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**A BRIEF ETHNOGRAPHY OF MAGNOLIA
PLANTATION: PLANNING FOR CANE RIVER
CREOLE NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK**

Studies in Archeology and Ethnography #4
<http://www.cr.nps.gov/aad/pubs/studies/study04a.htm>

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SUMMARY

Interest in the people with traditional associations to Magnolia plantation, one of the two plantations incorporated into Cane River Creole National Historical Park (CARI), and in the development of the new park's General Management Plan prompted this brief ethnographic study. We hoped to bring diverse voices to planning dialogues about resources, interpretation, and alternatives by walking the grounds that associated people consider culturally meaningful and by interviewing ethnically different peoples individually or in groups. Our interest focused particularly on the associated peoples who perceive park resources as essential to their development and continued identity as culturally distinct people. The same community members rarely participate in public planning hearings, but the research process would help inform them about the park taking shape in their midst. Additionally, the project would demonstrate the value of professional cultural anthropological or ethnographic work to "ground-truthing" community concerns by the researchers' direct interaction with people and places. We interviewed people who were born or lived and worked at and near Magnolia. We identified the ethnographic resources, or places and landscapes they considered culturally meaningful, and the ways they perceived their past and wished it conveyed to the visiting public. To help contextualize people's responses, we also lightly sketched the political, economic, social and geographic aspects of plantation life in the mid-20th century.

For more than a month, Dr. Muriel (Miki) Crespi, National Park Service Chief of Ethnography interviewed people linked to Magnolia. For another month, Northwestern State University anthropologist Mrs. Dayna Bowker Lee and historian Ms. Susan Dollar interviewed people primarily from neighboring communities in the Heritage Area. Crespi also analyzed the data and prepared this report. The brief research period necessarily limited our work to people and planning issues directly associated with the park. Sharecropper life in the area beyond park boundaries, although important, received less attention. Generally, this study offers a stop-gap solution to the ethnographic data shortage on the full array of people whose combined labor, land, and goals built and maintained the plantation. Nevertheless, it provided valuable lessons about the benefits of conducting early ethnographic research with people whose intimate relationships to park resources and unique insights into local life make them candidates for the planners' special consideration.

We found an immensely complex situation, reflected in a landscape faceted by the diverse uses of diverse people. Until the rural exodus of the mid-20th century reconfigured local farms and settlements, Magnolia had formed part of an extended landscape peppered with places local residents considered important in their work, worship, recreation, and marketing. Probably the most frequented area reached from Cloutierville to Derry and urban Natchitoches. Many places fronted Cane River or left their mark on the neighboring plantations and settlements in the Cane River Heritage Area. Some were in the forested Kisatchie hills. For the plantation owners, the Hertzogs, the culturally meaningful landscape extended to more distant places, including New Orleans. Until the 1950s and 60s, when agricultural mechanization drove rural residents away, people's class and ethnicity affected their distribution, activities, and the places that welcomed them across this landscape.

Magnolia's own resources form a named landscape, best known by its owners' name, "the Hertzogs'." The section now under National Park Service management includes the farm operational center with the quarters, first built to house enslaved workers and later serving the tenant laborers; the former slave hospital and later overseer's house; the store; cotton gin and other farm structures. Beyond park boundaries is the standing Big House and cultivated fields. They, along with the former church and sharecropper area along Highway 119, mirror the earlier

plantation community. Many of these still-meaningful places have become mostly “shadows” or ephemeral memory places and nearly invisible reminders of formerly standing structures. Still, in the conceptual landscapes of traditional residents, the barely visible remains mark the places and call to mind the people, events and structures that gave meaning and shape to local life and geography.

Local people tended to classify themselves and others as members of one of three principal ethnic categories. Combining views about ancestral birthplace with views about ethnicity and race led people to categorize themselves and others as: (1) Creoles of color or Creole who descended from the cultural and biological meeting of African, French, Spanish and perhaps American Indian peoples; (2) whites, including French Creole (different from Yankees, Anglos or Americans); or (3) blacks, a term people preferred for themselves over African American. Differences were attributed partly to ethnic heritage, including religion. For example, black people, along with Yankees, Americans and Anglo whites were mostly Protestant, but whites of French ancestry and the Creoles of color tended to be Catholic. Ethnicity and class tended to overlap so that “black” usually equated with agricultural laborers who, in the 19th and 20th centuries, occupied the quarters. Some might become sharecroppers but, generally, they struggled against enormous economic and political odds. Changes since desegregation have tempered past inequities so that many black people became successful businessmen and professionals. Still, change has not fully erased inequities and the accompanying pain. Creoles of color enjoyed slightly higher status as sharecroppers in Magnolia and successful landowners and businessmen elsewhere in the area. The social hierarchy peaked at the white Hertzog family. They are the French Creole descendants of French Europeans, the centuries-long stewards of Magnolia Plantation and the occupants of the architecturally important Creole-style Big House, the plantation command and control center.

Until mechanization fully transformed “the Hertzogs” into a modern agribusiness, organizationally, Magnolia reflected historic European manors in its power relationships and dependence on tenant laborers and tenant farmers, such as sharecroppers, whose compensation came partly in residence sites and only partly in cash. These arrangements, in addition to the practice of delayed cash compensation, mitigated management’s problem of scarce funds until harvest. Limited cash troubled everyone, but none felt it more acutely than tenant laborers and sharecroppers. Their survival rested on foods from gardens and barnyard animals, on fishing, hunting, neighborly cooperation, and on credit at the plantation store.

Status in the community reflected people’s ethnic/class identity and relationships to land and coincided with their distribution across the landscape. People of French Creole descent, the Hertzog family of planters who enjoyed the highest status, occupied the Big House. Other whites, geographically and socially distant from the Hertzogs, lived in the overseer’s house. The tenant farmers were mostly Creoles of color whose temporary use of plantation fields increased their earning potential. Landless black people, rural proletarians, lived primarily in the quarters. Although the most economically vulnerable of Magnolia’s residents, stable kinship, friendship, and church ties knit blacks into a support system and community with a sense of their own worth.

Black residents and Creoles of color lived among kin and friends whose activities, interests and special places created the “community” of place. Health care, work, recreation, and social gatherings brought people together, sometimes at ethnically mixed public events such as baseball games and horse races, and sometimes in ethnic-specific or private settings such as house parties and church suppers. Churches of all denominations were social linchpins that held people together through shared beliefs, ties to particular places, and joyful events such as Christmas and June 19th celebrations.

Plantation-supported holidays periodically and symbolically bridged the social divisions. At Christmas, “Juneteenth” or June 19th, and July 4th, Mr. Matt Hertzog, Magnolia’s family manager, gave residents food gifts and brought a popular local band to play at the plantation store, a social, communication and commercial center. Juneteenth celebrated the day black people say they learned of their emancipation, a day holding special but different meanings for blacks and whites. Although marking slavery’s end and new bases for relationships between previously enslaved people and their former owners, lingering noblesse oblige found plantation owners

giving resident workers food gifts and a holiday. Magnolia celebrated this day until farm mechanization and reduced labor needs drove workers from the countryside. June 19th celebrations continue today, now in urban areas, where, revived and modified, they continue to signal change in black/white relationships.

The new park and its resources intrigued most blacks, whites, and Creoles of color. Perspectives on the past reflected their different experiences at Magnolia, but agreements existed too. White people and blacks independently agreed that three principal features characterized the plantation's importance: (1) continuity as a successful agricultural enterprise, (2) organization as a self-supporting family enterprise, and (3) a long-term community and workplace, or rural company town. Former tenant workers still recognize "the Hertzogs" as their birthplace and the quarters as their community and venue of life-shaping experiences. They take pride in their labor as the lifeline of plantation production until the mid-century. Blacks and whites both viewed the Hertzog family line and its commitments to Magnolia as essential in keeping Magnolia's natural resource base intact and productive and in protecting its historic integrity. In addition, the weak name recognition interviewees gave to "Magnolia" but the high recognition given to "the Hertzogs" suggested that local people viewed the plantation as a place and the Hertzogs as a family as inseparable. Indeed, Magnolia has no identity without the Hertzogs, nor an existence without the black community.

Speaking about slavery proved difficult for whites and blacks and less so for Creoles of color from the Heritage Area. This topic, like discussions of who constitutes Creoles of color, seriously challenges park interpretation to fully treat the ramifications of this multi-faceted and controversial theme. Blacks and whites treated slavery as a delicate, nearly tabu subject for public discussion. Some blacks expressed anger at the inhumanity of slavery and some perhaps a victim's shame at being stigmatized by a system that prevailed through no fault of their own. Embarrassment about participating in a system that is vilified by some others or discomfort about defending what some still see simply as a pragmatic labor system may have troubled white interviewees. There was concern about how outsiders, such as visitors who represented other regions and views, would perceive local peoples and cultures if slavery was interpreted. Initial black and white reluctance about public discussion of slavery gave way to agreement that slavery could be considered but not as an exclusive theme. Both favored attention to the recent times they recalled and, for black people, the times since desegregation. Both would find the topic more acceptable if presented as one dimension of their multifaceted past, one phase in a sequence of adaptations to changing morality, and economic, political and social conditions. Blacks thought slavery might be shown in contrast to their present accomplishments as a way to educate youth to the continuing struggles towards equity. From slavery to contemporary times was an acceptable thrust if it offered a morality lesson about the dignity and humanity of African Americans and the capacity for change in all people. Agreement among different peoples about interpreting slavery implied permission for the National Park Service to assume responsibility for bringing a painful, complex topic to the public on behalf of the diverse Magnolia community. In effect, the community is transferring its trust to the agency by making it a partner in conveying the thrust of a contentious past and its lingering repercussions.

Strategies for projecting Magnolia's many voices might include developing mini life histories of selected families of black laborers and sharecroppers and Creoles of color whose identities and histories were as essential to the plantation system as the landowning Hertzogs. Calling up stories of selected workers will offer gateways to the culture of the tenant and farming community, the community-centered roles of the Baptist and Catholic Churches, and the related ethnic and class complexities of plantation society.

Interpretive discussions of "creole" as an architectural, food and music type and "Creole" as peoples and cultures are needed to clarify meanings and dispel stereotyping. The National Park Service concern with inclusiveness also makes it imperative to show how the story of Cane River Creole National Historical Park incorporates the black community, although "Creole," as used in the park name, is not a term they ordinarily used for themselves, or others would use for them. The park is also challenged to discuss Creoles of color, blacks, and French Creoles who share many Louisiana ways but necessarily have dealt with the effects of occupying quite different positions in the local hierarchy. This requires an interpretive approach that does not violate the local spoken and unspoken

implications of “Creole,” yet acknowledges the different Magnolia peoples. A related task is to interpret the park in ways that make present-day members of all traditionally associated groups proud of their special contributions to the development and survival of Magnolia.

It is important to emphasize the distinction between the park’s physical boundaries and the plantation community boundaries; they are not equivalent. Interpreting life in the quarters requires attention to life outside the quarters, especially in the Big House and sharecropper area as well as within the context of Cloutierville, Derry and the more extensive ethnographic landscape. Consistent with the theme of acknowledging resources beyond the park but traditionally associated with Magnolia blacks, we suggest recognizing the site of the St. James African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME) at Magnolia. A plaque that interprets the formerly standing AME Church and its standing partner, St. Andrew, on the opposite Cane River bank would enrich local lore and acknowledge a major black ethnographic resource.

Interviewees proposed interpretive approaches that included ethnically-marked events. Black people suggested celebrating June 19 and encouraging homecomings at that time. Black former residents and some others also objected to labeling the cabins formerly occupied by enslaved peoples as “slave quarters.” They preferred “quarters” because tenant laborers had occupied the cabins from about 1865 until the 1960s. Creoles of color proposed story-telling, French language classes, and quilting demonstrations, and events that coincided with Creole Heritage Day. Agreements with churches such as St. Augustine Catholic Church and St. Andrew Missionary Baptist might formalize relationships with the communities and regularize access to local talent.

People also suggested emphasizing Magnolia’s special features, such as its prize-winning horses and the horse races and baseball games that might briefly bring ethnically different people together. Rehabilitating and restocking the plantation store and replaying events such as Christmas celebrations were proposed. Techniques for interpreting slavery might include displaying historic records about commerce in slaves, but most people opposed costumed interpreters and efforts to mimic slave speech.

Varying familiarity with national parks and tourism in general framed local views about the potential value of the new park. Tourism’s adverse impacts raised concerns for Creoles of color who lived along the travel path of Magnolia-bound tourists and were experienced with the crowds attracted by the now annual Creole fair. They anticipated threats to their well-being from traffic on lightly traveled country roads and intrusive visitors armed with cameras. They suggested building a Visitor Center on Highway 1 to divert traffic away from residential areas, developing shuttle bus service from urban Natchitoches to the park, and off-road parking lots with jitney service between the park and other heritage sites. Whites feared the environmental consequences of new tourism facilities and housing development in rural and urban Natchitoches.

People seeking jobs or other income-generating opportunities found the employment and commercial potential of tourism attractive. Work as park interpreters and sales of local crafts and foods seemed attractive ways to highlight unique local knowledge. Starting a roster of people interested in jobs or in volunteering their services and materials, such as photos, for interpretive programs, could be useful. Former residents of the quarters proposed photographic exhibits on the Magnolia community, using Dr. Hertzog’s photographs and others. Useful additions could be found in B.A. Cohen’s photographs.

Local residents, we suggest, could be usefully engaged in helping the park prepare educational brochures or flyers for visitors addressing, for example, “what Cane River country people invite you to know.” This could be a vehicle for describing folkloric information and local etiquette regarding, for example, appropriate ethnic terms, not photographing local children or others without their permission, and respecting private residences and driveways.

Magnolia presents unique gateways to the complexities of plantation life and the broader cultural and natural environments within which it was embedded. Professional cultural anthropological/ ethnographic studies,

conducted with assistance from people of all ethnicities would help identify and document these complexities. A long-term comprehensive study plan is needed to identify the types and sequence of needed studies. Some studies would address traditional resource uses and the social consequences of the transformation of the plantation from traditional to mechanized agricultural systems. Others would consider ethnographic landscapes with the storied and named places assigned heritage value by different peoples. Studies would also consider the social labels people assign to themselves and others, the significance people invest in ethnic terms, and change in interethnic relations. Studies of the social, political and economic roles of Catholic and various Protestant churches, the consequences of rural migration for family and community, and the role of homecomings in maintaining and expanding communities of blacks and Creoles of color will be important.

Neither Magnolia nor its sister plantation, Oakland, the second plantation in Cane River Creole National Historical Park, developed or changed in isolation, making it essential to understand and interpret them within a regional context that includes people and places beyond the narrowly defined park boundaries. The sharecroppers are essential components of the Magnolia story, as is the Heritage Area. Studies of social, economic and political relationships among plantation owners and players in the local economic and political system and relationships among tenant laborers and farmers across plantation borders will highlight the factors that affect decisions and promote change or stability within families and particular farms. Framing local conditions within national and international factors, including political changes, markets and technological innovations, would be essential.

Finally, collecting ethnographic and economic data on present-day urban and rural Natchitoches society, culture, and resource use is essential for establishing baseline information from which to assess the future impacts of the park and tourism in general and to inform future planning in the heritage area. The local community, the National Park Service and the general public, and the resources, would all be beneficiaries.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

LOCATION OF MAGNOLIA

Magnolia Plantation is in northwest Louisiana in Natchitoches Parish or “county.” It is situated near Derry and, some 18 miles south of the Parish center, a small city also called Natchitoches. Located on the banks of the lower Cane River, the plantation neighbors the town of Cloutierville in southeastern Natchitoches Parish (see Figure 1). The nearly nineteen acre park under National Park Service (NPS) management is in the plantation’s southern end, fronting on Highway 119 and near of 119 and Highway 1. The larger plantation consists of several thousand acres of arable flat lands along with the main plantation house and owners’ residence, the “Big House” with its broad avenue or alley of 150 year-old live oak and magnolia trees. On the other side of the tree-lined alley is the National Park Service area with the pigeonnier (pigeon house), small field, and the farm operational center. This section also contains the overseer’s house, an ample 19th century structure once used as a slave hospital. The quarters are here too. Originally constructed to house enslaved workers, eight of the original two-room red brick structures remain standing. Tenant laborers occupied them from abolition until the late 1960s. Tenant farmers, the sharecroppers, had lived north of the Big House, beyond the NPS holding.

Geographically and historically, Cane River Creole NHP has been nested in the complex cultural landscape known as the Cane River National Heritage Area. The law creating the park had established the heritage area as well. It includes dispersed 18th and 19th century structures linked through their past contributions to Cane River’s political, social, cultural, and economic system. The structures are in mixed ownership, most held privately and some publicly, especially by the state. Establishing the Cane River Creole NHP added Federal holdings to the mix. The lands and structures cut an inverted “V”-shaped swath starting about 50 miles southeast of Shreveport.

The city of Natchitoches is found at the center of the “V,” near the banks of Cane River Lake. The Natchitoches Historic District is there too, with town houses formerly owned by important planters, along with a complement of civic and commercial structures. Some of these properties could be included in the heritage area if their managers and the NPS mutually sought the arrangements known as cooperative agreements. One wing of the “V” runs to the southwest and includes three State Commemorative Areas. One is the early French settlement and precursor of Natchitoches, the reconstructed Fort St. Jean Baptiste. A second is the Spanish mission post and Caddoan Indian settlement, Los Adaes. The third is Fort Jesup, the reconstructed American Frontier post, at the tip of this wing. The other wing runs the course of the Cane River lake and Cane River, to the southeast, with antebellum plantations such as Oakland and Magnolia on its banks, and Cloutierville at its tip. Although the heritage area legislation identifies no specific American Indian resources as such, the potential for identifying and interpreting indigenous groups and places is high.

Figure 1 is a PDF that can be downloaded at <http://www.cr.nps.gov/aad/pubs/studies/pdf/study04fig01.pdf>

WHY THIS STUDY WAS CONDUCTED

In 1994, Congress added Cane River Creole National Historical Park (CARI) to the system of parks managed by the National Park Service (U.S. Congress 1994). The park acknowledges the special architectural and other cultural qualities the Cane River area contributed over the centuries to the nation's heritage. Resources from two antebellum plantations comprise the park. First, the National Park Service acquired the Magnolia resources via donation from Museum Contents, Inc., a local heritage organization. The Hertzog family, which owns Magnolia, had previously donated that section to Museum Contents. Then, the NPS purchased the second section of the park, which includes Oakland, the Prud'homme family home, and adjacent resources. Both plantations are nationally recognized as outstanding in several ways. Each is a Bicentennial Farm. The U.S. Department of Agriculture so-designated them in 1988 because of their continuous cultivation by the same families since at least 1787, the year of the signing of the U.S. Constitution. Each plantation is a National Register site, and in 2001 the National Park Service also recognized each as a National Historic Landmark.

Consistent with the National Park Service planning process, a General Management Plan (GMP) is being prepared by the Denver Service Center (DSC), the agency's major planning facility (NPS 2000). By formulating broad guidance on interpretation and cultural and natural resource management, the GMP will help set the stage for managing and developing park facilities and programs over the next several years. Interest in the people traditionally associated with Magnolia is basic to planning. It is also a basic National Park Service policy to consider the present-day peoples whose ways of life and cultural identity are traditionally linked to park cultural and natural resources. Systematic ethnographic or anthropological investigation is the expected vehicle for gaining insights into contemporary peoples and concerns (1988 Management Policies, Chapters 2, 5; Directors Order #28, Chapter 5: Ethnographic Resources 1997).

Limited social science information existed about the historic Cane River area and its people (e.g., Mills 1977, Cohen 1984), particularly about Magnolia. To fill that gap, the park arranged for planning-oriented studies on Magnolia's archeology (NPS 1999a), history (Malone 1996), and cultural landscapes (Lawliss et al. 1996). A study of Creoles of color in the nearby Isle Brevelle farming community in the heritage area was underway (e.g., Gregory and Moran 1996). But information about the people who once lived and worked at Magnolia itself remained meager. This data gap, coupled with the evident social complexity of Magnolia and the need for community input into planning, troubled the planners, the former Cane River Creole superintendent, the Jean Lafitte staff associated with establishing the new park, and the Washington office ethnographer. They recognized the need to consult people whose traditional and varied associations to Magnolia would contribute rich and potentially hidden dimensions to the planning dialogue. Too often, community people who are not specialists in historic preservation or related professions avoid the public meetings that offer opportunities to participate in the planning process. As a result, their voices tend to remain muted and both they and the resources they value invisible. These considerations prompted the decision to conduct a rapid cultural anthropology or ethnographic study that would find and reach out to the otherwise silent or absent players.

THE STUDY

This report addresses the people associated with the resources now under National Park Service management. Whether they are the Hertzog family of owner-managers or tenant laborers and farmers, they have important stories to tell. Their different voices speak of their own pasts, community and work in the mid-20th century, and survival in the face of political, natural, economic, and technological challenges. This work, however, is a modest "starter" ethnography. Its aim is to sketch the context for life at Magnolia and make certain voices more audible and traditionally valued places more visible. We hoped the outcomes would advance the ethnographic research on living communities called for in section 304 (e) of the park legislation. To accomplish this within our limited funds and time, we sought peoples' perspectives on their past and present lives, and their views on park planning and interpretation. People experience, interpret, and report events in different ways because they occupy different

places in the social and ethnic or racial hierarchies and play correspondingly different economic or political roles (cf. Bond and Gilliam 1994). This reality prompted us to meet a range of people who might share their varying perspectives, or constructions of the recent past, and expectations of the National Park Service. Trying to be inclusive, we sought African American, or “black” people as they usually said, and Creoles of color, or they might say Creoles, who traced their ancestry to African and French people, possibly to American Indian, and perhaps to Chinese immigrants, as well. Other interviewees were white people, including the Hertzog family, who traced their ancestry to French Creole.

CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGICAL NOTE

SCOPE OF WORK

The study goals reflected discussions among NPS staff, including Joan DeGraff, then a DSC planner, and the previous park superintendent, Randy Clement. In late May, 1996, Dr. Muriel (Miki) Crespi of the National Archeology and Ethnography Program in Washington, D.C. and Ms. Allison Peña, Anthropologist at Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve in New Orleans, met with the staff of the Social Science Department at Northwestern State University (NSU). Anthropologist Dr. Hiram (Pete) Gregory, historian Dr. Ann Malone, and historian Ms. Susan Dollar participated. We discussed the goals and methods of Rapid Ethnographic Assessment Procedures (REAP), which was the originally intended research paradigm, the park data needs, and use of Jean Lafitte's Cooperative Agreement with Northwestern State University as a mechanism for accessing field assistance.

