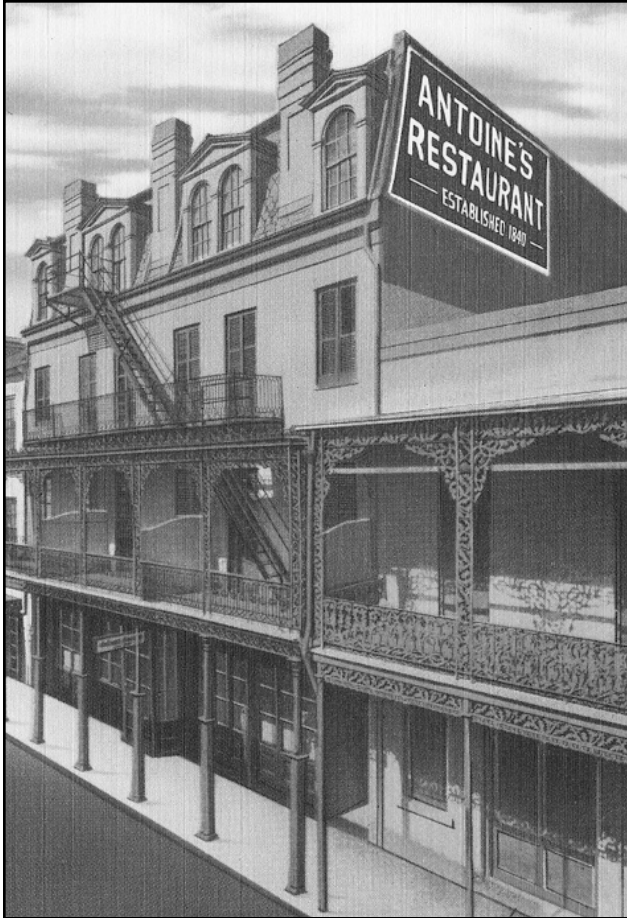


A Spanish Arsenal had been built on this site in the 1760s. The current building, designed by James Dakin, was erected in 1839 and is a virtually unchanged Greek Revival design. Look up at the top of the building - there are cut-outs of cannons and American flags. During Reconstruction, in 1874, a white supremacist militia, the White League, took up arms against the city's police force. The League had cornered the police in the customhouse, the Cabildo, and the arsenal. From the arsenal, police fired cannonballs down Chartres Street towards the League. The White League managed to defeat the Metropolitan Police and seized control of the state government, ousting Reconstruction Governor Kellogg. Three days later, in an action reminiscent of his days in the Civil War, President Ulysses S. Grant sent Federal troops to regain control of the city and restore the Kellogg administration. Since 1914 the building has been part of the Louisiana State Museum.

Antoine's Restaurant

New Orleans

1840



New Orleans is the city in America most associated with food. The oldest restaurant in the city, sneaking up on 185 years, is Antoine's. Antoine Alciatore began his life in Louisiana running a boarding house but his cooking was so popular with the residents that he was persuaded to concentrate on his talents in the kitchen. In 1874 Alciatore returned home to his native France to die but his namesake restaurant has never left family hands. Now in its fifth generation, Antoine's is considered the oldest family restaurant in America. Along the way the kitchen on St. Louis Street has often contributed to the legendary culinary

history of the Crescent City. Alciatore's son Jules whipped up an oyster dish with a sauce so rich it could only be called Oysters Rockefeller. While the green-flecked offering has become a staple of fine dining around the globe the original Antoine's recipe remains a family secret.

Lawyers Row

Clinton

1840s



By the 1830s it was beginning to look like America's bold experiment in democracy was going to work and more and more the country associated with the ancient Greeks who were the originals in that popular form of government. Many builders began to emulate the Greek temples of lore with triangular roofs over boxy buildings fronted by porches supported by classical columns. It was a versatile style of architecture that could go big with a courthouse or small with a farm house. Most were painted white, although that is often an historical misreading from colors that have long since faded. In 1824 Feliciana Parish was severed and the town of Clinton, named for New York governor and leading cheerleader for the Erie Canal, DeWitt Clinton, became parish seat of the new eastern section. A handsome brick courthouse enveloped in a Doric colonnade was erected on Woodville Street in 1840. Across the street sprouted four small buildings to house law offices. All mimicked the courthouse in Greek Revival styling. In 1860 a fifth office was added and even though the Italianate style was coming into vogue it too was given the pediment-and-column treatment. The lawyers who toiled in these offices were held in such high esteem that it was common practice for state law conferences to be held on Lawyers Row.