The group agreed on the need to address these general topics:

- identification of associated ethnic groups, activities, and settlements relevant to understanding Magnolia;
- places, or ethnographic resources, in and around Magnolia considered special to peoples' ethnic history and identity;
- the ties people perceived between certain places and their own and their groups' past;
- ways of life believed to be most related to cultural and natural resources in and around Magnolia;
- aspects of culture and history park visitors should know in order to understand Magnolia's qualities and the materials, such as letters and photographs, that would convey the messages; and
- techniques such as exhibits, cultural events, and music or food festivals that could involve local people in presenting Magnolia's special qualities to visitors.

We refined these topics during research, an iterative process in which researchers modify their questions to reflect the new information acquired in the course of study; as questions are asked and answered they tend to stimulate new lines of inquiry. Questions were also adjusted to consider peoples' different ethnicity, age, gender, and relationships to the Magnolia land and labor force. We also asked people what they thought the National Park Service should avoid saying or doing. Additionally, the pivotal role of slavery in driving the traditional plantation and National Park Service interest in interpreting the quarters made questions about this political/labor system essential. We regret the discomfort questions of slavery caused some people.

The National Park Service expected to conduct a Rapid Ethnographic Assessment Procedure (REAP) in cooperation with NSU field researchers. The REAP is an abbreviated intense field investigation that can satisfy the quite specific planning needs and deadlines of the National Park Service (Directors Orders 28 and Cultural Resource Guidelines, Chapter 5: Ethnographic Resources 1997). Its value to the National Park Service had already been demonstrated (cf. Low 1995, Williams 1998). A team approach is essential to the technique (cf. Beebe 1995), but, unfortunately, no such team could be established. Unexpected administrative, scheduling, and other complications prevented the timely development of a research team with coordinated methods, tasks, and priorities. Instead, although the brief time originally allocated to fieldwork could not be changed and the original research topics remained the same the National Park Service researcher and the Northwestern State University researchers conducted two sequential, related, yet somewhat different projects. Funding came from two sources. The Denver Service Center covered the University costs whereas the National Archeology and Ethnography Program paid Dr. Crespi's field expenses and salary during fieldwork, analysis and write-up.

PROJECT PERSONNEL

Several people contributed directly to this study:

Ms. Allison Peña, Anthropologist for Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve and expert in community outreach, helped identify consultants in urban Natchitoches and oriented Miki Crespi to the park and the area. She prepared and managed the Cooperative Agreement, CA 7029-4-0014, between Jean Lafitte and Northwestern State University, which was the vehicle for accessing University field assistance. She supported this work from its inception and commented in detail on the several drafts.

Dr. Muriel (Miki) Crespi is a cultural anthropologist and Chief Ethnographer for the National Park Service, Washington D.C. She has studied Latin American plantations and haciendas, conducted research in the United States, and introduced the concept of Rapid Ethnographic Assessment to the National Park Service. She was primarily responsible for developing this research project and conducting Magnolia interviews. She was alone responsible for analyzing data and preparing this research report.

Ms. Susan Dollar is a longtime Natchitoches resident with a M.A. in History from Northwestern State University. She reviewed the draft scope of work, conducted individual and group interviews, identified archival materials, and annotated a bibliography of relevant historical works. For this study, she reported to Dr. Ann Malone.

Ms. Dayna Bowker Lee has a M.A. in Anthropology from Northwestern State University and is a doctoral candidate in Anthropology at the University of Oklahoma. She conducted individual and group interviews and identified religious and recreational sites in the heritage area. For this study, she reported to Dr. Pete Gregory.

Ms. Barbara Anne (B.A.) Cohen, a photographer, ceramist, graphic artist, and Cane River native whose family once owned Lakeview Plantation, which adjoins Magnolia, helped identify community consultants, organized group interviews, and shared her insights into the local culture.

Mr. Randy Clement is former Superintendent of Cane River Creole NHP. He helped identify community consultants and relevant heritage sites, reviewed draft materials, and encouraged and supported this project since its inception.

Dr. Hiram (Pete) Gregory is an anthropologist on the faculty of the Northwestern State University Social Science Department and expert on Louisiana's American Indian archeology and history. He reviewed the draft scope of work and shared his insights about local cultures. He supervised Dayna Bowker Lee's work for this project and commented on the draft report.

Dr. Ann Malone is an historian, expert in Louisiana plantation systems, and then-faculty member in the Northwestern State University Social Science Department. She reviewed the draft scope of work and shared her insights about the area. She guided Miki Crespi and Allison Peña on an informative tour of major rural churches and supervised Susan Dollar's work on this project.

FIELD RESEARCH

Field research began in the Summer of 1996 and continued intermittently through the Fall. Miki Crespi spent a total of about 38 days in the field, starting with four days at the end of May and beginning of June, another 12 days between the end of June and beginning of July, six days at the end of August, and seven days at the end of September. She spent several additional days in Natchitoches in December 1996 and made brief trips in 1997 and 1998. Additional information came during interviewing in 1999 on the Oakland component. Crespi also made brief trips in 2001 to review the draft report with community members. Dayna Bowker Lee and Susan Dollar

initiated work early in September 1996 and interviewed intermittently until the end of November, each one working for about 30 days and usually conducting interviews together.

Lengthy open-ended interviews were a major research tool. Local diversity (see Figure 2) compelled us to interview a cross-section of ethnic groups, working with white people, including French Creole, black people, and Creoles of color with long-term associations to Magnolia. Although the census categories did not identify groups who defined themselves as being racially and culturally mixed, such as Creoles of color, they had been highlighted through personal experience and publications (e.g., Mills 1977). American Indian people, people of French/Indian descent, and other residents of Kisatchie “hill” communities were considered potential interviewees if time allowed and initial interviewing indicated their importance to Magnolia. Unfortunately, time did not allow systematic interviews of Kisatchie residents, but casual conversation occurred with an Apalachee man and Crespi met with the Clifton Choctaw Tribe after the Magnolia study formally closed.

Our interviewees represented a sample of convenience, rather than a random sample, and took on aspects of a network sample as individuals suggested other interviewees and concurred on several who were thought to be especially knowledgeable about local history. Identifying and personally contacting Magnolia’s black and Creole former residents proved to be a time-consuming and formidable challenge. The last resident laborers had left Magnolia about three decades ago as the rural exodus prompted by mechanization drew to a close. Crespi later learned about several former Magnolia sharecroppers who had remained nearby but could only briefly interview one. Some families had relocated to urban Natchitoches, others moved elsewhere in Louisiana, such as Alexandria. Some went to Houston, Texas, but many left the state for more distant locales such as Chicago and Los Angeles. Initial leads to former residents, including white overseers, came from Magnolia owners Betty Hertzog and her cousin Ambrose Hertzog. B.A. Cohen provided additional leads. Researchers Susan Dollar, who had previously worked with Pete Gregory and Ann Malone, and Dayna Bowker Lee, who also worked with Pete Gregory, drew on contacts among Creoles of color in the heritage area and added others.

We conducted interviews of from one to three hours each with a total of 39 individuals: 16 black, 14 French Creole and other whites, 8 Creoles of color, and 1 Clifton Choctaw person. Many interviews were audio taped as well. The locales for these interviews varied. Some were conducted in the city, others in Derry and Cat Island, and a few at Magnolia, Cloutierville, and Alexandria. More casual discussions lasting from about 20 minutes to an hour were held with nine more individuals, four white, three black, one Creole, and one American Indian (Apalachee). A few briefer telephone interviews were conducted with white individuals who lived in Shreveport, a black resident of Derry who we were unable to meet personally, and a black former Magnolia resident now living in Houston.

Group interviews were conducted as well, resulting in contact with another 14 people. Four groups of Creoles of color met in Derry, Isle Brevelle or Cat Island; two groups had three people each and one had five participants. One group of three black people from St. Andrews Baptist Church met in Derry. Taken together, considering only extended individual and group interviews, we contacted and formally interviewed 53 people: 19 black, 19 Creole of color, 14 French Creole or other white, and one American Indian. Several individuals were interviewed a few times. To orient interviewees to the NPS, before park brochures had been prepared, we distributed copies of the National Park Service Map and Guide showing the location of Cane River Creole NHP and examples of brochures from other plantation parks and parks celebrating African Americans.

Crespi focused on French Creole and other white people and on black people directly associated with Magnolia. White people included the Hertzog family at Magnolia and kin in Alexandria, and former residents of neighboring Lakeview Plantation. In urban Natchitoches she interviewed former overseers or supervisors and their family, and several businessmen and preservationists. Crespi interviewed black former Magnolia tenant laborers, one black sharecropper family working on “halves,” and one Creole of color sharecropper working as a “renter,” or on “a fourth,” some now living in urban Natchitoches or Alexandria. Most interviewees were also asked to indicate places of importance on a schematic map of Magnolia. On several occasions she also walked the quarters area

with former residents who had been born and raised there. She visited the Kisatchie Hills to meet with a representative of the state-recognized Clifton Choctaw Tribe and incorporated her findings here.

Dayna Bowker Lee worked in tandem with Susan Dollar to identify and interview individuals and groups, primarily in the National Heritage Area from Cat Island in Derry, Isle Brevelle, and Cloutierville. This represents part of Magnolia's larger social context. Creoles of color were especially important, but they also interviewed white people and black people. They asked interviewees to identify the locales of particularly important religious and educational facilities, ferry landings, and recreational sites, especially bars, race tracks and baseball fields in the heritage area, and schematically mapped them (see Figure 3). Dollar also worked in the Cammie G. Henry Research Center at the University where she reviewed, photocopied, and annotated relevant archival materials. They met once briefly with Crespi in early September and briefly with Crespi and Peña later that month. All four communicated through occasional telephone calls and e-mail. Lee and Dollar sent Crespi a brief summary of their interviews and, starting in November, draft transcriptions of interviews. By early 1997, draft transcriptions of all audio tapes were completed and sent to Crespi for use in preparing the subsequent draft planning report. In 1999, Crespi submitted a draft to the planners at the Denver Service Center, to the park and to others (NPS 1999b). This report refines and slightly expands the draft.

COMMUNITY REVIEW

In February 2001, Crespi sent interviewees copies of the final draft report for their last review and comments. Visiting Natchitoches from February 23 to March 2, she reviewed the draft on-site with several black families, the Hertzogs and other white families, and a few individual Creoles of color. The reviewers suggested additional nuances that were not clearly evident before, shared new insights and recollections, and corrected some names, maps, and dates. They also supported the impressions and conclusions conveyed by the draft. During another brief trip in July 2001, Crespi toured the Magnolia Big House and revisited the quarters with several former residents, further enriching her understandings. She greatly appreciated the interest and support shown by the Magnolia community and, in common with her anthropological peers, reaffirms the importance of working in tandem with the people who generously share their lives with the cultural researchers who come into their midst and leave, changed, in many ways, for the better.

CHAPTER 3: MAGNOLIA'S ETHNIC CONTEXT

Understanding the social universe people construct and participate in requires us to consider several kinds of information. One involves the way people organize themselves into social units such as family, friends, ethnic or heritage and racial groups, and class. Another kind is the terms or labels people use for the ethnic, racial, and other social categories they create. These categories and labels often have dynamic pasts and problematic presents, especially in multicultural societies where power relationships among various groups help shape the social universe. This section considers the ways people deal with ethnicity, ancestry, and race. Background information came from several sources, including publications and recent census data. More information came from listening to and analyzing peoples' comments about themselves and their interactions with neighboring individuals and communities. Ideally, systematic field observations of interactions among diverse peoples would have yielded important insights, but limited time in the field eliminated this possibility.

BACKGROUND ON ETHNIC DIVERSITY

As the Europeans colonized the Americas, the region they came to call the "New World," they devised, assigned, and manipulated numerous social categories and terms for the people they met and later helped propagate. The early French, like the Spanish and Portuguese, developed at least two bases for categorizing people. One, "blood line" or supposed racial ancestry, was believed to be reflected in a person's physical appearance and socioeconomic circumstances, as Wagley's (1968) classic article notes and Dominguez (1986) elaborates on. Nationality or birthplace was a second basis.

Considering "blood" or supposed racial ancestry first, it is likely that the earliest arriving Europeans and Africans were visibly and readily distinguishable from each other and from American Indians. This soon changed as people mated across social lines and women bore offspring whose appearances differed from their parents. The European response to these developments was to create a system for categorizing each kind of offspring into named categories that supposedly represented the individual's degree of white, black, and Indian "blood" or racial ancestry. Throughout Latin America the Spaniards called offspring of an indigenous and Spanish person a *mestizo*; the French in Canada called their offspring with indigenous people the *metis*. In Brazil the Portuguese called offspring of unions with indigenous people the *mamelucos*, and of unions with Africans, the *mulatto*. Dominguez (1986:24) notes that 18th century New Orleans residents also called the offspring of African slaves and French, or other European, unions *mulatre(sse)* or *mulattos*. Because they usually gained their freedom, the Louisiana "mulattos" were nearly synonymous with "Gens de couleur libre" or "free people of color." American Indians probably contributed as well to the complex mulatto ancestry (Dorman 1995:167).

Europeans continued to label new generations of people of mixed parentage by their imputed degree of European, African, and Indian "blood," necessarily inventing dozens of categories to describe the increasingly complex population. *Quadroon*, or person supposedly of 1/4 black ancestry and 3/4 white, and *octoroon*, or person supposedly of 1/8 black ancestry, for example, became familiar terms in Louisiana. Around 19th century Natchitoches, "redbone" was also heard to describe the offspring of American Indian, African, and European unions (Shugg 1939:49). Certain physical features, such as skin color, hair texture and color, finger-nail color and so on, were considered visible clues to an individual's ancestry that enabled even casual observers to identify a person's supposed racial ancestry.

The new European-dominated societies accorded the greatest esteem to persons who seemed to be white, that is, looked European, and seemed to carry "pure blood." The whiter a person appeared, the greater their opportunities for advancement, and the higher they were in the social hierarchy. Certain occupations and political or social rank, as well as dress and speech patterns, came to be associated with each of the ethnic or ancestry categories. Endogamy, or marriage within the group, helped consolidate wealth and power among people of the same

category. Louisiana's Civil Codes supported the social distinctions by attempting to define ancestry and, during some periods, prohibiting interracial marriages and even miscegenation or sexual relations between persons of different ancestry. Sumptuary rules also prohibited some groups from using certain features of dress while requiring them to wear others. Dominguez (1986:25) notes, for example, Louisiana's 18th century code requiring free women of color to wear kerchiefs (tignons) to distinguish them, at first glance, from "pure-blooded" whites. Persons of mixed ancestry fell between the hierarchical extremes of white and black on the basis of power and prestige. Educated, skilled, and sometimes encouraged by their white progenitors, persons of mixed descent might have ran middle-sized farms and specialized businesses and practiced crafts either rejected by whites or inaccessible to enslaved black people. In some instances, as Mills (1977) describes for Isle Brevelle in Cane River, free people of color were quite successful. Affluent tradesmen and landowners with extensive plantations, manor houses, and slave laborers, they were business associates of local white planters. Less regarded were enslaved black people whose knowledge and skills made them a desirable but vulnerable work force.

Attempts to biologically categorize and segregate people in different social levels, sometimes called "castas," eventually collapsed of its own weight. Despite legal restrictions, sexual relations across social boundaries continued in successive generations, resulting in offspring whose appearances challenged the stereotypic distinctions and visual clues to ancestry. Identifying peoples' supposed racial ancestry on the basis of "blood" or physical appearance became unworkable, except perhaps at the extremes of "white" or "black" skin color. Eventually, the many unwieldy categories that had proliferated for people of mixed ancestry merged into a single labeled group. "Mulatto" survived in this country, while mestizo and metis were common elsewhere. Other racial terms also continued in use, along with legal definitions of ancestry (Dominguez 1986). Informally, the social characteristics associated with the different "races" gained importance in identifying supposed ancestry. Physical characteristics, such as skin color or hair texture, were not completely ignored but were interpreted in different ways depending on their configuration and the social context. Wherever this system prevailed, persons might change their "race" and social label by strategically modifying their social and economic circumstances (cf. Crespi 1975).

The process of "race change" usually involved the acquisition of new occupations, dress, and speech styles characteristic of higher socioeconomic classes. People might also take surnames that had traditionally signaled a socially elevated "race." People who choose to "pass" or transform their ethnicity, for example, from mulatto to white, known in Louisiana as "passablanc," must, however, deny their parentage or leave their community of birth for places where their parentage and ancestry are unknown (cf. Dominguez 1986:161). Public ignorance of one's parentage was crucial to successful, acceptable passing. The transformation involves modifying the outward signs of social status and the acquisition of a new racial or ethnic label, but the individual's genetic and physical features remain unchanged. This use of racial labels to describe a person's or group's social characteristics, coupled with the potential for shifting one's ethnic identity from one labeled category to another, led Wagley (1968) to suggest the concept of "social race." The idea is that social categories with racial labels actually reflect social or class considerations more than, or as much as, any aspect of biological ancestry.

National origin or birthplace became a second basis for categorizing people, as Dominguez' (1986) analysis of the history and use of "Creole" shows. Briefly, creole in French, criollo to Spanish speakers, and crioulo to Portuguese described the first generation of people born in the New World. A politically loaded term, it highlighted distinctions between the people who were native-born and their parents, citizens of Spain or France. Under colonial conditions, Spanish or French nationals often enjoyed greater power than their offspring. The Caribbean and other New World offspring of African-born people were also called Creole, Midlo Hall (1992:157-158) notes, to distinguish them as a "seasoned" group from their African-born parents or newly arrived slaves. Starting, then, with the French occupation of Louisiana, "creole" meant local or native origin, that is, nationality rather than biological race (cf. Brasseaux, Fontenot, and Oubre 1994). Successive generations of American-born offspring who traced their ancestry to Europe or Africa also came to be called "Creole." Dominguez (1986:100-103) notes that political and demographic changes evident during the Spanish occupation of Louisiana (1768-1803) and following the American purchase of Louisiana in 1803 later added new ethnic groups to the population

mix. Local terminology changed accordingly. In southern Louisiana it expanded to include Acadians from Canada, later called Cajuns, Spanish-speakers or *Islenos* from the Canary Islands, and Haitian Creoles. “Anglo-American” came to describe other newcomers, especially from the eastern U.S. About the same time, U.S. stewardship over Louisiana and changing attitudes towards race began prompting a decline in the relatively high status Louisiana’s free people of color had enjoyed. The three-tiered society of white, mulatto, and black gave way in many respects to a two-tiered one of colored (black and mulatto) and white.

The Creole category, like the racial categories, took on cultural and social features. In time, birthplace or nationality was no longer its single identifying feature. The French and Spanish language and Catholicism, for example, became more closely or self-consciously associated with Creole identity in contrast to Anglo-American characteristics such as Protestantism and English speech. Later in the mid-19th century “Creole” began to imply two distinct social groups rather than the more general “born in the New World.” Free people of color, that is, people of mixed ancestry, began considering themselves a distinct ethnic community of Creoles of color (Mills 1977; Dormon 1996:xi). Meanwhile, partly to distinguish themselves from the in-coming Anglo-Americans who were new competitors for power, white French-speakers began describing themselves as the *ancienne* population or original settlers (Dominguez 1986:113). Following the Civil War and Reconstruction, white French or Spanish descendants began vigorously pursuing, what I would call, the “whitening” of “Creole.” In an attempt to take ownership of the term, they hoped to redefine “creole” so that it applied exclusively to them (cf. Dominguez 1986:146). What had started as a generic term for all people born in the New World began to assume new meanings.

The reinterpretation process has been incomplete, as will be shown. In some regions of Louisiana, and the Natchitoches area seems to be one, racially or ethnically mixed people who assert their claim to “Creole” identity, albeit Creole of color in preference to the term “mulatto,” might find themselves challenged by those who call themselves French Creole. The earlier competition over the right to use “Creole” persists among some white Louisianans who perceive the term as exclusively and legitimately describing their own racial ancestry and unique culture.

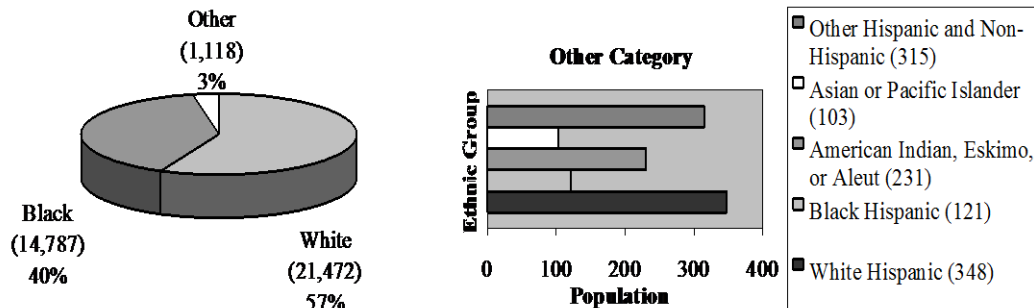
Ethnicity in the Natchitoches Census

In Natchitoches, the 1990 census (see Figure 2) tends to obscure ethnic diversity. The data put the Natchitoches Parish population at 37,377, with 40% calling itself Black and 57% White. Most of the remaining 3% includes White Hispanics, followed by American Indian, Eskimo, and Aleut. American Indian is the largest of these three. The urban parish seat of Natchitoches has a population of 16,609, almost equally divided between Black (49%) and White (48%), with the remaining 3% divided among Black Hispanics, White Hispanics, and American Indian, Eskimo, Aleut, and others. These figures are misleading for the purposes of understanding the local ethnic context because an important group, which defines itself as Creoles of color, is not separately enumerated. The 1990 census gave people limited ethnic/racial choices. People defining themselves as Creoles of color were forced to choose between assigning themselves to the white category, or the black, although they would have preferred a category describing their mixed genetic ancestry and cultural heritage. No estimate of their number is attempted here, but they should be acknowledged as representing an important segment of urban Natchitoches and the Parish population in general.

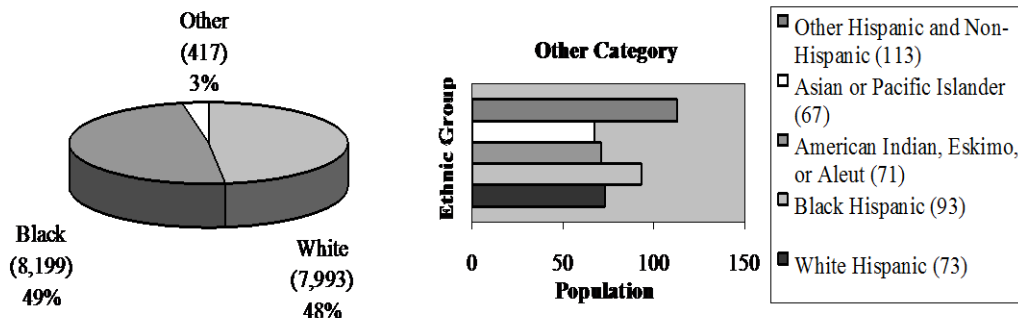
The census does not suggest the minor scale ethnic diversity that influenced the population in the mid-to-late 19th and early 20th century when people of Jewish heritage and those of Chinese heritage contributed to the local genetic and cultural make-up. Evidence suggests that although individuals might represent these categories and be aware of their ethnic heritage, they do not presently constitute self-conscious visible ethnic entities. Dr. Lucy Cohen, who studied the Chinese in Natchitoches Parish (1984), suggested (personal communication 1996) that intermarriage and acculturation of the small number of Chinese men precluded formation of a persistent group. The Jewish community, once large and prosperous enough to have constructed a major synagogue in urban Natchitoches, now has little public visibility. Most members had relocated or intermarried and, in some cases, assimilated into Christian groups. The remaining practicing members might attend synagogue in nearby cities, such as Alexandria or Shreveport. In some cases, the continued use of recognizably Jewish surnames is more indicative of family history than present religious affiliation. Still, the locked Jewish cemetery on 5th Street continues to be groomed, indicating the presence of caring individuals or families, if not an identifiable social group. Occasionally, people also mentioned “Americans,” “Anglos,” or “Yankees” as an ethnic category that became important after the Louisiana Purchase and more so after the Civil War when northerners and Protestants arrived in some number.

FIGURE 1: 1990 U.S. CENSUS: ETHNICITY

Natchitoches Parish Population: 37,377



Natchitoches City Population: 16,609



Hill Residents and Cane River Residents

Cane River people seemed to sort local populations into two major geographical categories, people of the hills or the Kisatchie National Forest and people of lower-lying Cane River areas. Geography and ecology, resources uses, occupations, speech, character, and ethnic heritages were bundled together to mark “hill” occupants as a single identifiable group, separate from Cane River people. The hilly uplands are home to the state-recognized Clifton Choctaw Tribe, to Creoles of color, and to whites, some of them descended from the French, and others with Indian, French, Creole of color, and African American ancestry. People also came into the area with the sawmills and timber companies that penetrated the pineries before the 1930 establishment of Kisatchie National Forest. Some newcomers had remained after the “cut out and get out” timbering ideology resulted in first stripping the forests, then shutting down the sawmills with their associated company towns. Several towns had been close to, or in, the Cane River area, along the railroad line: Derry, which adjoined Magnolia to the west, Montrose in Red Dirt, at Old River, and Cypress (Burns 1994).

Various activities and interests linked the hill and plantation area. For example, one Hertzog family member recalls a white family of basket-makers who came from the hills each spring to Magnolia, and probably other plantations, to assess the likely market and take orders for their wares. They returned in the summer with the basket order filled in time for use in the harvest. For the most part, from the Cane River perspective, hill occupants are woodsmen and craftsmen with behaviors, incomes, and homes that lack the evidence of wealth and gentility believed to characterize lowland people. Reciprocally, hill residents perceived differences between themselves and people of the bottom lands (cf. Dunn 1940).

AMERICAN INDIANS

Interviewees generally acknowledged American Indians as a special group, thanks partly to local American Indian efforts to raise awareness through school programs and annual powwows at Fort St. Jean Baptiste. American Indians have a long history in the parish and in the Cane River and Red River areas, although not necessarily at Magnolia Plantation itself. Keel (NPS 1999a:43) found some sherds there but presently available evidence does not suggest an intensive or significant early American Indian occupation. Historically, for the most part, American Indian people had vacated the parish voluntarily, or sometimes forcibly, as French, Spanish, and English colonists manipulated tribes and each other in the attempt to gain control over Louisiana and adjoining territories. In the process, numerous tribes, including Choctaw and Apalachee, moved, or were removed, closer to the Caddo areas above Natchitoches in northwest Louisiana (Gregory 1983). With the start of the American period in 1803 and the subsequent expansion of plantation economies, due partly to new technology, especially the cotton gin, the various remaining tribes relinquished the arable river valley lands. They moved to the wooded hills and were joined about the same time by displaced Mississippi Choctaw in the area that later became the Kisatchie National Forest. Although the later opening of "Indian territory" in Oklahoma siphoned off many Choctaw, others remained in the Kisatchie hills to hunt, cultivate small plots, and seek wage labor.

At the close of the 19th century, an expanding timber industry introduced new opportunities and settlements into the general area. Lumber camps and lumber towns flourished along the railroad line until the hills were logged out a few decades later (Gregory 1983). Depopulation of the company towns, such as Magnolia's neighbor Derry, accompanied the departure of most timber companies. Many Choctaw remained in the hills around Clifton, however, where, today, they cultivate small gardens and farms, ranch, and work in the pulpwood industry. Relatively recently, the Clifton Choctaw gained formal state recognition from Louisiana as an American Indian tribe. One of the new tribal ventures is an experimental tree nursery.

Cane River residents recognize varying degrees of family relationships to Choctaw and other American Indians. Creoles of color living near Magnolia mentioned a history of family associations with American Indians, starting with a pattern of intermarriage that probably began in the 18th century when Indians could marry other free persons of color (Mills 1977:85). Some Creole people could identify particular family members, including grandparents or great-grandparents, who traced their Indian heritage to marriage with Apalachee or Clifton Choctaw or Choctaw from the Lake Cote area and Rapides Parish in general. A few Creoles cited more immediate family members who recently married into Clifton Indian families and moved to Clifton. Although the hill and valley connections seem to have been primarily between Creole of color and Clifton Choctaw, several black people and whites mentioned black workers at Magnolia who were believed to have had Indian ancestry. One Clifton Choctaw tribal member confirmed that family ties existed between the hill residents and Cane River Creoles of color.

FRENCH CREOLES AND OTHER WHITE PEOPLE

People who call themselves "white" include those with ancestors from Natchitoches and elsewhere in Louisiana, from adjoining states and this country's eastern seaboard, and from France and other European nations. Their occupations run the gamut from planters to businesspeople, attorneys or other professionals to public employees. Many are Protestant, and some are Catholic. Although they might qualify as Creoles in the oldest sense of the term meaning people born in the New World, few of this generic white population would call themselves, or be called, Creole. Generally, whites who assert French, or perhaps Spanish, ancestry tend to restrict the use of "Creole" to people like themselves.

Natchitoches white Creoles trace their ancestry directly, and almost exclusively, to old line white French or Spanish families with identifiably European roots. Catholic and descended from prominent landowners and planters contemporary French Creole might pursue their forebears' interests in large-scale agriculture on ancestral lands or enter the law and other professional and business ranks while also maintaining an interest in agriculture. They often remain the owners of architecturally important and elegantly furnished historic town houses and rural plantation houses or "Big Houses," but do not necessarily occupy them. In several cases, the considerable costs of maintaining large historic structures or rehabilitating them with modern plumbing, electrical lines, and the like have prompted their owners to seek new uses for these homes in the hope of making them economically self-sustaining. Some houses have been adapted as Bed and Breakfasts where guests can drink their morning coffee from cups of exquisite 19th century china. Although potential visitors might find it unnerving to vacation in former slave quarters, some Creole homeowners in town have also upgraded and converted these into guest quarters.

In Natchitoches parish, whites of French European ancestry and cultural heritage, who categorize themselves alone as Creole, use the term mulatto for the offspring of a black and white union and their descendants. In the white view, and in Louisiana law as well from the 19th century until 1983, mulattos were considered Negroes if they were 1/32 Negro. Whites might also call them "colored," a generic category that included blacks. Local whites, who recalled helping people they called mulatto or colored to complete official school or other forms, remembered instructing them to check the "black" option when the form required a racial choice between white and black.

People of color take offense when whites or blacks call them mulatto. As one Creole of color noted, "maybe back then, you know, after the first 10 children were born, they could be called mulatto, you know, half black and half white, half one kind and half the other. But we have French and Spanish, Indian and black now; all kinds of blood." The speaker preferred to be called Creole of color, or just Creole. As the people who whites once called "mulatto" increasingly called themselves Creoles, and as political, economic, and social changes affected local communities and the tenor of ethnic interrelations, French Creoles began, perhaps reluctantly, to surrender their exclusive public claim to "Creole" and French ancestry. Privately they might mourn having to relinquish their unique claim to an ethnic heritage and status that had long defined them as special, might even feel under siege from people who seemed to deprive them of their ethnicity, and might still call themselves French Creole. Otherwise, in public, they were simply "white."

CREOLES OF COLOR

Opinions vary about a preferred designation even among people who reject being called "mulatto." Many prefer being called Creoles of color, but some experienced discomfort with, and uncertainty about, that designation. This is evident in one person's comment that "I ain't never knew nothing about Creoles until here lately... We always did know that we were French." Another added, "that's what Mama always told me. The first time I saw a Creole to recognize one, I didn't know nothing about it. All I knew was French." She recalled that the first time she heard the word Creole used to describe people like her, "I walked out of church. There was a lady that got up there and was talking about the Creoles... She was from New Orleans somewhere. I was so mad, I got out of church. I said, I'm not Creole. That was the first time I ever heard that." Older people explained that "French" is what they were accustomed to calling themselves and being called by ethnic peers and black people, although not by whites. Another person offered his more formal definition of a Cane River Creole as "...a person who has ancestors who were here when Louisiana was a colony and in French control... their offspring were Creole." He added, they are "...primarily French and African whose parents were born here prior to 1803." People felt strongly about keeping their French heritage visible even in ethnic labels. They recalled their parents speaking French at home, especially to disguise certain adult topics of conversation from curious children, and noted their own failed attempts to understand the language except for key words. Kinship terms in French remain in use. "We always knew that we were French," said several who preferred that term over "Creole," although some would accept "French Creole."

Ambiguity about the label's implications was also evident in at least one Creole comment about preferring to identify herself as black or Black Creole to avoid giving the impression of denying the black aspect of their heritage.

Regardless of the particular term they prefer, Creoles of color, or French, forcefully argue their status as a different race altogether, not black but not white either. Rather, they perceive themselves as a race apart, a new and special group that resents being forced to choose between being called or calling themselves white or black. Several noted that they have lived elsewhere and might have passed as white, Spanish or other group, if they wished, but "decided to be what we are." The sense of a racial or ethnic community, of being a unique group that differs from whites and blacks, is evident in discussions of marriage preferences. People noted their parents' strong preference for marriage into another "French" family as a way to maintain the uniqueness of the line. Nevertheless, marriage occasionally occurs between Creoles of color and blacks, sometimes initially creating tension between both families. Lineage pride also operates among Creoles of color, many of whom assert their "true" Metoyer ancestry, referring to the 18th century progenitors of the Creole of color line. Some claim direct descent from the offspring of the French white Creole Claude Thomas Pierre Metoyer and his long-time companion, the black woman, Marie Thereze Coincoin (cf. Mills 1977). Their children, especially the eldest son, Augustin Metoyer, who founded St Augustine Catholic Church in Isle Brevelle in 1803, are revered. Even if they might be unable to trace descent directly to the first Augustin Metoyer, some people thought it important to distinguish their white ancestors from other whites. Comments about early white ancestors who were planters, not just any "poor white," with whom "even the slaves would have no relations..." suggested the value seen in having had landed forebears. Pride in the Creole identity and strong attachment to place also marked discussions of returning home to Cane River after a period of absence. Regardless of where you live or were born, if your parents and their parents are from Cane River, people said, "you are always from Cane River" and feel compelled to return.

Although Creoles of color consider themselves a separate "race" or ethnic and social group, the diverse genetic contributions of different ancestors necessarily get reshuffled in each birth and generation. This is often expressed visually in the great color range and other variations in physical appearance found even within the same family. Some individuals may be described as "bright" or quite light-skinned, while their siblings may be dark. Some may have curly hair while their siblings have dark straight hair; some have blue eyes while their siblings are hazel or brown-eyed. Individual appearances defy existing racial stereotypes for both white and black. As one white neighbor of the Hertzogs said, speaking of a Cloutierville baseball player, "he was white, no, he was mulatto. Well, sometimes it was hard to tell the difference." This ambiguity has enabled some people to redefine their ethnic identities in other locales, distant from Natchitoches, where their ancestry was unknown or unsuspected and their appearances seemed to generally satisfy the stereotypic "white" images. Creole interviewees noted that such cases of "passing" or of redefining one's ancestry as "white" represented a useful pre-integration strategy to gain access to otherwise unobtainable opportunities for oneself and one's children. Within the Natchitoches area, however, especially in Cane River communities, shifting to another ethnicity or race by denying one's ancestry was difficult if not impossible because people's genealogy and parentage tended to be common knowledge and readily verifiable. Locally, actual or imputed family lines are treated as the most powerful identifying factors. Even skin color can be irrelevant in determining status as a Creole in situations where individuals have no choice about identifying themselves as black, white, or Creole of color. If you were known to be from a Creole family, as one person said, "then nobody paid much attention to your color, you were Creole."

"Creole" also carries a class connotation. While recognizing "blood" or ancestry as a basis for being Creole of color, Creole comments about lifestyle and land ownership also imply their perception of the Creole category as a stable middle socioeconomic class with some internal variations. Despite sharing the Creole designation, the group is not homogeneous. Creoles recognize social differences, as already noted, for example, between "true" Metoyer descendents and others. Additional differences are drawn between Creoles of Upper Cane River, that is, Bermuda, Cat Island, and Isle Brevelle, and those of Lower Cane River around, for example, Cloutierville, with a general but fuzzy dividing line around the dam near the Lakeview/Magnolia line. Interviewees, primarily people

defining themselves as Upper Cane River Creoles, suggested that economic differences and, more generally, a different atmosphere existed between the two areas. They thought Upper Cane River Creoles had become landowners, sometimes important landowners, before Lower Cane River people had achieved that status. Although some Upper Cane River people had lost their farms following the Civil War, they were seen as working the land for other Catholics and running it as if it was theirs. In contrast, Cloutierville Creoles worked for Protestant whites who purchased small lots after the Civil War and let Creoles farm them. Upper Cane River Creoles attended St. Augustine Catholic Church with a primarily Creole of color congregation and its school, which had a primarily Creole student body. Other Creoles attended St. John the Baptist Catholic Church in Cloutierville, which had also had black members and a large white French Creole congregation. Some Upper Cane River Creole considered themselves better educated and college educated, although they also recognized a decline in this difference in recent years.

Being Creole of color is also seen as a cultural feature reflected in speech, dress, behavior, religion, festivals, occupation, and so on. Blacks, whites, and Creoles of color agree that, as a group, Creoles differ culturally from blacks by religious preference and language background. Creoles of color are Catholic, but black people usually belong to Protestant denominations. Linguistically, Creoles of color, especially older people, speak French and younger ones use or can respond to key French words, such as kinship terms. A particular cluster of surnames of French derivation tends to be another indicator of Creole heritage and a basis for tracing individual and family genealogies. White French Creole likewise have French surnames but tend to use a different array. Creoles of color also see themselves distinguished as a group by their unique local history. Materially, it is reflected in places, such as the all-Creole community of Isle Brevelle and the mostly Creole St. Augustine Catholic Church and cemetery. Social practices, such as in-group marriages, or endogamy, to protect group boundaries and organizations and activities devoted to the continuation of the Creole cultural heritage, enhance Creole cultural continuity and visibility. Additionally, Creoles tend to see their comparatively greater wealth, entrepreneurial skills, and education as distinguishing them from black people.

In some respects, Creoles of color and blacks were alike, particularly in terms of the effects of segregation. As several Creoles ruefully recalled, “we weren’t allowed into Northwestern when we graduated from high school in the 60s, and we couldn’t go into restaurants unless we sat with the blacks in the back, in the kitchen,” the area reserved for Coloreds.

BLACK PEOPLE

The divisiveness of plantation society reverberates in the social distance that customarily marked relationships between blacks and whites and blacks and Creoles of color. Possibly the greatest distance separated blacks and whites, geographically, politically, economically, and socially. Although boys from the Big House, the overseer’s house, and the quarters sometimes played together and all people might use the same recreational space at horse races or baseball games, adulthood widened the social gap between them. One symbol of these gaps is the way people used, or withheld, titles of respect. Relative standing in the hierarchy could be surmised, for example, by hearing black people refer to Magnolia’s white owners as “Mr. Matt,” “Ms. Sally” or “Ms. Betty,” but the use of first names or nicknames when white people referred to and addressed blacks. Exceptions might be made for older trusted help, such as the black cook or other longtime domestic staff, who whites might call by a kinship term, “Uncle,” for example, or “Aunt,” as in Aunt Martha, the Hertzogs’ longtime cook, to indicate familiarity and respect.

Black people and Creoles of color usually avoided each other’s dance halls and juke joints or bars unless they were prepared to physically defend their right to be present. They might interact at outdoor events, however, such as horseraces and baseball games, which were “open” to everyone. Each also tended to live in different areas when they had the option. Cat Island and Isle Brevelle were Creole strongholds. At Magnolia, the quarters were exclusively black, except for one intermarried couple. Magnolia’s sharecropper area north of the Big House was

primarily Creole but included several black families. Informal visits to each other's homes were rare. Creoles who had attended St. Matthew public school noted, "you might be friendly with blacks, but you didn't mix" even if you all came from the same plantation, such as Magnolia. Each group preferred to sit and play apart to avoid unpleasantness. As previously noted, Creoles and blacks both disapproved of intermarriage, partly on religious grounds, although several had occurred locally. One intermarried couple commented on the keen distress and disapproval their families expressed when first learning of their relationship and in the years immediately following their wedding.

Black people, who ordinarily referred to Creoles of color as mulattos or French, usually are distinguished by membership in Protestant churches, especially Baptist and Methodist, although membership in Catholic Churches occasionally occurred. Anglo, more than French surnames, tended to distinguish them. Several black people, commenting on their peoples' continuing struggles, expressed pain and anger about being treated by both whites and Creoles as less than equal. One former Magnolia resident wondered aloud about the sort of God who could have let that situation happen. "Why," she asked rhetorically, "did black men hang from the trees? Why? Because someone thought they were looking at a white woman. Then they were hung... When we went to the doctor, we would wait there from 7 in the morning until 4 in the afternoon because she took all the white people first, even if they came in last. And its still going on. Look at David Duke..."

To their satisfaction, several black people from Magnolia also perceived a reduction in distinctions between themselves and Creoles of color in the years since desegregation. School was one reason, they suggested. Greater mobility for blacks due to more equitable access to educational and professional opportunities was seen as closing the economic distance from successful Creoles. Black people were becoming university professors, successful businessmen, and other professionals. The spatial separations that had often also characterized housing arrangements on plantations and in the rural settlements in general have been diminishing somewhat since the rural exodus and the relocation of blacks and Creoles, sometimes to the same neighborhood in urban Natchitoches.

ETHNIC TERMS

In the language of ethnicity, "black," "French Creole" and other "whites," and "Creoles of color" were considered respectful terms by each of the three named groups, but alternatives were also heard. Black people, primarily older people, preferred the term black over "African-American," whose use is associated with "outsiders" to the region. One person explained that his color, black, not his African background, was the basis of his self-definition. Younger people generally seemed to find "African American" or "black" equally acceptable for use by themselves and others. Other terms are best described as "insider" terms that this group reserved for its own use as symbols of intimacy, shared histories, and camaraderie. Ethnic peers could use the terms for themselves without apology or discomfort, but gave others no license to use them. The term "nigger" is a case in point. Although some black people found the term insulting regardless of whether the speaker was white or black, others referred to themselves jokingly, cynically, or self-deprecatingly as "nigger." Occasionally it was used with irony to emphasize a point in the struggle for greater equity. Ethnic outsiders who use that term for black people necessarily changed its quality from one of intimacy to, as blacks saw it, insult. More often, white people used "black." Sometimes the generic "colored" was used to describe both black and Creole, a term black people might find offensive.

The respect term "white" was nearly the only term heard for this population. Even when the interviewer asked about alternatives, none were offered except for "honky" and the occupational term "boss." Conceivably, the rules of inter-ethnic etiquette made blacks and Creoles of color reluctant to share, with outsiders, their disrespect terms for relatively powerful local people, if such terms existed at all.

Whites of French ancestry described themselves as French Creole. “Antique Creole,” reminiscent of the 19th century term “ancienne” population, was occasionally heard to emphasize French ancestry yet distinguish themselves from racially mixed Creole. Still, most whites called themselves white.

Creoles of color might use that term, or just “Creole,” for themselves, although older people tended to refer to themselves as “French.” Sometimes we heard the term “bright,” and one person mentioned “Black Creole.” The term “Creoles of color” seemed to raise the hackles of some whites, but “mulatto” or “mulatto Creole” or “colored,” which whites used, offends people who call themselves Creoles of color. Black people referred to Creoles of color as “French,” sometimes “Mulatto” or “bright,” but only rarely as “Creole.”

CHAPTER 4: AN ETHNOGRAPHIC VIEW OF LANDSCAPES

This chapter notes the landscape features that people believe give meaning to local geography. In the National Park Service, we call these features “ethnographic resources” because people’s comments and interactions have demonstrated that certain sites, structures, and natural features are considered heritage resources with traditional importance in their ethnic histories and identities (1997 Directors Order #28:10). People may attach meaning, for example, to birthplaces and communities where they grew up or “came up,” and to the places they worked, played, and worshipped. These tend to be storied places, associated with and explained by tales about the people and events that made them special. Acknowledging the diversity of socially complex societies, the National Park Service also recognizes that “factors such as people’s class, ethnicity and gender may result in the assignment of diverse meanings to a landscape and its component places” (NPS 1998a). Not every landscape feature is valued in the same way by different people.

Magnolia’s past and present residents regard the park as a slice of an extensive landscape sculpted by the different places associated with their lives. Some places fall within the NPS area, and others are beyond park limits but still on the plantation grounds. Additional places are in the general vicinity of the plantation. Taken together, they represent a core area within which people spent most of their days. This core is nested within a more inclusive landscape that extends to further reaches of the heritage area and parish, or even beyond, to places that Magnolia residents had shared with members of neighboring towns and plantations.