International Boundary Marker

De Soto Parish

1841



One of the first orders of business for the new Republic of Texas after gaining its independence from Mexico in 1835 was to stake out a permanent, agreed-upon boundary with the United States. Representatives of both countries convened at the mouth of the Sabine River with their astronomical instruments to begin the task of establishing a line of demarcation. Standing in the way of the survey team were swampy marshes, dense forests, yellow fever and more than a few poisonous snakes. Texas was also finding it hard to scrounge up the money for the project. They would not reach the Red River and complete the border until June 24, 1841. The work was so arduous and done so

skillfully that laying out the boundary was recognized as a National Historic Civil Engineering Landmark - few disputes have ever arisen between Louisiana and Texas over that border, either before or after Texas joining the Union. Most of the physical markers have been swallowed by the river or disappeared so that this granite marker - bearing the engraving R.T. for the Republic of Texas and U.S. - at the 32nd parallel is believed to be the only international boundary marker still standing within the contiguous United States.

Madewood Plantation

Napoleonville

1846



Henry Howard sailed from his native Cork, Ireland at the age of 18 in 1836, arriving in New York City. The following year he followed his brother to New Orleans and worked as a carpenter for five years, specializing in staircases. He dabbled in studying architecture and received his first commission, a house for planter Thomas Pugh, in 1844. Howard announced his arrival as an architect with a bang - the exquisitely proportioned Madewood Plantation House, fronted by a parade of fluted Ionic columns, is regarded as one of the South's best Greek revival structures. Howard's practice grew steadily with other plantation work and New Orleans commissions. He segued easily from the Greek Revival style to the Italianate, often blending the two. During the Civil War Howard decamped for Georgia to work with the Confederate Naval Iron Works. He returned to New Orleans and spent another two decades designing residences and commercial buildings. When his four-decade career ended with his death in 1884 Henry Howard's resume included more than 250 buildings in Louisiana, many of which still stand.

Pontalba Buildings

New Orleans

1850



The life of Micaela Leonarda Antonia de Almonester Roxas y de la Ronde inspired novels and even an opera. Born in 1795, she was the sole inheritor of much of the land around Place d'Armes (today's Jackson Square) when her father, who had ingratiated himself with Spanish authorities to acquire the property, died when she was not yet three. At the age of

15 she was maneuvered into a loveless marriage with a cousin, Célestin de Pontalba. The newlyweds soon decamped for Paris where any growing affection in the union was sabotaged by a father-in-law scheming to get Micaela's fortune. The elder Baron de Pontalba would eventually pour four bullets into his daughter-in-law at point blank range before ending his life with the same dueling pistols. She would survive. Escaping a revolution in France in 1848, the Baroness Pontalba found her property run-down and, more importantly, unprofitable. She razed the rows of dilapidated structures and plowed \$300,000 into high-end apartments and commercial space which she designed in a traditional Creole-European style, with commercial space on the street level, housing above, and a courtyard in the rear. The wealthiest woman in New Orleans could be seen nearly every day on horseback directing the construction. She fired the esteemed architect James Gallier and replaced him with Henry Howard who designed the cast iron verandahs with Micaela's initials prominently entwined, kickstarting a tradition in the French Quarter. She also commissioned the equestrian statue of Andrew Jackson in the center of the square, one of three sculpted by Clark Mills. Her work done, the Baroness returned to Paris, never to return to Louisiana.

Old State Capitol

Baton Rouge

1852



This was the building that greeted the Louisiana government when it arrived from New Orleans in the 1840s. Architect James Harrison Dakin won a competition to design the Capitol with an eye-catching Gothic Revival scheme that was a daring departure from the classically-flavored buildings of the time. Dakin was a New Yorker who came to New Orleans in 1835 where he designed several landmark buildings before moving to Baton Rouge to supervise construction of his masterpiece. The medieval castle on a hill above the Mississippi River was treated harshly during the Civil War and it was completely refurbished in 1882, losing its turrets in the process. It served as state capitol for another half-century before turning governing duties over to the current tower. After hosting occasional official business afterwards the Louisiana Castle was re-born as a museum in the 1990s.

Fair Grounds Race Course

New Orleans

1852



Horse racing was the most popular spectator sport in America in the 1800s and the game came early to Louisiana. Private tracks could be found on plantations in the 1820s and the Eclipse Track opened in 1837 in what is today's Audubon Park in New Orleans. The following year the Metairie Race Course opened with a spacious grandstand and separate viewing room for the ladies. The showcase for racing in the South attracted the nation's fastest horses. The Metairie Jockey Club was famously snobbish and one candidate who didn't measure up was Philadelphia-born Charles Turner Howard whose fortune came from owning the unsavory Louisiana Lottery Company. The story goes that Howard vowed to one day buy the racetrack and turn it into a cemetery. His chance came after the Civil War shut down Louisiana racing. Howard bought the Union Race Course that had opened in 1852 and renamed it the Fairgrounds. The Metairie Jockey Club was slow getting out of the gate from the war and declared bankruptcy in 1872. Howard bought the deed and soon after burials indeed began in the now Metairie Cemetery. Today New Orleans Fairgrounds is the nation's third oldest race course and opening day on Thanksgiving Day is a hallowed tradition. The Louisiana Derby, contested since 1894, caps the racing season in late March.