EXTENDED LANDSCAPE: URBAN NATCHITOCHES, ALEXANDRIA, AND BEYOND

Management found several locales beyond the parish landscape important. New Orleans was significant for conducting plantation business and had been the residence of Dr. Ambrose Hertzog, Mr. Matt’s brother, who practiced medicine there. Family ties and business interests, such as auctioning plantation herds in the 1950s, also linked Magnolia management to Alexandria, a city some 32.5 miles to the southeast. It was not until the rural exodus of the 1940s, 50s, and 60s that Alexandria gained greater importance to black people as one of the destinations for outward-bound country people from Magnolia and environs.

Magnolia residents attached importance to urban Natchitoches. A local commercial center, plantation managers banked there and, in a lighter vein, competed for the annual prizes banks awarded to planters who ginned the first bale of cotton. Magnolia managers re-stocked the plantation commissary, purchased equipment, and had it serviced at the Front Street facilities. They also relied on black Natchitoches entrepreneurs to recruit black seasonal laborers and transport them to and from Magnolia for the cotton harvest. Early in the 20th century, Baptist and AME ministers came from Natchitoches to serve the black Magnolia congregations. Some black Magnolia residents moved temporarily to Natchitoches for domestic work, but not until the 1940s and 1950s when cars and trucks facilitated transportation between the city and the country did Magnolia residents travel there more frequently to shop, visit, and attend church.

Ecologically, Magnolia is part of an ecosystem that includes the low valley, created by the rich alluvium deposits of the Cane and Red Rivers, and, on the western periphery of Natchitoches Parish, the hilly uplands of Kisatchie National Forest with its abundant pine and oak. Social and economic links brought the valley and hills together. Blacks and Creoles of color not only had kin living in the hill towns, they also depended economically on the hills for sassafras leaves for teas and gumbo seasoning and thickening. People collected the leaves themselves or acquired them from kin and other middlemen. Earlier in the 20th century, the household economies of white hill families and the commercial plantation economies were linked through the plantation needs for basketry containers and the hill families’ production and sale of baskets. The plantation also met its firewood needs in the upland pineries when Magnolia wood lots became too reduced to provide adequate supplies. Kisatchie occasionally provided a refuge for plantation cattle during Cane River’s high water periods. Management and a

former cowhand recall that when the 1945 floods made Magnolia pastures unusable, the cowhands drove the herd to Red Dirt in the Kisatchie hills, where men and animals stayed until the waters receded. At another time, even when cattle could remain at Magnolia during the high water, they grazed in the hills because the high waters made the lowland grasses inedible, scaled, and rotten.

THE CORE AREA

Derry, Cloutierville, and Vicinity

Dozens of meaningful places pepper the core area south of urban Natchitoches from Cane River to the Kisatchie Ranger District. They include smallholder settlements, ferry landings, schools, Catholic churches, Protestant churches with their baptismal sites on the banks of Cane River, former mill towns, and commercial centers (see Figure 1). Derry, the township within which Magnolia is located, was important for Magnolia management as well as labor. Management cooperated with the Derry lumber company in various ways. For example, around 1910, some people suggested, Magnolia donated land to the Derry Lumber Co. to build a dam across Cane River and a swimming place complete with a diving board. In return, the company developed a small island near the dam for the Hertzogs' use as a campsite for family and guests. The camp, which replaced a smaller site on the riverbanks, is still in use, although now as a rental property.

The lumber company also spawned the Derry mill town, just west of Magnolia. A segregated company town on the railroad line, like other Louisiana sawmill towns, its resident laborers and specialists depended on the mill for their homes and livelihood. Derry had the accoutrements of its trade, such as a kiln to cure timber and a sawmill. It also had the amenities needed to maintain a stable work force: grist mill, commissary, school, medical services, boarding houses, and recreational facilities. Black people from Magnolia's quarters occasionally found wage work in Derry, where, for example, one of the longtime cooks in the Magnolia Big House briefly worked. Montrose and other neighboring mill towns also offered temporary jobs. Management and others also recall a Catholic chapel located in a grove of Chinaberry trees near the Derry Bridge, within walking distance of Magnolia's quarters, and constructed on land, the Hertzogs noted, donated by Fannie Hertzog Chopin, great aunt of Magnolia's present owners. The land reverted to the Chopin estate when the chapel was taken down several decades ago.

Whites, including visitors to Magnolia, recalled Derry as "a lively little town" with recreational facilities they could use, such as a dance hall, the ubiquitous baseball field, and race track. A popular outdoor movie theatre, available to everyone, was located behind the Derry Mercantile restaurant on Highway 1. It ran movies until the 1950s, recalled Ms. Ruby, who had cooked for the restaurant, a popular lunch stop, and local landmark. Today, relocated to a nearby site, the restaurant and the adjoining Metoyer's Arts and Crafts shop are among the few visible signs of commerce remaining in Derry since the defunct timber industry and farm mechanization prompted the mid-20th century exodus.

Figure 3 is a PDF that can be downloaded at <http://www.cr.nps.gov/aad/pubs/studies/pdf/study04fig03.pdf>

Churches and schools in this core area also attracted residents from various settlements and plantations. For example, black people recall St. Andrew Missionary Baptist Church (see Figure 4) in Derry and, opposite it on the Magnolia side of Cane River, the plantation's formerly standing St. James African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME), as principal religious and social centers as well as partners in community events. In the early 1940s, a public school was established near St. Andrew Church for black children. Both churches drew members from neighboring plantations into the mid-1960s, and St. Andrew continues to operate today.



Figure 4. ST. ANDREW MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH, ON THE BANKS OF THE CANE RIVER, IN DERRY, OPPOSITE THE SITE OF MAGNOLIA'S ST. JAMES AME. Photo: M. Cresdi.

Just south of Derry and Magnolia was the town of Cloutierville. Some people know it as the place where Kate Chopin lived and worked in the late 1800s on her then-controversial novel, *The Awakening*. Her residence now houses the Bayou Folk Museum. But most Magnolia and other rural residents probably know Cloutierville best as the source of services not available at the plantations. Highway 491 functioned as Cloutierville's main street. It supported a string of services, mostly white-owned banks, medical services, barbers, a cotton gin, and several ample general stores. The LaCaze family owned one and, in 1910, the Cohens built a large store, which they later sold to the Carnahans. Not to be outdone by the plantations, or Derry, the town had a racetrack too. In addition, a multi-purpose "Opera House" that held plays, movies, and dances had been established with support from the legendary Father Becker of St. John the Baptist Catholic Church. From 1921 to 1952, this multifaceted man served not only as the priest but also as a businessman, entrepreneur, and a State Fire Marshal (Miller 1994).

During its most commercially successful period, from around the start of the 20th century to the 1950s, Cloutierville catered to the logging work force, agricultural workers, and managers. The largest merchants competed briskly for available business, sending school busses, wagons, or their own trucks around the plantations on Fridays and Saturdays to collect potential customers. One major store owner gleefully recalled shoving handbills into open car windows, handing them out, and showering the Cloutierville exit at Highway 1 with advertisements of his own weekly specials. Stores were "wide open," or non-discriminatory, recruiting customers of any ethnicity, and extending credit to trusted clients and sometimes others, preferring perhaps, to risk losing cash but gaining loyal new customers. One merchant recalled that Fridays were days people would seek credit and would get it if they were known, that is, from his own or a neighboring plantation. Others paid cash, if they were strangers or people with unknown, unknowable, or unreliable credit histories. High-risk shoppers lacked established ties to the merchant or his peers and were not vulnerable to wage garnishing for nonpayment of debts. In any case, shopping on Saturdays, which often were plantation paydays, were "cash days" only.

Until segregation gradually ended in the 1960s, blacks, whites, and Creoles of color necessarily differed in their uses of most Cloutierville facilities. Bars, for example, unlike stores, tended to be race-conscious. Blacks were likely to use facilities run by their ethnic peers and Creoles of color tended to favor bars run by their peers. The public Cloutierville High School served the white students and, until it burned, the Springhill High School served the blacks. Two separate Catholic schools served white children and black children. Church structures themselves might serve a mixed population to some degree as did Cloutierville's St. John the Baptist Catholic Church. Consistent with the architecture of segregation that previously held sway, however, each group entered St. John's

through separate doors and each sat in separate areas until its remodeling in the 1960s. White Catholics sat in the center pews, the black Catholics used pews to one side of them, and Creoles of color occupied the opposite side of the building, each clustered together in their own group. The Church cemetery was somewhat more ecumenical earlier in the 20th century, judging from a headstone that clearly bears the Star of David. On the other hand, St. Davis Missionary Baptist Church, located on Highway 495 in Cloutierville, catered to a primarily black congregation that included some Magnolia laborers.

Several developments in the early-to-mid-20th century converged to reduce Cloutierville's status as a local economic center and all but eliminate mill towns such as Derry and Montrose. Large-scale logging ceased soon after Kisatchie became a National Forest in 1930. This coupled with the later transformation of plantation economies from labor-intensive to mechanized production and the increasing focus on cattle ranching with its reduced labor demands eventually took their toll. First, the changing resource uses and labor needs pushed rural workers from the timber industry and led to the close of sawmill towns. Then, changing agricultural technology with its associated replacement of men with machines prompted further depopulation of the rural area. These and other factors curtailed the local need for services and fostered Cloutierville's commercial decline. The number of Cloutierville residents declined as well. Although Kate Chopin's home is now the Bayou Folk Museum, part of the National Heritage Area and a local attraction, main street is largely marked by structurally and ethnographically interesting places, including the shells of the bank and general stores, all sorely in need of repair. Meanwhile, commerce and real estate in urban Natchitoches benefited from the relocation of rural residents.

Family ties or social and economic interests created social networks that crossed town and plantation boundaries. Magnolia's cotton was ginned at the Cohen's place, Lakeview plantation, and Magnolia residents sometimes bought clothes and supplies at the Cohen's plantation store. Recreational facilities, such as juke joints, race tracks and baseball fields, work, and ties of kinship brought Magnolia tenants in contact with their neighbors and neighboring places, such as Lakeview and Melrose plantations. Marriage, for example, linked Magnolia laborers to others from the Cohen's place, and pecan harvests at nearby Melrose plantation attracted laborers from Magnolia as well as other plantation communities. Old family ties closely linked the Hertzogs of Magnolia to the Prud'hommes of Oakland plantation. Schools drew teachers together from different communities. For example, Ms. Dee Hertzog, wife of Magnolia's owner-manager, known as "Mr. Matt," taught at Cloutierville High School and sometimes invited her co-teachers home for dinner. Communication throughout the area was also facilitated by the principal waterway, Cane River, which was dotted with ferry crossings and foot bridges that facilitated transportation during most seasons to churches, schools, plantations, and towns along the same or opposite river banks.

North of Magnolia and the neighboring Lakeview plantations is the Melrose area. An area heavily populated by Creoles of color, Melrose plantation is the legendary holding of French Creole Thomas Pierre Metoyer and his companion, the black Marie Thereze Coincoin. Nearby on Highway 484 is St. Augustine Catholic Church. Started by their eldest son, St. Augustine tends to serve the Upper Cane River communities as well as urban Natchitoches, especially, but not exclusively, Creoles of color. The Creole of color community perceives this Church, along with Cloutierville's St. John the Baptist Catholic Church, as principal spiritual, educational and community centers. Recreational facilities also line Highway 119 around Melrose where numerous clubs are located.

Until closing in the late-1980s, a public high school adjoining St. Matthew Baptist Church, north of Melrose, drew Creoles of color and blacks from the surrounding countryside. Some Creole children attended parochial school at St. Augustine or in Cloutierville, Baton Rouge, Shreveport, or New Orleans.

Magnolia

Magnolia plantation stretches over 2000 acres and had included another nearly 19 acres now in parklands (see Figure 3). Together, the area is mostly fertile bottomlands that support agriculture, especially cotton, and pastures,

and had supported orchards and considerable timberlands at an earlier period. Culturally important places punctuate the entire area. Many are aligned with the riverfront with ready access to numerous ferry crossings and Highway 119, fronting the work area, or to Highway 1, located just to the west. The landscape is described here in terms of three locales, the parklands themselves, off-park plantation lands with places that were integral to the plantation community, and places that served the community but were found off the park and the plantation.

Black people and whites generally agreed on the importance of several landscape features. Former residents of the quarters, as well as the Hertzog family and neighbors, for example, commented on the Hertzog campsite and the dam and noted the plantation store. They all also mentioned activities associated with the former stiles, the ascending and descending steps that had been built over fences dividing the corral from the quarters, and the road from the farm buildings, so that people and small animals could cross them. Everyone agreed on the importance of the Big House, farm structures, and the quarters. Other resources were readily named or recalled by the people most closely associated with them. Black people, for example, spoke enthusiastically of the AME church, the site of former deacon's home, the flowering trees and bushes, and the gardens that once grew near their homes in the quarters. They identified their own and their neighbors' homes in the quarters. Residents of the Big House commented on the Catholic chapel in the rear gallery of the Big House and the Derry chapel.

Parklands

A tree-lined alley separates the Big House and the main plantation from the parklands. There on the parklands are the pigeonier and the work area holding most of the outbuildings, such as the commissary or plantation store, blacksmith shop, stable, the gin, and other features of the farm operational and labor community. The large multi-room cottage of bousillage construction that served as the slave hospital in 1858 is there too (see Figure 5). It became the landowner's temporary home while the Big House, burned-out in the Civil War, was later reconstructed. In the 20th century it was the overseer's house. Rising above nearby structures, it represented the owners' authority and a permanent white presence in an otherwise black occupied area. Nearby, in another section, are the quarters, the black community site built to house enslaved workers, later occupied by day laborers, and now consisting of two adjacent rows of four red brick cabins each.



Figure 5. SLAVE HOSPITAL, LATER OVERSEER'S HOUSE. Photo: D. Fricker.

Natural features recalled on parklands include:

- Chinaberry or China ball trees (bot. *Melia azedarach*) produced small brown cherry-sized balls. People in the quarters used them to prepare medicinal teas to de-worm children and for adults with fevers. Children also

used the fruit balls recreationally as shot in their popguns. The trees were found at the northern and southern parts of the quarters and in the work area behind the plantation store.

- Juju or jujube trees, sometimes also called zizis trees, (bot. *ziziphus jujube*) bear round date-like fruit that became edible once they ripened and turned reddish. People in the quarters used them to prepare jelly and wine. The trees were found near the quarters and farm buildings.
- Sassafras bush (bot. *Sassafras albidum*) had leaves that were dried and universally used for teas and as a thickening agent and seasoning for gumbo. They were found in the fields behind the quarters.
- Blackberry (bot. *Rubus*) bushes produced berries that people in the quarters used in preparing table wine. Some bushes were found behind the blacksmith shop.
- Peach (bot. *Prunus persica*) and plum (bot. *Prunus*) trees were behind the quarters. Fruits were picked and jarred.
- Pecan trees (bot. *Carya illinoensis*) in the quarters and farm operational center provided nuts collected by residents of the quarters primarily for their own consumption in pies and candies.

Community features on parklands include:

- the plantation bell, now stored for protection, was rung at the store to signal the start and end of the work day, and critical events;
- the quarters with their gardens and rain barrels;
- the stiles (no longer standing) that bridged the fences in the quarters and farm work area;
- the overseer's house; and,
- the plantation store.

Farm structures on parklands include:

- the cotton gin;
- the barn; and,
- the blacksmith's workshop and adjacent grist mill.

Off-Park Plantation Lands

Dominating the horizon is the main house or the Big House, the plantation control and command center as well as home to its owner-managers (Figure 6). Surrounded by a lush flower garden and facing an avenue of cooling live oak and magnolia trees, the Big House is a gracious galleried structure built in 1896 or 1899 to replace the one burned by Union soldiers (NPS 1998b). It is a stately reminder of the care and costs invested by generations of Hertzog family owners and the work of generations of laborers. Nearby, is the contemporary-style home Dr. Hertzog built in 1976, which is presently occupied by his widow and son.

North of the Big House and along Highway 119 are additional physical remains of the larger Magnolia community (see Figure 9). Barely standing walls, almost hidden with foliage, rubble heaps, still-flowering crepe myrtle trees and plants, and majestic live oaks, mark the house sites of former occupational specialists, just north of the Big House, along Highway 119. The site of the former St. James AME Church along with its kitchen outbuilding, baptismal site, and rutted parking lot follows at the bend in the road (Figure 7). Then come the sharecropper house sites, some occupied into the 1960s by black people and more by Creoles of color. These places all offer evidence of the once viable settlement that made its way around the bend towards Melrose. Although few visible traces of the earlier



Figure 6. THE FRONT PORCH OF THE BIG HOUSE.

Photo: M. Crespi.



Figure 7. FORMER SITE OF ST. JAMES AME, MAGNOLIA, ON THE CANE RIVER. Photo: M. Crespi.

structures remain, they persist as important and often named features in people's perceived landscapes. Former residents used earlier structures as place markers that indicate the site of some important event, activity, or person's home. In addition, they provided locational markers for giving directions or describing locations of other sites. Certain features, for example, were said to be at the "bend" in the road on Highway 119 (see Figure 8), "near the AME Church," or "close by Ms. Lizzie's house," or "down from Cliff Lemell's house." The Church and Ms. Lizzie's house had fallen decades ago and left no more physical evidence than rubble heaps and blooming trees, and Ms. Lizzie had moved to Natchitoches over 40 years earlier. The Cliff Lemell house, where the AME deacon once lived, is now a shell of partial walls. Still, these places and the memories of their uses and former occupants were imprinted on the landscape as well as in the minds and conceptual maps of those who knew and visited them. Residences were linked to the former occupants in a socially proprietary, rather than legal, sense. Cultural outsiders could not identify them or their importance without local assistance, nor would they have found sites such as those near "Ms. Lizzie's place." Memory places or ephemeral "shadow" structures with stories and names that represent past people, events, and activities help keep the past viable in the present.

Certain features of this core landscape were also so closely connected that they were perceived and used as a coupled unit, despite their location in different communities. Prominent in this respect is the St. James AME Church in Magnolia and, directly opposite it on the Derry side of Cane River, the St. Andrew Missionary Baptist Church. As described later, the two structures and the river between them formed part of a single continuous religious landscape.

Off-park plantation religious sites, structures, and objects include:

- A small statue of the Catholic Saint Isadore, patron saint of farmers. Mr. Matt had it set on a horizontal beam between two telephone poles as the gateway to the main field north of the plantation house. It was later removed because of threatened vandalism, possibly by people not from Cane River.
- Unmarked baptismal sites recalled on the river bank near the formerly standing St. James AME.
- St. James AME with its two locations. The first Church, no longer standing, was on the riverbank opposite St. Andrew Missionary Baptist Church; its back was towards Cane River. The second site, mentioned as a place marker, was nearby at the bend, fronting on Highway 119 in the sharecropper area. Termite-ridden and destabilized by a car crash, it was leveled in the mid-1970s. The Church had an adjacent kitchen at each site (see Figure 4).
- Catholic Chapel on the back gallery of the Big House, which serves the Hertzog family.

Off-park plantation engineering features include:

- A spillway or dam below the Lakewood-Magnolia boundary, seen by some as marking the difference between upper and lower Cane River.
- The "bend" in the road near the St. James AME and the line of sharecropper homes where the river turns away from Highway 119.

- “Up the road,” towards Melrose and the sharecropper homes along Highway 119, north of the Big House before, at, and after the “bend” (Figure 8).

Off-park plantation community features include:

- the Big House;
- Ms. Lizzie’s place near the “bend” in the sharecropper area (not standing);
- fruit trees and others, including crepe myrtle and flowering plants, found in the fields where they marked abandoned sharecropper house sites;
- Cliff Lemell’s house near St. James AME (not standing);
- John Vercher’s house (not standing);
- the Hertzog camp;
- the thoroughbred stables and nearby gravesite of the Flying Dutchman, a prizewinning horse;
- the cook’s house; and,
- Ms. Betty’s new house.



Figure 8. THE BEND, HIGHWAY 119 TOWARDS MELROSE.
Photo: M. Crespi.

Off-park plantation natural place markers include:

- the live oak near the bend, AME Church, and start of the sharecropper area;
- the pecan tree (near Ms. Betty’s house) that marks a former sharecropper’s cabin; and,
- the Upper/Lower Cane River.

Off-plantation religious places:

- St. Andrew Missionary Baptist Church and cemetery, near Cane River in Derry, attended by Magnolia’s black residents who also buried their dead in its cemetery. Held events in tandem with the AME Church opposite it on the Magnolia side of the river.
- St. Matthew Baptist Church and cemetery, north of Melrose, attended by some Magnolia black people who also buried their deceased there. Numerous Magnolia youth also attended the public high school adjacent to the Church.
- St. John the Baptist Catholic Church, and cemetery, in Cloutierville on Highway 491, attended by whites, Creoles of color, and blacks.
- St. Augustine Catholic Church and cemetery, Highway 484, a religious and community center for Creoles of color and other Catholics.
- St. Davis Baptist Church and cemetery in Cloutierville where several deceased Magnolia tenants are buried.
- Derry Catholic Chapel (no longer standing) on Chopin lands, near Magnolia, attended by Creoles of color, blacks, and Derry whites.

Figure 9 is a PDF that can be downloaded at <http://www.cr.nps.gov/aad/pubs/studies/pdf/study04fig09.pdf>

CHAPTER 5: PLANTATION ECONOMY

As a traditional plantation, Magnolia had shared some characteristics with the historic old-world manorial system (cf. Hilton 1973). Both were shaped by the production and political goals of large-scale powerful landowners with limited cash but access to subordinate landless laborers. With meager or, in the case of the slave plantation, no options, the labor force confronted few reasonable alternatives to meeting some of their own subsistence needs outside the traditional arrangements. Magnolia's subsequent transformation from a slave driven plantation to one using landless laborers and sharecroppers—rural proletarians—and, in the past century, to a mechanized enterprise, was accompanied by a gradual shift to an exclusive cash economy.

Actually, the 20th century and earlier “plantation economy” included several related economies. One is the commercial plantation system, which emphasized cotton, corn, soybeans, and cattle. The other is the tenant economy of sharecroppers and day laborers. The commercial and tenant farm economies obviously contrasted in terms of scale, land tenure, marketing, income, and other factors, but some commonalities existed too. They shared certain agricultural risks, such as bad weather and infestations, that could ruin everyone's crops. The commercial losses resulting from natural disasters might force management to seek fiscal support from banks, neighbors, and associates to keep their holdings intact and tide them over until the next season. Without equivalent economic cushions so vital to survival and recovery, however, the contrasts between the economies became glaring as disasters threatened to permanently undermine small-scale sharecroppers. For day laborers, threats to commercial crops could devastate workers by reducing the plantation's need for them. Everyone also shared the problem of being cash-poor most of the year, making the immediate exchange of cash for labor or commodities rare until the annual harvests brought a “settling up” time. Although conserving scarce cash was problematic for all, the problem was most acute for day laborers and tenant farmers.

PLANTATION ACCOMMODATIONS TO SCARCE CASH

“Croppers”: Half-Hands, or Sharecroppers; Fourth-Hands, or Renters

Magnolia had tractors in use by 1938, yet mules and farm hands continued to work nearby them (The Progress 1938) until mechanization became the dominant and then exclusive mode. Meanwhile, Magnolia necessarily depended on diverse arrangements to meet its labor needs. Classified by management either in terms of their physical input, that is as “hands,” or their take of the harvest, plantation tenants might be half-hands, or sharecroppers. Others were fourth-hands, also called “renters” by some. Still others were the landless day hands or day laborers who earned wages. Some workers also provided specialized services, such as domestic help or chauffeuring. All received housing. The tenancy arrangements gave management access to agricultural labor without requiring major cash outlays because Magnolia used available land to attract otherwise landless farmers to put its fields into production in exchange for various in-kind payments and potential cash incomes. The houses of numerous families who “worked on the half” or “on the fourth” once dotted the landscape on both sides of Highway 119 from the Big House north to Lakeview, the Cohen's place.

Magnolia provided tenant farmers with fields, a house, and garden area and advanced them certain agricultural inputs and other items from the plantation store. Tenants varied somewhat in the extent and type of investments they made in producing the crop and, concomitantly, in the size of their split with the plantation. Tenants who worked as half-hands provided labor throughout the life cycle of the crop; used Magnolia's mule team; and purchased seed, insecticide, and other inputs on credit. The plantation managed the sale of the crop and split the income 50-50 with the sharecropper or “cropper” as some called themselves. People recalled that the costs of purchases made on credit and against anticipated income were later deducted from the tenants' portion of the harvest sale. Some remembered earning just enough to pay the year's debts, starting the new year no further ahead

than the old. In the worst scenario, sharecroppers ended the year with such major outstanding debts that they started the new cycle under a cloud. Some might have quietly moved away. In the best case, successful sharecroppers might eventually obtain their own mules and become renters, as one former resident recalled.

People working on a fourth-hand, or renters, were usually Creoles of color. They too provided labor throughout the life cycle of the crop and might purchase seed and other items at the plantation store. Like the half-hands who split 50-50, renters shared the crop and settled up after the harvest. But unlike them, the fourth-hands evidently exercised greater control over their time, labor, and resources, such as mule teams. Tenants who farmed on the fourth differed importantly from the others by owning their own mule team. As owners, they could and did rent their mules and their own and their children's labor to neighboring independent farmers during planting and harvesting seasons, thus enhancing their incomes beyond the returns of the plantation harvest they shared. They also managed the sale of their crop, rather than have the plantation do it, and distributed the returns in a 25-75 split, with 25% or 1/4th going to the plantation. Although all tenants shared the risks of pests, weather conditions, and the like, families working on a fourth-hand could anticipate potentially greater benefits.

Day Hands and Seasonal Laborers

Partly because the design of plantation fields had not been fully adapted to tractors and other new technology, Magnolia depended on day and seasonal laborers to work the fields along with machines and mules. For example, mechanized pickers did not harvest the ends of the turn-rows because the machines missed them in making wide swings around the ends of the cultivated rows. In the late 1950s, people were still picking the end of the turn-rows, helping to plant, and chopping cotton. As Magnolia's 1957 Work Book list of laborers and their hours noted, the cotton harvest—a peak employment season—drew day workers from the few black families still living in the quarters. They paid no rent but were available as needed for short-term or long-term help and for work as domestic specialists in the Big House. Other occasional field hands came from families of black and Creole tenant farmers living up the road. Workers put in long days, from “sun up to sun down” during the peak labor seasons (Magnolia Plantation Papers 1957). One worker recalled, “you would be going to the fields when the sunrise, and you didn't quit until, maybe, five minutes to the time to go home. You'd be so tired, and you might have a mile or two to walk...I have come across that field, cutting off every which a way myself.”

The additional laborers needed to cultivate or chop the cotton plants in order to thin the fields and pick cotton came primarily from Natchitoches. Presumably underemployed or unemployed people responded to the call of a major labor recruiter, Reverend Turner. He was a respected black preacher and entrepreneur who had left the countryside for residence in the city. He spoke with pride of the many years his school bus periodically did double-duty. It carried children to school during the school year and, when school was suspended during the harvests, hauled black men, women, and children hoe-hands to chop or pick cotton at Magnolia and other Cane River plantations.

Special Workers

Some tenant laborers and sharecroppers might also do more specialized permanent or temporary work. Supervised by the overseer, who managed the day-to-day field operations, their roles included:

- Yard-man: usually came from the quarters, maintained the area around the main house, tended the garden and sheep and other barnyard animals. He might also use the buggy to pick up mail in Derry.
- Lot-man: came from the quarters, tended the horses and mules, fed, and watered them in the afternoon and evenings.

- Blacksmith: sharpened plowpoints, fixed axles, shod mules and horses, did some carpentry, and ran the grist mill. The longtime blacksmith, Cliff Lemell, was also the collector at the store and a deacon of St. James AME
- Cowboys: cattle were herded by several workers, including some from the quarters, and others, Creoles of color, from nearby areas.
- Tractor drivers: some came from the quarters; others came from near Melrose. They earned more than others and received bonuses for working overtime during harvest.
- Stable hands: tended the thoroughbreds and other stock.

Managing the Big House required considerable domestic help, including:

- Laundry help: washed, ironed, and sewed for the Big House. In the summers, in anticipation of harvest needs, someone from the quarters used an old sewing machine on the back porch to repair sacks for holding cotton.
- House servants: included men and women from the quarters.
- Nurse maids: included women from the quarters who helped care for children.
- Cooks: including the well-known and respected “Aunt Martha” and her daughter, Rosa, who lived in the cook’s house, and Mary Jane Cheatham from the quarters.
- Chauffeurs: several lived in the quarters, including Mr. Matt’s driver who also repaired tractors. The drivers sometimes also worked in the Big House.

Other specialists, people from urban Natchitoches and adjacent areas, were overseers, store managers, and accountants. Usually they were white.

Animal Husbandry

Diversifying its economic base probably gave Magnolia insurance against pests, such as the crop-specific boll weevil, poor weather, and other natural threats. The plantation maintained a small flock of sheep. Like other resources they served multiple purposes, which, in this case, included browsing on the Big House lawn to keep the grasses down and providing yearlings for the Hertzog family dinner table. Pigeons provided squab for the Big House dinner table and some recreational benefits. Geese, briefly, helped clean the lawn. Plantation cattle were a principal commercial investment raised for sale. Perhaps twice yearly, auctioneers would come from Alexandria, sometimes from a firm called Dominique, or from Hodges, to take the calves back for auction. Cattle also provided food sources for the Big House and for laborers on festive occasions such as June 19th and Thanksgiving when Mr. Matt donated cattle for the community feast. In the 1960s, management recalls, Magnolia ran about 1,600 head of cattle. Skilled handlers were required. Although ranching was less labor intensive than agriculture, management commented on the difficulty of finding skilled cowboys to tend the herd at Magnolia or, as occasionally needed, drive it to the Kisatchie hills when necessitated by floods and rotting grasses.

Unlike its present stock of mostly work horses, Magnolia once had an active breeding program. Its stables raised prizewinning thoroughbreds, saddle-gates, and single-foot horses, as well as ponies, called “creole,” and mules, some of which were exported to Texas and elsewhere. Magnolia’s fine horses were a matter of pride to the Hertzogs as well as to former workers. Among the more memorable ones, management noted, were prize-winners, such as Magnolia Mary, the pony Black Giant, the showhorse Major Mosley, Charley, Blackbird, Gray Mack, and Frank, Mr. Matt’s horse. Charley Williams from the quarters was the jockey when Frank won one of the more competitive regional races. But the best known and rewarded might have been the Flying Dutchman who won the Stakes in the early 1850s at the Metarie course in New Orleans. A visible symbol of his achievement is the heavy sterling silver service the Hertzogs received to mark their win, now proudly displayed in the dining

room of the Big House. When the Flying Dutchman died at age five, the family buried him near the thoroughbred stables.



Figure 10. MAGNOLIA PLANTATION STORE. Photo: D. Fricker.

Plantation Store

A public space, the store served as an economic and social magnet for men, women and children of all ethnicities (Figure 10). Working men might have been the primary users, making purchases, as well as lounging on the porch and its bench and at the nearby stiles where they exchanged news and gossip, played dominos, or sometimes shot craps. Gas and diesel fuel were pumped here. Magnolia's tractor drivers would start lining up to fuel their equipment by 7am and make another stop around noon when they returned for lunch. As a market, the store's almost exclusive clients were cash-poor residents who needed foodstuffs, including wheat flour, condiments, such as sugar and salt, and other necessities,

and occasionally supplemented produce from their gardens or barnyard animals with canned foods. The store also sold unparched green coffee beans. Residents of the Big House still pleurably recall the early morning aroma of parched beans being ground and roasted at home and wafting up from the quarters. Medicines, candles, kerosene, some clothing, and small tools were available too and later ice cream and frozen foods after Mr. Matt purchased a freezer in the 1950s. Agricultural needs for seed, fertilizer, insecticide, and other inputs were met here. This is also where residents paid, in kind, for having the plantation grist mill grind their corn and where people came to be paid and "settle-up."

Day workers and tenant farmers were paid in plantation-specific paper scrip or brass tokens for many years until new banking laws in the 1930s prohibited this form of payment. Not legal tender, scrip substituted for the limited cash available to the plantation management. It represented payment for past services or for future labor, that is, an advance that day workers drew against expected earnings or tenant farmers drew against the anticipated income earned from future harvests. Each plantation had its own characteristic scrip, which could be redeemed only at that plantation store or in Magnolia's case either there or, for a brief time, by arrangement with Cohen's neighboring Lakeview Store. Scrip gave the plantation the option to use its limited available cash to meet other demands while also ensuring its store of a supply of steady customers. Workers received convenient access to needed goods but, unless they had some ready cash, no opportunity to purchase provisions at competing stores. Plantation stores were unlikely to extend credit to strangers with unknown or unknowable credentials whose bills could not be easily settled.

"Settling up," as residents called it, occurred for both management and tenants once the harvest was sold. Management sold its own crop and the sharecropper yields, paid its own debts to suppliers and banks, and settled with residents. Settling had management paying day laborers their wages and sharecroppers their share of the harvest sales and also deducting the outstanding debts accumulated at the commissary against the earned wages or sales. One former sharecropper recalled the habit of charging everything at the store-shoes, clothing, anything. "They had all that at the store. But now, when you come to settle, they would take what you bought out of your half. So you see how far that left you behind." Debtors considered themselves fortunate if the year brought a small surplus after the "settling up" or saw them just clearing the debt burden without carrying it all over into the next year.

The store was an entertainment center too where local musicians staged popular performances. Residents from the Big House and the quarters recalled gathering around the porch Christmas Eve to enjoy hearing and seeing the LaCour brothers perform. The Creole family, Youk, Duma, and Sheck LaCour (another brother, Eveck, might join them elsewhere), had formed what might have been the most popular local band. Mr. Matt would bring the three LaCour brothers to the plantation at Christmas and other occasions to play for the community before moving on to family festivities at the Big House. The store was also where Mr. Matt's brother, Dr. Hertzog, would treat rapt audiences to viewings of the movies or photos he had shot on previous trips to Magnolia. Many of Dr. Hertzog's photographs of special events and people, baseball games, and horse races permanently decorated the store walls, reflecting the faces of the community back to the shoppers. As his photos and films show, Dr. Hertzog and his family regularly returned to his Magnolia birthplace for holidays, family celebrations, and vacations. A center for trophies and memorabilia, the store also displayed the ribbons and trophies management's well-bred walking horses and mules won, thanks partly to the care lavished on them by workers and owners alike. Walls were also adorned with musical instruments, such as a guitar and fiddle. Children found reasons to be at the store too, sometimes accompanying their parents and sometimes, as recalled by a former overseer's wife who worked there, stopping for a piece of candy, and to practice reading, writing, or reciting their alphabets.

The store closed after Mr. Matt's death in 1973. Even before then the store was losing its economic edge for the plantation as well as the community, as one Hertzog family member observed. Keeping it stocked with merchandise required trips to Natchitoches or Alexandria, entailing small investments of time, labor, and gas. Wholesale prices had also been rising beyond the level that could be covered by a mark-up that was affordable to the purchaser yet yielded the store a reasonable profit. In addition, for some time the store had been open only part-time because most residents had already relocated and others had access to transportation or could obtain provisions for cash elsewhere. It seemed more expedient and economically satisfying to everyone to use the supermarkets that had come to urban Natchitoches.

CHAPTER 6: THE MAGNOLIA COMMUNITY: MORE THAN 19 ACRES

The park is an incomplete segment of what once was a community of interacting, socially differentiated families. From the residents' view, the landscape called the "Hertzogs'" extends to Magnolia's boundaries. In addition to the quarters, overseer's home, and farm complex in the park, the community included the Big House and the area around the bend with the sharecropper houses and the St. James AME Church. Until the 1960s, the plantation showed lingering evidence of its complex organization as a residential community as well as an agricultural enterprise. A rural "company town" in these respects and a form of "total institution" that met many lifelong needs (Gordon and Williams 1977), the right to live in this essentially private domain depended on the landholder's continuing concurrence.

AUTHORITY

Mr. Matt gave the work orders, paid the workers, and sometimes personally counted the coins and bills he slapped into their hands. Mr. Matt told people where they could live on the plantation or at least approved of their choices. Mr. Matt gave the gifts, brought the band on festive occasions, and declared the holidays. Mr. Matt decided who would work. In the residents' view, the primary responsibility for guiding Magnolia through its economic trials and successes and for major decision-making belonged to Mr. Matt. Overseers were responsible for implementing the owner's decisions in the fields and in the quarters and tenant farms as well, but authority rested with Mr. Matt.

Typical of company towns, authority, influence, and power followed class lines, giving the landowner the right to be the general peacekeeper as well as rule-maker. Earlier in Magnolia's history, real or alleged infractions would probably have been handled locally at the landowner's discretion. Evidence of local solutions to problems comes from the antique leg irons and stocks people recalled seeing stored in the cellar of the former two-story house near the St. James AME. Perhaps this structure served as a jail in the past century. The Hertzogs noted that the rusted stocks were since moved to the main house for storage. In recent times and until the late 1960s, the landowners' considerable weight with law enforcement agents might be used to the workers' advantage or disadvantage. As interviewees said, plantation managers could use personal influence to intervene on a workers' behalf to avoid their incarceration for some minor infraction or gain their early release from jail. As one former worker observed, "Mr. Matt used to have a say-so in who got arrested and who got out of jail, but that changed in the late 1960's" when local officials began exercising greater authority.

Former residents usually remembered their roles as, in a sense, "tenuous guests" of the Hertzogs, living at Magnolia with Mr. Matt's permission and fully dependent on his agreement for continued access to a house site. Laborers lived rent-free in the quarters even when work was occasionally unavailable. They paid for their own electricity, installed in the 1940s, about 10 years after the Big House was electrified. But tenure in the quarters and elsewhere at Magnolia was precarious, subject to the landowner's discretion and the residents' evident compliance with his norms. One story tells of the manager's displeasure at learning that two young black men from two different families in the quarters had enjoyed themselves at a recently desegregated cafe in urban Natchitoches. Having broken the traditional social rules against inter-racial fraternizing in bars and elsewhere, management penalized the young men by evicting them and their families from the plantation. They found alternative residence at Melrose but were permitted to return several weeks later once tempers subsided.

FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Plantation facilities and services often met multiple purposes, serving both community and commercial plantation needs. For example, the blacksmith not only repaired axles, filed tools, and shod the plantation horses. He also fixed broken hoes or plows for laborers and tenant farmers. He ran the grist mill located near the blacksmith shop

and, in that capacity, ground corn for the community. Although some families had their own mills, others kept him especially busy on Fridays, recalled as being “cornbread days” when they prepared this special fare. Some corn came from their own small gardens, while some might be gleaned or “scrap picked” from the leftovers in harvested plantation fields that machines failed to pick. One resident recalled occasionally receiving gifts of corn from Mr. Matt from the plantation crop. Residents used the plantation pump to get water from the river to wash clothes and bathe. A cistern near the gin house was recalled as the source of cooking and drinking water at one time. Residents in the quarters also had cisterns in their yards and they as well as sharecropper families kept barrels near their cabins to catch rainwater for drinking and cooking purposes.

Residents took several alternative approaches to health care. Although some problems occasioned trips to medical specialists in urban Natchitoches or Cloutierville, solutions were usually sought locally. Ms. Betty Hertzog recalls Public Health Service physicians periodically coming from Natchitoches or Cloutierville to set up temporary clinics on the back porch of the Big House. They treated community members there for general ailments and annually gave children their required typhoid shots and other basic inoculations. Temporary Public Health Service clinics might also be found dispersed in the countryside. Mothers-to-be in the quarters found the assistance needed during childbirth from a midwife who lived nearby, sharing the cook’s house at one time. Magnolia women also called on other local midwives from nearby towns such as Cypress. On a day-to-day basis, residents relied on their own folk knowledge and remedies, using herbs from their gardens and fruits or leaves from nearby trees and bushes to prepare healing teas, poultices, and salves.

SCHOOLING

Magnolia had no public school facilities. One former resident recalled classes being held at the quarters, taught perhaps by the wife of the second St. Andrew’s preacher. That would have been around 1922 (Baptiste n.d.), a decade or so before the construction of “colored” public schools. Classes were also occasionally held after services at St. James AME. It was not uncommon for churches to house public schools until separate buildings were constructed on donated church land or nearby. The Natchitoches Parish School Board records show that several churches and private landowners had cooperated with the Parish by donating or selling land at a nominal fee for public schools. For example, although Magnolia children might have first attended public school classes held in the church itself, the Parish School records show that the Parish purchased private holdings in 1941 to construct a public school for “the colored” in Derry near St. Andrew Missionary Baptist Church. The school would also be called St. Andrew. Children from the quarters attended it, crossing the Cane River by boat whenever possible, taking the footbridge, hiking up their trouser legs and wading across when the river was very low, or walking the long way around on Highway 119 and Highway 1. When the Parish sold the land in 1954 and the building was moved elsewhere, children transferred to St. Matthew School near Melrose, likewise established as a “colored” public school for blacks and Creoles of color.

St. Matthew public school had also started within the church building itself. Former teachers recalled the unique challenges teaching in church occasionally posed in the late 1930s, such as having to escort children from the building for a while whenever funerals were held. Later, in 1939, according to the Natchitoches Parish School Board Records, St. Matthew Baptist Church donated land so that the Parish could construct a public school, also known as St. Matthew Public School. The Natchitoches Parish School Board Records document its expansion in size and scope from a three-room schoolhouse in 1939 to a senior high school in 1947. Located near Melrose, the school came to draw Creoles of color as well as black students. By the time black children from Magnolia went there, it served all age groups. Children of Magnolia attended segregated public schools throughout their stay in the countryside. Only after the 1964 Civil Rights Act and subsequent court-ordered school integration in 1968 did schools in the parish very gradually integrate.

The educational system responded to phases of the agricultural cycle and labor as well as laborer needs. One result was an abbreviated school year and high absenteeism in the “colored” schools prompted by participation in

the cotton harvest. To accommodate the landowners' labor needs and family financial needs to have children work the plantation fields, colored schools used a "split session." Classes were held for 3 months, closed for the cotton harvest season between September and October, and then resumed in November. Children's earnings either supplemented family incomes and helped purchase household necessities or paid for school clothes, books, baseball uniforms or equipment, and school organizations. Teachers might pick cotton as well during this period when their wages were suspended. Sometimes, families pooled their money to pay the teachers to continue giving classes during the harvest. Children and teachers returned to school afterwards and stayed until summer, without leaving for the planting season in March or April.

Adults recalled that as children they worked hard at school, but they also played. Aside from marbles and other schoolyard games, children also duplicated adult activities in the form of games. In the kind of "dressing up" play that mimicked adult life and anticipated their own future, children often played during recess at baptizing and preaching. Although their parents might have disapproved, people recalled that "playing" baptism meant being held by other kids as they were bent backwards, "like they were dipping you in the river, and you had to shout loud." Some youngsters, conceivably Catholic Creole children, did not always like that game and would sometimes excuse themselves by claiming illness.

LONGEVITY AND RESIDENTIAL MOBILITY WITHIN THE COMMUNITY

Several families had maintained a presence at Magnolia for generations. With a history dating back to the 18th century, the Hertzogs might have had the greatest longevity. Although families of tenant laborers and sharecroppers might not have duplicated the Hertzogs' residence history, Keel (NPS 1999a:20) notes that some freed laborers had remained at Magnolia following abolition, working as freed contract laborers. Conceivably, tenants who lived in the quarters or were sharecroppers could trace their ancestry to enslaved workers. Interviews taught us that members of several extended families, including Ms. Lizzie's, which stayed at Magnolia until the 1960s, traced their maternal kin back to a grandmother who might have been born into slavery. Perhaps this grandmother lived at what is now the adjoining plantation, a part of the greater Hertzog holding until 1903 but



Figure 11. Ms. LIZZIE, BORN AND REARED IN MAGNOLIA, IN FRONT OF HER FORMER HOUSE IN THE QUARTERS.
Photo: M. Crespi.

now owned by the estate of Ms. Fanny Hertzog Chopin. Ms. Lizzie was born in 1900 (see Figure 11). If her mother was born in the mid-1880s, it is possible that her grandmother had been born into slavery. Several women in this particularly long line of workers had husbands who married into the community from neighboring areas, for example from black Cloutierville families and black families working at the Cohen's. Members of this same family and surviving spouses were also the last residents to leave Magnolia. Our limited data on Creole tenant farmers suggests that at least two generations of some families had lived and farmed at Magnolia.

Although families maintained a stable residence in Magnolia for generations, residence in the quarters and up the road was quite fluid between the 1930s-60s as residents shifted their domiciles between these two locales, and new residents moved in from other communities (see Table 1). One laborer listed in the plantation Work Book for 1957, for example, came to the quarters from Little River and another came with his family from Powhatan, a town located between Shreveport and urban Natchitoches. Black families might move to the quarters from the sharecropper area, evidence of declining fortunes and a sign that the risks of sharecropping did not always balance the returns at "settling-up" time. In these cases, families had the option of moving to the quarters and assuming the status of day laborers. Other black day hands listed in 1957 were members of sharecropper families, one of whom formerly had been

day laborers living in the quarters. The reverse movement was unlikely to occur; that is, Creole sharecroppers rarely, if ever, moved to the quarters regardless of downward turns in their luck. On the other hand, Creole sharecroppers who worked “on the half” might become fourth-hands, or renters, if they acquired the important team and further ratcheted up their economic potential. Tenant farmers might also cycle through Magnolia and other Cane River plantations as sharecroppers before purchasing their own land or moving to urban Natchitoches and elsewhere.

Residence within the quarters also shifted in response to the available housing stock and social changes in the residents’ life and family cycles. Changing occupational and marital status and changes in family size with the birth of children and death or departure of adult children might precipitate relocation to another cabin. Small families were known to move from larger quarters to smaller ones if in-coming families needed additional space. Marriage, sometimes between individuals within the quarters, and establishment of a new family stimulated another series of moves. These several types of moves meant that, within a decade, an individual or a family might have occupied several different cabins in the quarters. A similar process involving the redistribution of individuals into new households and families into changing house sites was occurring in the sharecropper area.

An example of changing social identities and shifting house sites comes from one family history. Ms. Lizzie and her husband – he had come from Lakeview plantation – moved from the quarters to a sharecropper’s cabin while their adult daughter moved with her husband to Keithville, another Louisiana community. Ms. Lizzie’s daughter returned in 1944 to bear her own daughter in Ms. Lizzie’s house assisted by a midwife from Cypress, a rural settlement closer to Oakland. For a time, the three generations lived together. Ms. Lizzie’s daughter left again with her child but later returned for a while. The next time she left Magnolia, her daughter, Ms. Lizzie’s granddaughter, remained to keep Ms. Lizzie company, eventually sharing domestic and field tasks and attending St. Matthew’s public school. Later, in the mid-1960s, Ms. Lizzie’s granddaughter married a Magnolia man and moved to the quarters with him. Meanwhile, Ms. Lizzie’s daughter had returned again and moved into a cabin in the quarters with her subsequent husband, also a Magnolia man.

TABLE 1: ESTIMATES OF MAGNOLIA POPULATION

1938	Approximately 7 families in the quarters (The Progress 1938). Approximately 30-40 sharecropper families, according to B. Hertzog and about 43 according to The Progress. Hertzogs occupy the Big House.
1958	Approximately 6 families in the quarters and 20 sharecropper families (1958 Work Book and estimated by E.V and G. L). Hertzogs occupy the Big House.
1960s	Approximately 7 families in the quarters. 2 sharecropper families (L.J., D.W.). Hertzogs occupy the Big House.
1969	Approximately 1 family in the quarters (E.V.). Hertzogs occupy the Big House and, in the 1970s, Dr. Hertzog’s house.
1996	1 trailer near the bend occupied by daughter of former cook. Hertzogs occupy the Big House and Dr. Hertzog’s house.

STRATIFICATION AND RESIDENCE

The two and one-half story Big House was reconstructed in the late 1890s using the foundation and brick walls and pillars remaining from the original house burned by retreating Union troops in 1864. One of the long-lived tales about the Union troops was their killing of the caretaker, whose ghost is said to linger under the staircase where he was killed. The more than 20 rooms, including a wide central hall on the main floor that runs the width of the structure, are elegantly furnished, primarily with antiques, many of them family heirlooms. Like its predecessor, the house has a front and back gallery. Part of the rear gallery once served as a sleeping porch (The Natchitoches Times 1978) and it still has the small Catholic Chapel built in 1910 for the family's use. This was primarily the domain of the plantation owners, members of their extended family, friends, and business associates. Unless they were part of the domestic staff who maintained the family and ample house, black residents rarely entered the area. Work areas on the back porch and behind the house, as Vlach (1993) observes for most plantation mansions, were the domain of black specialists who did the laundry, sewing, slaughtering, and other chores. At Magnolia, it was also where tenants received medical attention from visiting doctors.

Beyond the tree-lined avenue that separated the Big House from the several outbuildings or farm structures and quarters is what is now called the overseer's home. The mid-19th century use of this hip-roofed cottage was as a slave hospital. Painted white with dark trim, the house dominated the landscape in the farm operational center and nearby quarters. The white occupants represented the plantation management and added a local middle-class presence to the area. At least one overseer remained in the Magnolia community for decades, with his sons assuming various roles there, such as running the store. One eventually replaced his aging father as the overseer, following the pattern, not unusual around Cane River, of passing a position down to an offspring. Like the laborers, the overseer's family maintained barnyard animals and cultivated a garden with the array of crops characteristic of the area.

Social life for members of the overseer's family varied with a person's age and gender. Young children might play with other children from the Big House and sometimes the quarters as well. Adult interactions were generally more restricted to social and ethnic peers unless work was the context. In doing their jobs, overseers maintained close communication with the Hertzogs, especially Mr. Matt, and with the day laborers and sharecroppers, conveying information or work orders down from management to workers and the quality of responses from workers up to management. In this sense, the overseer's position was an intervening or brokering position between the two extremes of the occupational hierarchy. Overseers themselves might lunch with Mr. Matt to brief him on field conditions and discuss general operations. Overseers' wives interacted in a work context with the women from the quarters who provided domestic help. At least one former overseer's wife worked in the store where she had contact with workers and children, some of whom she helped with schoolwork. For the most part, however, with few, if any, social peers at Magnolia, the overseers' social lives necessarily depended on kin, friends, and activities outside the plantation.

QUARTERS

The quarters were the domain of the day laborers, an almost exclusively black neighborhood or community within the larger community. With few exceptions, Creoles of color claim never to have gone there even to visit. Facilities such as the store were at hand and, unlike the sharecropped houses north of the Big House towards Melrose, immediate neighbors lived in cabins within earshot of each other. Sharing ideas, activities, and information was easier among people living in the adjacent red brick cabins. Built in the 19th century to harbor two enslaved families each, the eight intact cabins with central chimneys continued to house black families, now day laborers, well into the 20th century. They stand four in each row, the remains of a once larger set of about 24. Seven of the cabins have two rooms separated by a common or party wall with a central chimney and a fireplace in each room. Floors are of wood. Each room has its own entry door. The eighth structure is a half-cabin, said to have lost its other half during the 1939 tornado. The original wood shingle roofing on each cabin had been

replaced by tin. Photographs dating from 1939, before the now-legendary tornado devastated the area, show front porches, picket fences, flowers in pots and in the garden (Cammie G. Henry Archives), and yards with hard-packed soil that people would sweep clean. Flowering bushes and trees once enlivened the quarters, former tenants recall.

The cabins were the birthplace for some laborers and home to more. The two front doors to each cabin, leading to the two rooms with a fireplace in each, are present-day reminders that two families once lived in each house (see Figures 12 and 13). The two-unit arrangement changed when the population, Ms. Lizzie noted, became “thinned,” earlier in the 20th century. As residents vacated the quarters for lack of work or to become sharecroppers and competition for housing was reduced, the interior housing space for each of the remaining families was enlarged. Mr. Matt allowed the conversion of the two-family houses into one-family units by breaking through the party wall originally separating the two rooms. Modifications were also made to the rear of several cabins where Mr. Matt allowed the construction of an additional room, called “plank rooms” by former residents. The room might serve a widowed mother or mother-in-law or an increasing number of children, or be used as a kitchen. Each cabin also had a small front yard, where firewood was stockpiled, and gardens. Outouses were in the rear. Electricity had been installed in the 1940s as part of the rural electrification program, about 10 years after the Big House was electrified, as the Hertzogs recalled. Although almost bare of foliage now, former residents recall the flowering fruit trees and bushes that once shaded and lent color to the area. The general or common area in front of the cabins became an informal playground for the quarters’ children as well as for young white children visiting the main house, white children of overseer families, and black children who played together with their age-mates.



Figure 12. THE INTERIOR OF A CABIN IN THE QUARTERS SHOWING THE DOOR THROUGH THE WALL THAT ORIGINALLY SEPARATED THE HOME INTO TWO RESIDENCES. Photo: M. Crespi.

The quarters represented a space that landless black people could treat as theirs, albeit on a limited basis. Personalizing the cabin interiors by adding their own furnishings, arranging their gardens, and selecting food crops and flowering plants as they wished helped convert the two small rooms into their own place. Former residents recalled wallpapering the cabin’s interior with magazine pages. Using paste made by mixing flour and water, they covered the paper and stuck it to the walls, tacking the tops and bottoms where they would remain unless children pulled at them. Pride in their modest homes, along with Mr. Matt’s interest in making the plantation look more festive, led people to whitewash the exterior at Christmas when Mr. Matt provided the whitewash. Interiors might be whitewashed too, once the magazine wallpaper had been removed.

Residents were not only co-workers and neighbors; several families were kinsmen too. Marriage linked many neighbors. Some neighbors were siblings and, in other cases, several generations of the same maternal and paternal lines occupied adjacent cabins. The institution of god-parenthood might add another bond to the ties between children and adults, and between parents and godparents. Residents occasionally cooperated in childcare, exchanged surplus foods, and reciprocated small favors. They courted here, married, and raised families. They participated in the same church activities and celebrated the same holidays together. Weekend fun might find young and old playing “roll the barrels” in the area in front of the cabins, trying to remain upright on the barrels as they pushed them along with their feet. Snacks purchased at the nearby store quenched their thirst and hunger. Residents had common job and money problems, but driving poverty did not dominate peoples’ recollections, nor, it seemed, their lives. On a visit to the quarters, one woman reminisced that “we did not have as much as some other people, but we all had enough food and clothing. And everyone took care of everyone else. Everyone watched out for the children. You could chastise kids who were doing wrong things even if they weren’t yours.” Others expressed similar sentiments. As they saw it, the quarters was their neighborhood, a community defined

both as a physical and socially meaningful place where residents had a sense of worth, created a rewarding life, and evolved a culture that reflected both complementary and shared interests and activities.



Figure 13. The Only Cabin In The Quarters With A Porch. Photo: M. Crespi

LABORER ACCOMMODATIONS TO SCARCE CASH

Day laborers earned barely enough to sustain themselves and their families, but they creatively combined additional activities in order to supplement their plantation wages with cash or incomes in kind. For the most part, these activities were labor intensive, using time, energy, and skill, but required little or no capital investments.

Kitchen Gardens and Barnyard Animals

Residents relied as much as possible on foods from their kitchen gardens and barnyard animals, rather than on any store or market. In fact, undoubtedly realizing that wages were below subsistence level, the plantation management expected residents to meet a considerable part of their food needs from their own gardens and animals, including dairy cows, pigs, and chickens. Considering perhaps the limited buying power of plantation wages and reluctant to extend more credit than could be repaid, Mr. Matt remarked that “as a matter of both tradition and sound economics, the tenants and day laborers are given not only their homes but a garden plot as well and are required to own a cow and a mule and to raise a crop of vegetables to supply their own tables” (The Progress 1938). Each tenant family might actually have had a cow and a mule in the 1940s, but the former residents were uncertain if the practice continued into the 1950s and 1960s.

Typically, residents managed the small areas in front of or alongside each cabin as spaces to manipulate almost as they wished, reaching their own decisions about whether or not to plant, and then, having decided to “make their crops,” as most did, determining what and how much to plant. Most tenants raised diverse vegetables and ornamental flowers and expected to share and exchange their produce with neighbors who likewise gardened but not always with identical crops or equal success. Reciprocity was the community norm although perhaps practiced most often among related families. Other tenants who might have joined the community too late in the year to put in a reasonable crop, whose gardens failed through no fault of their own, or who were short-term residents with no interest in gardening might expect some neighborly assistance.

The varied inventory of crops residents planted mirrors the kitchen gardens cultivated elsewhere in the Cane River area and includes:

- beans, including snap beans, later canned;
- corn, including popcorn;
- cucumbers, later pickled;
- ornamental flowers;
- garlic, dried and strung for storage;
- greens, including mustard greens;
- Irish potatoes (thrived better than sweet potatoes), piled into a bank and covered for storage;
- okra, conserved in jars;
- sweet peas, later canned;
- onions;
- peanuts;
- pumpkins, later jarred;
- red peppers, later dried and strung, or dried, pounded and bottled;
- sweet potatoes;
- tomatoes, later canned;
- turnips, later canned;
- peaches, from nearby trees, picked and jarred, and made into jellies and wine; and,
- pears, from nearby trees, picked and jarred, and made into jellies and wine.

Some families also raised sugar cane, and people recalled their delight at munching on a piece of sweet young cane. But the better part of the crop was brought to one of the mills run by Magnolia sharecroppers to be ground and made into cane syrup.

Tenants might adopt and adapt successful plantation agricultural practices for use in their own gardens. One widespread plantation practice was the use of Paris Green, a poisonous powder that combined sodium arsenite with copper sulphate and acetic acid. Used to kill caterpillars and boll weevils well into the 1950s, people recall loading the mixture into buckets or bags that horses carried on a yoke suspended across their shoulders and then tipping the buckets to spread the mixture over Magnolia's cotton fields. Aware of its toxicity and trying to avoid having people and animals inhale it, workers covered their faces with handkerchiefs and their horses' snouts with socks. In a form of internal "technology transfer," workers also applied Paris Green to their gardens, diluting the compound by mixing it with flour. DDT later replaced it.

Barnyard animals, such as chickens, geese, ducks, and hogs, represented important food sources and exchange commodities too. One family, Ms. Lizzie's, recalls having an enormous sow with remarkable reproductive powers. "People would bring their hogs there, and everyone (who owned a hog) that sow fooled with would get one of the litter." Other piglets might be sold. To protect this mobile animal "bank account," which paid interest in piglets, lard, and food, the hog pens were kept close by the house. Christmas was a time for families to butcher and barbecue a hog. Ms. Lizzie recalled killing an enormous hog that filled as many as 20-gallon cans of lard. They would make cracklings and smoke the meat in the smokehouse, grind the meat and make sausages, and fry the backbone meat and jar it. Families, such as Ms. Lizzie's, raised their own feed corn and stored it in the crib behind the house. Chickens had the run of the yard most of the year but were brought indoors in the winter to be kept warm by a lamp. Goats, horses, and milk cows were tethered in nearby pastures.

Conserving Food

Residents lacked electricity and refrigeration during most of their stay in the quarters although a few had purchased ice boxes. In any case, no one could afford to have food spoil. Fifty-pound blocks of ice were purchased to keep produce fresh, especially milk. In the summers, people wrapped the ice block in a burlap and cotton sack for storage in the back of the fireplace. Fresh cow's milk could be put in a jar and kept with the ice.

For the two or three days the ice lasted, it kept the milk cool. Sometimes a wrapped ice block was put in a bucket along with a jar of milk and lowered down a cistern where it remained usable for days. In addition, residents provided for their future needs by processing the garden yields in various ways, by canning or pickling some crops, and by drying or pounding others into powders. Peaches, plums, berries, and figs were picked and preserved. Wine might be made from fruits and berries, and pralines from pecans.

Fishing

Fishing the Cane River and the plantation pond behind the Big House were not only recreational, they also enriched the diet with protein. Men were especially busy at the river when fried fish was on the menu for family and community celebrations. The Hertzog pond yielded crawfish and the lake offered catfish, gar, buffalo, and grinner, among others. Trout might be found near the Hertzogs' camp. Men as well as women and children fished, sometimes fashioning poles from the wild cane growing along the riverbank near the quarters. Bait might consist of small crawfish or a piece of chicken fat, liver, or salt meat attached to the line. "Barrel fishing" was a seining technique some used when the waters were low. Fishermen would attach a wire net or burlap sack, a "grass sack," to a barrel hoop or even a deep open can and drag it through the water. As Dunn reported (1940), the technique was used to catch shrimp, crawfish, and minnows. One former resident also recalled how delighted she and her young friends were to find and collect crawfish even in the gardens after a prolonged heavy rain, which not only filled their water barrels but soaked their gardens and created small ponds that made it look as if "it just rained crawfish."

Supplemental Cash Income

Limited resources might be stretched by seizing opportunities for cash work that occasionally came along within as well as outside the plantation. Men might work part-time in Cloutierville, as one man did in the evenings at a black club. Women in the quarters could take wage work if they found employment nearby, in Derry, for example, and work the plantation fields when childcare was available. One elderly former resident recalled being able to manage children and a job because she worked as a cook in the overseer's house in the early 1930s. In addition to earning cash, she learned to make some special foods, such as preserves. She also could observe the lifestyles of other families and, what proved most advantageous, could keep her children nearby. Several women recalled working in the Big House, enjoying the status of trusted domestic help. One recalled with pleasure apprenticing with her mother in the kitchen, learning to cook when she was just 9 years old, and becoming so adept at baking coconut lemon pies that Mr. Matt would tease her about keeping the tasty pies coming each week. Work in fields at some distance from the quarters was less compatible with childcare, but made easier by helpful neighbors and kin who cared for children so that adults were released for uninterrupted field work.

Men, women, and children looked forward to earning Christmas cash at nearby Melrose and other local plantations during the pecan season when they picked, actually picked-up, the commercial pecan crop that was shaken loose from the heavily laden trees. Pecan picking at Magnolia was an unimportant source of income for the tenants and the plantation as well because, unlike the grafted trees at Melrose, Magnolia's native pecan trees yielded small-sized nuts. Not interested in exploiting the crop, Mr. Matt let residents collect the nuts for themselves. Occasionally he might purchase small quantities from them for use in the Big House, but otherwise he let them harvest the pecans for their own domestic use.

In-Kind Supplements

Sometimes gleanings rights were extended to laborers who were allowed to pick the remaining crops inadvertently left standing after harvesting the corn fields in September. This was a useful way to augment corn for their pigs

and perhaps their own food supply as well. Plantation sugar cane and sweet potato fields might be “scrap picked” or gleaned, too. “Scrapping” might also provide new varieties of seed for later planting in one’s own garden or fields. Suspecting that workers might occasionally employ the strategy of deliberately leaving substantial scraps behind for later collection, causing some crop losses for the plantation, overseers and mounted supervisors maintained surveillance over the hoe-hands to ensure all the cotton was chopped and picked. In the 1950s, one overseer recalled, vigorous protests from field hands about being treated like slaves resulted in halting the practice.

MOBILITY: BECOMING SHARECROPPERS

Birth in the quarters did not always mean spending a lifetime there as a day laborer. Movement into other occupational statuses and to other Magnolia areas was possible, if not frequent. For example, Ms. Lizzie and her two brothers grew up in the Magnolia quarters, but she left briefly at 12 or 13 years old to attend school in Natchitoches. For about a year she lived with her mother’s sister, who worked in the city, but then returned to Magnolia and began contributing to the family income by chopping cotton and picking corn. Soon after, at 16, she met and married her husband, best known by his nickname, Shine; nicknames were so important, they were often the only ones by which people were known. Born on the neighboring Cohen’s plantation, Lakeview, where his father worked, Shine was 12 years when his father died and he assumed his father’s tasks. Later, around 1916, after his marriage to Ms. Lizzie, he moved to Magnolia. His mother eventually moved there too.



Figure 14. MS. BERTHA, MS. LIZZIE’S DAUGHTER, BORN AND REARED IN MAGNOLIA, IN FRONT OF HER FORMER HOUSE IN THE QUARTERS.
Photo: M. Crespi.

The couple stayed in the quarters for just over two decades. During that time Ms. Lizzie bore two children, a son in 1916 and a daughter in 1919 (see Figure 14), with help in the birthing process by the Magnolia midwife. She found domestic work in the overseer’s house and sometimes in the Big House too. Meanwhile, Shine worked in the plantation fields. He also helped train Mr. Matt’s horses, a task that required considerable skill to avoid being struck and hurt by unruly horses. Shine was not totally averse to helping at home too and would brush and sweep the yard and feed their hogs and chickens. With their own mill and smokehouse in the rear of their cabin, the couple could process their own foods. They also earned additional cash by selling gumbo and other foods during baseball games at Magnolia. Eventually, the couple became sharecroppers on a small lot near the AME Church. They continued living in the quarters for several years, however, working their shared plot and doing day labor on the plantation fields too. A neighbor often cared for Ms. Lizzie’s young children while she cultivated their shared field. But the walk to the shared field was long, perhaps a mile or so. When it rained, as it frequently did in the spring, Ms. Lizzie said, “you just was in it. I came from the field a heap of days wet.”

They were able to buy a used car soon after they started sharecropping, first a Dodge, then a Ford, and then a Chevrolet, her daughter recalled. This acquisition suggests that, in addition to frugal living and small-scale entrepreneurship, the family occasionally met with some financial success after they “settled up.” That is, in good years, they might have a small surplus after receiving their fifty

percent of the sale of the harvest and paying off their accumulated debts for seed, insecticide, fertilizer, the use of the mule team and other agricultural inputs, and for any provisions purchased at the store.

Even better than the car, in Ms. Lizzie's view, was their move to the sharecropper area near the shared fields. They had to move after the 1939 tornado tore the roof off their cabin and destroyed several others in the quarters. About the same time, a sharecropper vacated his cabin near the AME Church, and Mr. Matt made it available to the couple. Their daughter, who had started her own family by then, remained in her own cabin in the quarters for a while but then relocated with her first husband to work in Keithville, a distant Louisiana town.

The sharecropper location proved more efficient in terms of the demands made on Ms. Lizzie's time. Like other sharecropper wives, she cultivated the shared crops as well as their own kitchen garden. Sometimes she worked as a day hand in the plantation fields too. At the same time, her husband Shine earned cash or credit towards it by working as a day laborer for Magnolia, cultivating plantation fields as well as caring for the prized plantation horses, especially Light-Gray. Shine's work days were very long during critical periods of field preparation, planting, and harvesting because he, like other sharecroppers, rose early to plow and seed their own fields before leaving for day work on plantation fields. During the harvest season, men, along with women and children, brought in their own crop as well as worked for Magnolia as day laborers. Under these circumstances, having several children and access to members of the extended family gave sharecroppers the benefit of a larger labor pool.

Moving to the sharecropper area did not necessarily mean establishing new and close ties to their Creole neighbors or abandoning their ties to the quarters. Although not necessarily communicating daily with their former neighbors, Shine and sometimes Ms. Lizzie would meet them while working the plantation fields to supplement their income. Family ties to the quarters remained close, reflecting work relationships, continued participation in special events there, participation in Church activities, and their daughter's and granddaughter's (see Figure 15) eventual move back there.



Figure 15. DOROTHY, MS. LIZZIE'S GRANDDAUGHTER AND THE THIRD GENERATION OF MAGNOLIA WOMEN, NEAR THE SITE OF THE SHARECROPPER HOME WHERE SHE WAS BORN. Photo: M. Crespi.

CHAPTER 7: RECREATION AND HOLIDAYS

Periodically throughout the year, the divisiveness of ethnic and occupational differences was somewhat bridged by open participation in community celebrations, such as Christmas, and recreational events, such as baseball and horse races. Public and personal holidays also interrupted the routine round of agricultural and domestic tasks. Some activities and holiday events were public and likely to be held outdoors where they were open, “wide open,” to everyone’s participation. Others were considered private, held at least partly indoors, and, in practice, ordinarily restricted to members of certain families or ethnic groups.

OUTDOOR SPORTS: BASEBALL AND HORSERACING

Both baseball and horseracing seriously competed for people’s discretionary time, especially, but not exclusively, men’s. An exception was one woman who proudly recalled her youthful success as a pitcher on the quarters’ softball team. Color and class lines, if not always gendered, tended to relax for outdoor public events, such as ballgames and horseraces, when blacks and Creoles of color might play on the same or opposing ball teams or ride in the same races. As Dr. Hertzog’s photographs show, blacks, Creoles of color, and whites might also sit nearby in the same bleachers or observe the events standing in the same general area.

Baseball was a major pastime from the 1930s to the 50s and 60s and played the length of Cane River at most plantations and towns, including Derry and Cloutierville. Temporary ballparks dotted the area, interspersed with a very few more permanent ones. The Tigers’ home park, for example, at neighboring Lakeview was complete with bleachers, and one of the Creole night clubs, the “Friendly Place,” had a relatively sophisticated field with a cane fence at one end. Otherwise, most fields were ad hoc temporary “brush” fields or simply pastures with dirt sacks to mark the bases. Some recalled Magnolia’s field as located between the tree-lined driveway and the blacksmith’s shop; others say it was nearer the overseer’s house, in the area that doubled as a riding ring. Still others recalled a site in the pasture behind the quarters. Baseball fields were temporary sites in any case and probably located in different places at different periods.

Mr. Matt, credited with starting the first Cane River team, is considered a major fan who encouraged the weekly ball games. Reputed to be an excellent pitcher too, he would often team just with Father Becker, the Cloutierville priest and a practiced catcher and hitter. Former residents remembered baseball enthusiasts streaming down Highway 119 Sunday afternoons, sometimes still eating the ice cream and cake the commissary sold at the games. They recalled the watermelons Mr. Matt kept on ice in the store to award the winning team at special games. Winners were expected to share the prize with everyone. Sometimes Mr. Matt would turn on the lights in the evenings when people in the quarters wanted to play softball themselves. Whether it was day or evening, the game was an economic, sports, and social event. Assembled spectators and, after the game, players too, might purchase the gumbo Ms. Lizzie had prepared and sold or the ice cream her husband, Shine, had purchased from Mr. Matt for resale to the crowd.

So many black people around Cane River were talented players that the Negro League, which sponsored games in urban Natchitoches, perhaps at Highland Park, recruited several local men. People are proud of one man, Pat Listach, who went to the major leagues, moving from the Milwaukee Brewers to his present infielder position with the New York Yankees.

Team names usually signaled their origin. The Magnolia teams started by Mr. Matt were the Magnolia Giants and, at another time, the Black Magnolias.

Some local baseball teams included:

- Cane River Dodgers;
- Magnolia Giants and Black Magnolias;
- Cloutierville team, the Brown Derby;
- Derry team, sometimes called the Coutees, because many team members shared that family surname;
- Melrose Pecans; and,
- Lakeview Tigers.

Racing, like baseball, was a passion that found a home at nearly every plantation, saw mill town, small town, and local bar. A seasonal pastime, temporary “brush” tracks or exercise tracks were created in the late fall, sometimes, as at Magnolia, in the turn-rows of harvested cotton fields. Some plantations would convert harvested fields to tracks by plowing under 5 or 6 rows and leveling them with a disc. In the late spring, the short-lived tracks were returned to their agricultural work and plowed in preparation for planting the new cotton crop. One Magnolia riding ring in the 1960s was near the overseer’s house in an area that might double as a baseball diamond, the Hertzogs recalled, and another between the Hertzog and Cohen place. Like baseball, racing was an after-church event held in the late afternoons or early evenings. Dr. Hertzog’s films show white people, blacks, and perhaps Creoles of color, including women, animatedly talking and milling around Magnolia’s track still dressed in their Sunday finery.

Most events were scrub races that ran horses without special pedigrees but with the spirit or speed that might make them run well. Some of Magnolia’s better horses might participate too, depending on the worthiness of their competitors. More often, however, they ran on year-round tracks in Alexandria, at the Metarie course in New Orleans, or elsewhere. The Hertzog family was known for their horses and their horsemanship and several people noted that Ms. Betty Hertzog and her cousin Ms. Mary Gunn Johnston were skilled and caring horsewomen.

INDOOR ACTIVITIES: BOXING, CLUBS AND JUKE JOINTS

Unlike outdoor events, class or race distinctions influenced participation at indoor activities, such as nightclubbing and boxing, which occurred at the several bars or juke joints that punctuated Highway 119. Some people recalled a bousillage and log structure located near the bend at Magnolia. It might have been a juke joint and gambling place that also held boxing matches. Mr. Matt is said to have closed it after a stabbing there. Others recall it as a family house, a movie house, and a delivery point for ice. The structure might have served each of these functions at different times in its history.

People from the quarters recalled boxing and drinking at the Green Derby near the Lakeview-Magnolia border, or going to one of Cloutierville’s black bars and gambling spots. Numerous Creole clubs, such as Bubba’s place, were located closer to Melrose. These clubs were reluctant to admit dark-skinned people until the early 1960s, Creoles say, unless they were known to be Creoles of color. In fact, dark-skinned people from other areas would have had difficulty being admitted unless someone local vouched for their Creoleness.

BIRTHDAYS

Former residents of the quarters recall enjoying birthday celebrations when kin and friends congregated to share festive foods and sometimes hear live music. People fortunate enough to have spare cash might hire entertainment from one of the local bands, such as the Creole LaCour brothers. These might be the times for fish fries and barbecues. More lively celebrations could be assured by the corn whiskey that was purchased locally from entrepreneurs who ran their own illegal stills. One still operated near the Magnolia pond behind the Big House until its owner was caught.

WOMEN

Only the most adventuresome woman interviewed recalled going to the clubs where, others argued, they might put their reputations at risk. For the most part, women's recreation tended to be more house-centered than men's, more associated with the private domain. House-parties in the quarters to celebrate personal events, such as birthdays, the church-sponsored social events, and house-dances at nearby plantation communities, were important times to be with friends and relatives. These also were opportunities to meet new people, including potential mates, in a relatively protected or closed context. Women in the quarters could occasionally combine child-care with fun by playing card games at home. A favorite one was pitty pat. The goal here is to pair off each of your cards with those of another player and get yours paired off first; shovelbutt was another game. Young girls also entertained themselves playing ball, often tossing one made out of rags.

CHILDREN

Ethnic and class lines were briefly suspended for outdoor play among some children. Friendships existed among young black children from the quarters and white children from the Big House, who spent their summers at Magnolia until old enough to go to camp, and white children from the overseer's house. Children of the Vercher family in the quarters, the Gallien overseer family, and young Ambrose Hertzog Jr. visiting from New Orleans, for example, played together around the yard, fished from the river banks, went swimming, and sometimes rode horseback throughout the plantation. They recalled Mr. Matt treating them to surrey rides around Magnolia from time-to-time.

JUNE 19, EMANCIPATION/FREEDOM DAY, AND JULY 4, INDEPENDENCE DAY

June 19th marks a major event in the black community and, for different reasons, in the white community as well. President Lincoln had signed the Emancipation Proclamation in September 1862, making it effective January 1, 1863. Word did not reach slaves in several states for many months and sometimes was not fully accepted by slaveholders or even believed by slaves. Sometimes it required federal authorities, particularly Union troops, to bring the word to the countryside once Lee surrendered at Appomatox in April 1865 (cf. Litwack 1979). Not until June 19th, many people argue, did enslaved people learn of their freedom in Louisiana, Texas, parts of Oklahoma, and perhaps elsewhere. June 19th came to be the day freedom was celebrated. It also marked the end of an era for whites.

As one black elder saw it, June 19th is Emancipation Proclamation Day.

That was our July 4th. Yes'm, the whites would take July 4th, but we had our day. Mr. Hertzog gave us a beef and bread and a keg of beer. There were house parties and people would come to eat and drink and play baseball. All the kids played in a field near the overseer's house, on the north side of the quarters. The mulattos didn't want to celebrate with us niggers. They thought they were more than we were; they thought they were white. Mr. Hertzog said they had to celebrate June 19th or celebrate nothing, so they celebrated every year until Mr. Matt died, and then that was the last time.

Other people doubt that Creoles of color celebrated the day. But there was no disagreement about June 19th as joyous "celebrations of freedom" and a black peoples' holiday. The blacksmith and deacon cooked the beef Mr. Matt had culled from the plantation herd and the quarters hummed with people busily preparing for the event. They needed to catch abundant fish for the fish fries, clean chickens for barbecuing, and sometimes fix goat soup too for the family and friends who came together at home and for the church celebrations held at St. Andrew and St. James. There might be baseball games, too, in the quarters during this "black" holiday.

The June 19th celebration began to wane with emigration from the plantation and the dispersion of worker families from the quarters to Natchitoches, Alexandria, Houston, and elsewhere. The rural social structure and plantation relationships between white and black people that had supported the celebration were weakened and eventually almost fully transformed. Nevertheless, the celebration lingered on in some fashion for a while. Some former residents noted that their family still celebrates it in a very attenuated fashion by taking time from work and holding weekend barbecues for friends and families. In the past few years, evidence of a renaissance has been appearing in urban Natchitoches, Shreveport, and several other locations. Spearheaded in Natchitoches by civic-minded black leaders and supported by public agencies and civic organizations, public celebrations are being organized to mark June 19th and its historic redefinition of black status and black-white relations. In its present-day iteration, for example, the planned weekend events in Shreveport now include picnics at principal local parks, locally prominent political guest speakers, and musical and other stage performances by renowned musicians, white and black. Special programs in the Natchitoches schools bring the events closer to youngsters. Television and newspaper coverage make it evident that present-day celebrants come from diverse ethnic groups and that the resurgence of interest marks continued changes in inter-ethnic relations.

July 4th was celebrated plantation-wide with time off from work and more family parties, food, drink, and music. Mr. Matt brought Youk and his Creole band to play at the store to the enjoyment of the assembled tenant workers and farmers, and he distributed gifts of watermelons community-wide. Yet, the relationships between June 19th and July 4th, or the differences between them, were not clear to some black participants. Decades later, these remain unclear. Interviewees recognized the celebration of freedom as a connecting concept between the two events. In some people's view, "July 4th is the day we are supposed to celebrate; it's when they signed the Declaration of Independence and that's the day we were freed." Others thought enslaved people had learned about their freedom on June 19th, but freedom actually had occurred on July 4th. No one expressed Frederick Douglass' 1852 sentiments about the absurdity of black people celebrating Independence Day before slaves were emancipated (Blassingame 1982), but his sentiments seem to resonate in peoples' continuing uncertainty about, or discomfort with, the notion that different groups of people could become free at different times.

CHRISTMAS AND THANKSGIVING

Christmas was another event that brought families together in each of the community's three residence areas, the sharecropper, the quarters, and the Big House. In the quarters, it was recalled with pleasure for the break it brought from the routine work week and for the opportunities to celebrate with family and friends. The holiday meant another chance to hear the band and enjoy special gifts. Black children especially appreciated small food gifts – precious apples, oranges, and candies – too costly for parents to splurge on during the year. Dr. Ambrose, who came with his family from New Orleans for the event, also treated the plantation children to the sought-after fruits, especially apples and oranges. Thanksgiving was another festive time when Mr. Matt had the blacksmith roast one of the cattle for the celebrating community.

THE HERTZOGS' CHRISTMAS AND RECREATION

Dr. Ambrose Hertzog and his family from New Orleans, along with kin from Alexandria and elsewhere, joined customary residents of the Big House to celebrate the Christmas holiday together. On this occasion Mr. Matt would bring Father Becker to celebrate mass at the small family chapel. A time as well to ritually recognize the interdependence of the Big House and the labor community, Mr. Matt distributed food gifts in the quarters and among the sharecroppers and brought Youk and his band to play at the store early on Christmas eve. Later, the band moved on to the main house for the private Hertzog family celebrations. Sometime during the holiday week, people might also assemble at the store to see the photographs and movies that Dr. Hertzog had shot the previous summer during the family vacation at Magnolia. This might have been the time he distributed copies of photos to

community people, photos they and their families still cherish, depicting them in action, for example, at the horseraces or in various poses around the yard and store and behind the Big House.

The Hertzog camp on the small island in Cane River Lake was another locus of family recreation. In the summer and at holidays, the camp drew the extended Hertzog family and friends from New Orleans, Alexandria, and elsewhere to fish for trout, perch, and catfish, among others, and to swim. Hertzog kin recall eating wonderful meals there, being well-served with fine food, and treated to entertainment by Youk's band, sometimes playing on a barge that moved slowly around the island. Serious pollution in recent decades has been keeping swimmers away.

PRIZES FOR PLANTERS

Not without their own group incentives and public awards, prominent white and Creole of color landowners competed for the annual cash prize given by Natchitoches banks to the planter who qualified as having the First Bale of Cotton Ginned. Viewed as special, that first bale would bring the planter a premium price, Ms. Betty recalled. The Hertzogs usually competed along with others. An old photograph recently reprinted in the Natchitoches Times (July 23 and 30, 1997), showed the winner, the Creole of color family, Balthazar, along with that year's other contenders (see Figure 16). The Hertzogs did not enter that year, but the contenders included the Cohens of neighboring Lakeview and the Prud'hommes of Oakland, whose Big House now is incorporated into Cane River Creole NHP.



Figure 16. COMPETITORS FOR THE PRIZE TO THE PLANTER WHO GINNED THE FIRST BALE. Photo: The Natchitoches Times.

CHAPTER 8: RELIGION

In northwest Louisiana, Catholicism and Protestantism, including Baptist, Methodist, and African Methodist Episcopal denominations, co-existed since at least the early 19th century. At that time, a minister, a “mulatto” according to Sobel (1988:193), established the first Baptist church about 35 miles south of Alexandria. People of French heritage, the Hertzogs and families of Creoles of color, and a number of blacks traditionally have been Catholic at Magnolia. The plantation became more ideologically diverse by the late 19th century with the introduction of Baptist and AME churches. Additionally, a Masonic Lodge might have been established in Derry just before the Civil War. It would have provided another organizational basis, a fraternal order, for civic action within the context of spiritual beliefs. It extended the social support available to black communities by functioning primarily as a burial society that helped black members inter their deceased kin. Early this century, the lodge reportedly relocated to Natchitoches.

BAPTIST AND METHODIST CHURCHES

Two churches closely identified with Magnolia’s black community are St. Andrew Missionary Baptist Church and St. James AME. Members of St. Andrew’s congregation, especially the deacons, who also served as traditional church historians, described the 1875 establishment of the church with encouragement from Natchitoches’ First and Second Baptist Churches (Baptiste n.d.). Originally constructed on Upper Cat Island in Derry at Hypolite Hertzog’s plantation, the first building was leveled by a storm sometime around 1903. The congregation reconstructed it with some of the original lumber on newly purchased land at its present Cat Island site. About the same time, at the turn of the century, the St. James AME congregation was taking shape at Magnolia. One black elder recalled that services were initially held at the quarters in one of the two-room cabins temporarily occupied by the visiting pastor and his wife. The couple would come from Natchitoches and remain for brief periods, ministering to the black community and sometimes accepting compensation in the form of foodstuffs. The AME church was built for the first time, probably around 1910, with land and timber donated by Mr. Matt near the bend on the banks of Cane River, down an old dirt road. Later, after Highway 119 was graveled and blacktopped, the congregation moved the church up from the banks and closer to the road, to another site donated by the plantation. The new location was still opposite St. Andrew. Mr. Matt did not provide for a cemetery at either AME site.

People remember that throughout the history of St. Andrew and St. James as co-existing structures, the two churches were partners in many, if not most, events. Both were located near the riverbanks almost directly opposite each other. Using boats or the footbridge in existence until the 1940s, congregants regularly crossed the easily forded Cane River to participate in each other’s services and special events. Some people recalled even fording the river on foot when the waters were low. From weddings, funerals, and river baptisms to church gumbo suppers, box suppers, fish fries, and June 19th emancipation or freedom celebrations, the church-sponsored activities drew participants from both sides of the river. Additionally, without a cemetery, St. James AME congregants would hold funeral services at their church, then transport the deceased by barge, over the bridge, or around Highway 119 and Highway 1 to St. Andrew for the burial in its cemetery. The practice is reflected in the headstones at St. Andrew’s cemetery; about half of them bear surnames identified with Magnolia. Ritual or ideological differences between the two churches created “no hard and fast separations” between the members in life or death.

Members recall church suppers as busy and well-attended cooperative community events that occurred at least once a month. Dunn’s 1940 description of the AME “camp meeting” describes the celebrants construction of temporary brush arbors or “brush harvests” to shade themselves and their foods. The arbor was built by driving forked saplings into the ground and placing poles in the forks in order to form a roof. Willow branches were tossed over the frame as cover for the roof. At night, the arbor was ablaze with every available lamp, candle,

lantern, and homemade light. One customary light was made with a wick of twisted “grass sack” or burlap sack, which was squeezed into a beer bottle filled with kerosene, or “coal oil.” When lit, it cast a light as bright as a large candle, an observer remarked. Former residents recall the good times sitting with friends and family on the many benches under the arbor and busily preparing meals in the small kitchen constructed alongside St. James. The ruts of the old parking lot adjacent to the AME church site give clear evidence of a well-trafficked area.

The churches might have frowned on dancing, but members of both churches adapted to the restrictions by organizing suppers under church auspices, for the benefit of the church, but at their own homes. Rotating the event and its associated responsibilities among different homes throughout the year, people made and sold gumbos, fried fish, popcorn, meat pies, and other favorites to raise funds. The Creole band that played at the store and in the Big House sometimes entertained at church suppers too. The churches were venues for community social services as well. For example, St. Andrew served as a Relief Center during the depression, distributing commodities to people working on a Works Progress Administration (WPA) road crew. St. Andrew, as we noted, also briefly housed the black public school, and St. James likewise had a school, although it might have been a Sunday school. One former resident of the quarters recalls tutoring children with their alphabets at St. James.

Residents in the quarters also relied on several other churches for access to religious support systems and cemeteries. Some joined St. Matthew Baptist Church north of Melrose. Another Baptist church located at a considerable distance from Cloutierville’s center, St. Davis Lane, where the kin of former Magnolia residents are buried, occasionally drew members from Magnolia and the surrounding countryside. Burials of deceased former Magnolia residents still occur at these two churches if parents or a parent had been buried there. Burying the deceased in the cemetery with their mother’s grave has meant separating longtime partners at death, if parents are buried in two different cemeteries. However, this practice asserts the lineal relationship to a parent.

More than places of worship and sources of spiritual and social support, or as a dimension of them, churches offered Magnolia’s black residents opportunities to develop and demonstrate political leadership and responsibility beyond the boundaries of their own families. Earlier, this might have been the only public context within which men and women community members could aspire to visible roles, such as deacons, mothers of the church, or members in women’s support groups, roles that gave them responsibility for decisions or influence within the black community or congregation as a whole. In this sense, the church was not only the principal vehicle for otherwise unavailable opportunities for advancement in the community but, as we know from other situations, a training ground too for effectively mobilizing public sentiment and performing civic roles.

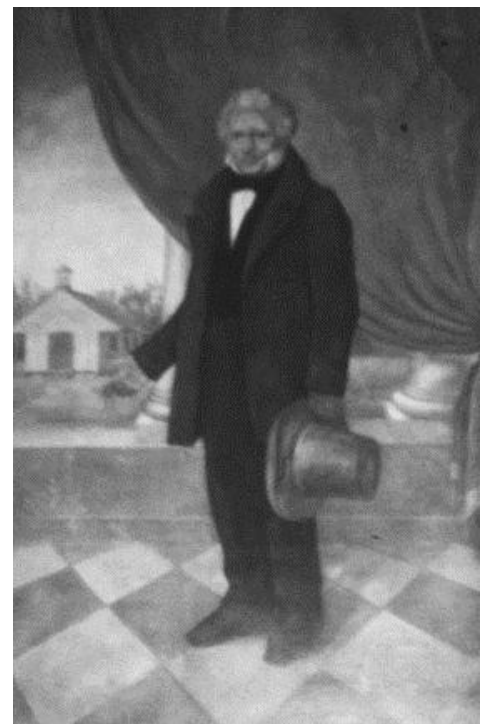


Figure 17. PORTRAIT OF AUGUSTIN METOYER IN ST. AUGUSTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH. Photo: M. Crespi.

CATHOLIC CHURCHES

The Magnolia plantation had no Catholic church within its borders, but Catholic events and practices were well represented in the Big House and at a nearby chapel and church. In 1910, the Hertzog family built a small private chapel in the back gallery of the Big House to accommodate Mr. Matt’s ailing mother. Christmas and other holidays brought Father Becker of St. John’s Catholic Church, in Cloutierville, to give mass there, and the Hertzogs still use it for special family celebrations. A religious physical presence was also evident in the fields in

the statue of St. Isadore, known as the farmers' patron saint, that Mr. Matt had suspended on a pole across a field "gate" near the Big House. Annually, before planting started and rains were needed, Father Becker would come to bless the plantation and its fields. Compensating for the absence of a plantation church, a small Catholic Chapel had been constructed near the Derry Bridge, on the Derry, not the Magnolia, side. Public mass was held for local people from time-to-time, especially when the lumber towns were thriving. One Magnolia Creole of color recalls going to the Derry chapel occasionally, although she regarded the Cloutierville Church as her own. People also recalled Mr. Matt urging them to attend church on Sundays and even parking his truck at the store, offering congregants rides to Cloutierville, to St. John's Catholic Church.

Most Magnolia sharecroppers, who were Creoles of color, probably belonged to St Augustine Catholic Church on Isle Brevelle. First constructed in 1803 with an adjoining cemetery, then replaced in 1916 by the present structure, St. Augustine was started by Augustin Metoyer, son of Marie Thereze Coincoin and a principal progenitor of the Metoyer line of Creoles of color (Figure 17). A full-length painting of him hangs in the church entryway. St. Augustine is an active center that serves the spiritual and community needs of its primarily, but not exclusively, Creole congregation from Isle Brevelle and the surrounding area. Residents who had relocated to Natchitoches still regularly return to St. Augustine.

The Catholic churches drew support from the congregation's donations after regular services or at special celebrations during the year. Additional help came with the annual tithe planters paid after the cotton harvest. Ms. Betty Hertzog recalled that each local planter contributed enough cotton to make up a bale, which churches would have ginned and then sold for the upkeep of the buildings and their clergy.

AFRICAN/CHRISTIAN SYSTEMS

This brief study found no obvious evidence of the syncretic religion known as vodun or voodoo. A dynamic religious system, vodun had developed in the New World, the Americas, among people of African heritage who adapted African beliefs, practices, and paraphernalia to the new environment and integrated them with Christian features. At most, we learned that someone in the quarters may have been expert with "hoodoo," the techniques, such as cutting cards, associated with soothsaying or fortune-telling, and people mentioned a knowledgeable Upper Cane River woman who might have ministered to Magnolia people in the quarters.

MECHANIZATION, RURAL EXODUS, AND THE CHURCH

One black elder observed that: "... after they got big cotton pickers, they didn't need anyone to pick cotton. And those plowers broke up the land. When my husband and I farmed we had to plow our own land. And we had to hoe it. But those big machines plowed land and planted it." Unneeded, the family, like others, vacated Magnolia and found new homes and places of worship.

Out-migration necessarily diminished the size of the rural congregation, but even before emigrating, Magnolia residents were becoming dependent on cars or trucks to reach churches outside the immediate vicinity. Sometimes, one former resident explained, rural people continued as members of the AME church but attended one in Natchitoches where they were served by the same preacher who had periodically ministered at St. James AME. By the time the Second World War started, St. James might have been used only once a month, and by the time it ended, the shift to mechanization and the related exodus had intensified, leaving few rural church members. The last remaining deacon died in the 1960s. About that time, vandals began attacking the building and stealing its trappings. Eventually the congregation abandoned the church. It was still standing in 1974 when a drunken driver hit it, knocking the weakened structure off its foundation. Efforts to repair it ended when problems created by severe termite infestation so complicated other structural problems that the Magnolia management

decided to level the building. St. Andrew drew some of the previous St. James congregants and St. James became a ghost on the landscape, serving as a place marker of former activities and ways of life.

People who relocated to Natchitoches often remained bound to their home churches and periodically returned to the countryside to participate in major events. Those events no longer regularly include river baptisms because, people noted sadly, urbanization in Natchitoches and new industries have been polluting the waters. Still, rural churches became mechanisms for linking city and country residents. More than that, the church also became a venue to celebrate homecomings, when people return periodically from Texas, Illinois, and elsewhere to renew family ties and introduce, as well as meet, newcomers to the group. Although small, the St. Andrew's congregation remains active even today and still meets in Derry. St. Augustine continues its central role for Creole communities in the countryside on Isle Brevelle, Cat Island, and in Natchitoches. Religious study groups, various cultural heritage events throughout the year, and a flourishing membership help keep St. Augustine viable.

Relocation did not necessarily terminate all relationships among former residents of the quarters or between them, sharecropper families, and the Hertzog family in the Big House. Former residents might continue to do occasional small jobs for the Hertzogs, see and greet the Hertzogs in the local bank, or greet the Hertzogs on the streets of Natchitoches.

CHAPTER 9: LOCAL VOICES SPEAK OF THE MEANING OF MAGNOLIA

Magnolia's black former tenants and its white owners and their kin, former business associates and neighbors, preservationists, and former employees were asked what they thought about the meaning or importance of Magnolia. Different people used somewhat different language and concepts to describe their views, but overall, their responses showed few variations across ethnic/class lines. People generally agreed that Magnolia's past and present importance rests on three major themes:

- (1) the plantation as a successful and continuing organization,
- (2) the plantation as a self-supporting and family-run agricultural venture, and
- (3) the plantation as a combined residential and working unit or rural company-town where residents were both community members and players in the productive unit.

WHITE VIEWS

White respondents noted the importance of Magnolia's continuity as a recognizable and extensive physical entity with largely intact standing structures and still-cultivated fields. Admiration was expressed for the farming and business acumen required to successfully manage an agricultural undertaking of its size. Farming skills were seen as crucial to success but not the single most important factor. Instead, skills were seen as operating in tandem with the deep and steadfast emotional investment needed to persevere over the centuries despite unpredictable natural threats, political disasters, and economic uncertainties. While acknowledging that Magnolia is privileged by its location on rich farming lands, respondents recognized that "just keeping the farm going is an accomplishment" and considered Magnolia one of the better farmed units in the area. Its designation as a Bicentennial Farm, one that is still productive, is seen as richly deserved.

Continuity is also a critical attribute in terms of kinship and Magnolia's centuries-long unbroken association with a particular local family line. Magnolia is seen as the only historic family-managed farm still working on the Lower Cane River in an area and era where ownership by extended families or family corporations is increasingly rare and public corporations or agribusinesses managed from impersonal board rooms and by remote decision-makers are expanding. As such, it is considered symbolic of a way of life that once characterized much of rural Louisiana. One older white interviewee noted: "Magnolia is in a class by itself, representing the best example of plantation life; like *Gone With The Wind*, it was the old south." Mr. Matt was called a Southern gentleman who exhibited the best of the old qualities, like caring about the welfare of his servants who were seen, reciprocally, as devoted to him. These long-term ties between the family and the place and their active involvement in the long history of Magnolia and Cane River are also viewed as giving current family managers "a feel for Magnolia." A sense of connectedness to the farm and the workers who made it run is seen as distinguishing the family management style and relationships to the farm community from those of other local agricultural enterprises.

Several whites drew on childhood memories to recall Magnolia as a wonderful place, "a fun place to visit." There always was something to entertain youngsters—horseback riding, surrey rides, swimming at the camp, and the magic tricks Mr. Matt performed for them. "There always were caring people around."

Some whites perceived Magnolia's black community as a peaceful place occupied by relatively happy people who were well treated. People in different households at the quarters were thought to visit frequently and attend church together, although they sat apart from others if the church congregation was mixed. White people who had visited Magnolia as children recalled "good natured blacks" and fishing or horseback riding around the place with little black, or "colored," boys. They rode to the hayfields, the blacksmith shop, or where the hoe hands were working. From the perspective of whites, who primarily viewed blacks in public rather than private venues, it seem that "no

matter where you would go, when blacks were working they were always laughing and having a good time, no matter how hot it was or how hard the work was.”

White former employees or their offspring, who worked at Magnolia for several years, also appreciated the plantation as a self-sufficient unit. But they perceived Magnolia in less personal terms, although expressing respect and affection for some Magnolia people and pleasure in recalling some experiences. These few specialists did not experience a strong attachment to the place. They tended to see their roles compartmentalized, primarily as work related, but not as irrevocably linked to a more complex set of social and political plantation roles. One person explained: “Magnolia was where I worked and where Mr. Matt taught me about farming and the philosophies needed to make it work. He was a strategist. For example, he said the crops that fronted the road had to be as “clean” as possible so that people driving by, rubbernecking, would be impressed. Crops in the back need not be so good-looking.” He recalled Mr. Matt’s delight in having the tractors repainted in time for Christmas and lining them up near the Big House, glistening like new, to impress the arriving family visitors and passers-by. Still, from the overseers’ perspectives, working at Magnolia “...was a job, like going to a plant. Unlike some neighboring plantations, which are just showplaces, Magnolia was where people worked. It needed to make money for the family and for the workers.” Planting was a business. As these comments demonstrate, Magnolia was a place in which management and workers had a complementary concern for productivity, for “clean,” not “dirty,” fields. From management’s perspective, “clean” fields indicated effective husbandry, good labor relations too, and a basis for enhancing the owners’ standing in the community. Whitewashing the quarters at Christmas is a counterpart of “clean” fields, reflecting good management and another sign of the Hertzogs’ pride in their place. “Clean” meant “cared for” and well-managed.

BLACK VIEWS

Black former tenants did not explicitly articulate Magnolia’s importance as a persisting Hertzog family establishment, working farm, and community. That sentiment was expressed in other terms. Sensitivity to the strong connections among the Hertzog family, its lands, and the community was repeatedly implied by personalizing and individualizing the plantation and its community. As mentioned before, local people preferred to identify the farm by its owners’ family name, the Hertzogs’, or the Hertzogs’ place, rather than by its impersonal formal title, Magnolia. One lived at the Hertzogs’, worked for the Hertzogs, and shopped at the Hertzogs’. So compelling was the link between the place and the family name that interviewees who had lived in the area for decades failed to recognize “Magnolia” as a local entity. On the other hand, they responded immediately and with interest when “the Hertzogs’ place” was mentioned. Like “Ms. Lizzie’s place,” “the Cohens’ place” and “the Carnahan store” in Cloutierville, families long associated with particular sites lent their names to the social geography.

Pride in “the Hertzogs’” and an association with it, as well as pride in their own contribution to a well-managed place, is implied in criticisms of the present appearance of the quarters, the store, blacksmith shop, and some fields. According to one former resident, “When we lived here, this was a superb place. It was clean then.” Other observers disapprovingly commented on the presently “dirty” place. “Dirty” did not mean trash-strewn fields or residential areas, or even the exuberant growth along the riverbanks. “Dirty” implied neglect. It described overgrown and weedy areas in and around the quarters that formerly were occupied, or cultivated, weeded, cleared, and otherwise managed for a traditionally recognizable farming purpose. While they lived and worked at Magnolia, laborers and sharecroppers, it seemed, considered themselves responsible for maintaining a worthy place, and took pride in doing it. Without them, the quarters, the farm center in general, and the fields had suffered, had shifted from the clean to the dirty status, from the cared for to the uncared for. The National Park Service was admonished to clean up the place.

Black tenants, like white respondents, saw Magnolia as a company town that met their needs from birth to death. However idyllic these recollections might strike outsiders, Magnolia was seen to have provided food and shelter,

health care, religious ministering, and a limited cash income. Not that living with meager funds, few material possessions, and limited options was good, rather, people who remained at Magnolia until the 1960s fashioned a life in which problems and good times co-existed as integral parts of a larger complex package. As one person recalled, “you could make that little money and you were so happy over it and everything...It was a good life for me and I enjoyed it, because I didn’t know nothing no better than that.” A different woman appreciatively noted the gifts of elegant children’s clothes she received for her own family when children from the Big House outgrew them. Another elderly woman reminisced: “It was a wonderful place to grow up. No one ever went hungry. Either everyone had milk cows and chickens or people shared and exchanged the foods they had.” Someone else recalled, “...we always had good neighbors; it wasn’t like it is now where everyone is for himself.” Tasks were shared too. “You weren’t the only one to raise your children. Everyone raised them in these quarters and if they saw some kid doing something wrong, well, they would tell the kids about it. Everyone raised the kids in these quarters...I loved it (this place) because it did so much for me.”

CHAPTER 10: LOCAL SUGGESTIONS OF INTERPRETIVE EVENTS OR ACTIVITIES

Responses to questions about the information and messages parks should convey to the visiting public reflected several kinds of experiences. Residence in the area potentially affected by increased tourism traffic influenced some views. Probably just as important in framing peoples' responses was familiarity with national parks or other historic plantation sites, travel outside the area, and knowledge about or involvement with heritage conservation programs. Responses from white Magnolia owners and Creoles of color, for example, suggested familiarity with plantations and heritage sites elsewhere in the south, and Creoles of color in the Heritage Area demonstrated their own involvement in developing local heritage events and programs. Concern about "heritage resources" and tourism was more recent among the blacks we interviewed, although it is expected to expand with the recent establishment of the Black Heritage Society in Natchitoches. Different individual or ethnic group experiences in the Lower Cane River in general and Magnolia more specifically sometimes encouraged divergent opinions. Agreement was evident other times.

BLACK VIEWS:

- Clean and repair the quarters, the store, and other farm structures.
- Encourage events, such as homecomings and community reunions, at June 19th and Labor Day weekends. June 19th is important for friends and families but the national holiday, July 4th, when people enjoy a long weekend, brings people back from elsewhere, including California, Texas, and Chicago.
- Teach black work songs.

WHITE VIEWS:

- Commercial ventures, such as establishing a souvenir shop for the sale of local specialties, including Ms. Lil's dolls (formerly made and sold by a Creole of color woman in a shop on Highway 1, at Natchez), and a food service where local culinary specialists could demonstrate Cane River creole cooking. Hot tamales, meat pies and crawfish pies are especially important foods at Christmas time.
- Make Magnolia a fun place to visit with family-oriented and children's activities, including riding horses, taking buggy and surrey rides, having someone perform magic tricks for children, and providing farm machinery that children could ride.
- Tell ghost stories such as the one about the overseer, supposedly killed by Yankee troops, who still haunts the Big House.
- Swim in Cane River.
- Initiate environmental education programs.

BLACKS AND WHITES AGREE:

- Run the plantation store, stock it as before but also sell small items such as post cards and other items representing Magnolia. Both groups felt the store should be shown as the hub of local life where people traded, played dominos, told stories, paid bills, met, and enjoyed Youk and Dumas' band.
- Reconstruct the stiles where people could sit and talk and see small animals cross.
- Show how people processed their foods, for example, demonstrate coffee parching.
- Demonstrate recreational events, such as running horses on a brush track and playing baseball.
- Run a demonstration farm.
- Create a photo gallery that displays enlarged copies of Dr. Hertzog's photographs. Magnolia people from the

quarters would enjoy seeing themselves and their families and would like postcards for sale to them as well as to visitors. (Former residents have offered to lend copies of their photos to NPS. Another potential source is B.A. Cohen, daughter of one of the Lakeview Plantation owners and a professional photographer.)

CREOLES OF COLOR IN THE HERITAGE AREA SUGGEST:

- Host special exhibits that support Creole Heritage Day in January and the Creole Fair in October, but schedule NPS events on other days to avoid having them compete with Creole-sponsored activities.
- Involve Creole community members in story-telling, discussions, demonstrations of foodways and quilting, and French-language lessons and programs.
- Tell the Creole story through photos and documents.
- Create an Interpretive Center where Creole community members could interpret their own history, tell their own stories, and demonstrate their own crafts and foodways. Grandparents and great-grandparents could tell stories about years ago.
- Create a demonstration center where older people or “culturals” could demonstrate traditional crafts to today’s younger people who know nothing about, for example, quilt-making. Cooking demonstrations would be useful too, because young people don’t know how to make meat pies, defined as a “creole” dish.

BLACKS, WHITES AND CREOLES OF COLOR AGREE:

NPS should:

- Demonstrate the preparation of local foods, such as tamales and meat-pies.

INTERPRETIVE TOPICS

Blacks Suggest:

- Describe the quarters, the dirt floors, and how we used to sweep the yards clean.
- Talk about our gardens and animals.
- Tell about the history of places in and around Magnolia.
- Talk about times from this century, our lives here, and the way we live now.
- Tell about family connections, because people who have left this area, and then returned, and young people would like to hear about their past family relationships.
- Discuss healing skills and wisdom, and the way we cured sickness.
- Discuss the music played under the trees and how we had old-fashioned picnics there, at the churches.

Whites Suggest:

- Interpret different historical periods by using different cabins in the quarters to communicate stories of different periods.
- “The best thing to interpret is the part we remember. The second best is to interpret the whole story.” This includes stories about the major changes brought by mechanization after WWII, when people left, and how some people, who had always lived in the country, stayed on even though they had no work.
- Discuss the difficulties of farming and financing it each year.
- Talk of the importance of Magnolia’s survival as a family farming unit.

- Discuss differences between Creoles of color and white Creoles.
- Tell stories about the different people who made up this country—“Creole people and people of color, and blacks—and their heritages.” Tell these stories in terms of events and developments within and beyond Natchitoches.
- Emphasize self-sufficiency of the rural area, and the self-reliance and lifeways of rural people, immersion in work and isolation from town. Although town people might say that we’re not in the real world, this is the real world. It isn’t just farming that is important, its living close to the earth.
- Emphasize the sense of connectedness to the rural surroundings, a real attachment to place.
- Play an educational role so that visitors and townspeople can better appreciate the area. Educate people about the importance of the environment.
- Talk about Cane River as a cultural island, extending from Cloutierville to the commemorative area, with its own way of life and philosophy related to plantation society. Tell how French Creoles never left this island except to go to other islands like it.
- Tell about the pigeonier, which supplied squab for the Big House.
- Relate Magnolia’s experiences with those of other plantations. Use ledgers to discuss economics.
- Tell about plantations in history and changes in plantation life, and about differences between town and plantation life.
- Talk about the sheep around the Big House that helped keep the grasses down and provided lambs for the table.
- Talk about the old bell behind the overseer’s house that called people to work, announced the noon break, and rang for emergencies.
- Tell about how black residents were not downtrodden on the plantations.

Blacks and Whites Agree:

NPS should:

- Discuss cowboys and their jobs.
- Describe all the different types of plantation jobs.
- Discuss Magnolia’s prize-winning horses.
- Demonstrate life in the quarters.
- Run the blacksmith shop and other facilities.
- Discuss Magnolia as a quiet, peaceful, and cooperative community without public disputes.
- Tell how important the store was. Open and stock it, bring the band, and make the store a Visitors Center.
- Talk about the prize-winning horse, the Flying Dutchman, and about Ms. Betty and Mary Gunn, who were expert horsewomen; show their photos. Talk about Magnolias’ horses and people from the quarters who were their handlers.

Creoles of Color in the Heritage Area Suggest:

- Portray them as a unique group, differing from other local groups.
- Portray them as multicultural, without denying their black or white heritages, and present them as a separate group equal to blacks and to whites.
- Describe St. Augustine Church as the spiritual and cultural center of the Creole community.
- Discuss out-migration as a survival strategy and the initial dependence of newcomers on relatives and friends already established in the new settlement area.

CHAPTER 11: LOCAL PEOPLE SPEAK OF SLAVERY

BLACK AND WHITE VIEWS ON ADDRESSING SLAVERY

Slavery initially met little support as an interpretive topic, although individual interest in interpreting it varied somewhat with age and social features, such as ethnicity and kinship, business, or labor relationship to the Hertzogs'. Several older blacks – former Magnolia tenants – and whites, appeared uncomfortable even discussing the possibility of considering slavery. They avoided eye contact with Crespi, for example, and hesitantly addressed the topic. The two local interviewers themselves objected to raising the topic. Nearly everyone's immediate response was that slavery was an unacceptable interpretive topic. Some whites were concerned with how outsiders, including visitors from other regions and with other views, would perceive local people and cultures if slavery was discussed. Some elderly black former tenants, who found discussions of slavery untenable, commented that managers and their treatments of the labor community could differ significantly among plantations. Unlike other places they had heard of, "there was no brutalizing at the Hertzogs'." They thought this plantation had a high regard for its labor community. In these public conversations, they dismissed the possibility of mistreatment by conceptually excising Magnolia from the mainstream 19th century plantations with the comment that "it's in a class by itself." White and black people preferred interpretive programs that would highlight events of the present century, especially "our times," the times they remembered and often enthusiastically described. Their reluctance to conceive of slavery as an acceptable public topic tended to diminish as the conversations progressed, or during subsequent conversations, when the initially reluctant black and white respondents modified their initial opposition to public discussions of this thorny issue.

The initially reticent black people and whites came to agree with those few who had unambiguously supported an interpretation of slavery that the topic was legitimate. But, people insisted, it should not be the major or single focus. Slavery was acceptable only if presented as one phase in a historical sequence of phases that ran the gamut from Magnolia's inception through its transformation from a traditional plantation to the presently mechanized farming operation. The National Park Service was asked to contextualize the story in terms of political, demographic, economic, and other conditions so that slavery would not be presented in isolation as a comment about local morality, or the lack of it, or a comment about economic decisions alone. Rather, slavery should be portrayed as a response to diverse regional and national conditions.

The language of slavery also drew some comment. Several whites and black former residents noted the offensiveness of describing the cabins as "slave quarters." Just call them "quarters," they argued, because a succession of different categories of workers occupied them and it is misleading to depict the cabins as just housing one kind of worker. Moreover, several black people who had occupied the cabins as day laborers, explained, "if you say people lived in the slave quarters in this century, you are implying they are slaves." Former resident laborers asserted that the park must "make it clear that tenant laborers were not slaves." One black person who had grown up in Magnolia's sharecropper area was even offended at the suggestion that she might have been a tenant in the quarters. On the other hand, because the cabins were constructed to house enslaved people, some whites argued, they should be called "slave quarters."

Blacks and whites without direct ties to Magnolia or who were several generations removed from the resident labor force seemed more comfortable speaking of slavery. They suggested that "the National Park Service must talk about slavery because that's what made the plantation work and we can't make believe it didn't happen." Another noted that "slavery must be mentioned because it is the background for discussing how Magnolia evolved from slavery to respect for colored people."

Blacks Suggest Topics on Slavery and Its Aftermath

- Resistance to enslavement, including the Underground Railroad.

- Social, cultural, economic, and political dimensions of the slave community.
- Adapting to freedom: abolition, reconstruction, and their aftermath.
- Black roles today.

One black respondent from urban Natchitoches, without direct ties to Magnolia or the countryside, vigorously argued for a generic discussion of slavery as a despicable “evil institution” that dehumanized people, depriving them of the skills and education required to effectively survive after manumission. To convey to visitors the full impact of an institution that enslaved the mind and the spirit, he observed, the aftermath of slavery needed explication. “The tragedy of slavery was that some people didn’t know how to deal with life without having someone there to tell them. Slavery kept people from developing survival skills.” Moreover, he argued, slaves must not be portrayed as passive victims. They were also people who created strategies to protect themselves and also planned and implemented insurrections. Draw attention to the possible presence of the Underground Railroad, he argued, and to the Lemee house on Jefferson St., which might have been a station on the Underground Railroad.

A young black person whose grandparents were from the Hertzogs’ place argued that it was imperative to share the plantation history with younger people. Otherwise, the story would be lost in the future and young people would not know of the past difficulties. Indeed, several people prevailed upon the National Park Service to convey “old time talk” or black history to younger people so they could better appreciate their elders’ experiences as well as their presently improved situation. One individual was forceful about needing to “preserve the memories of our people from generation to generation but, when we speak to blacks, we must talk about slavery with compassion. Whites will be in the audience too and because hardships were suffered by everyone, black and white, you must tell the story from white and slave perspectives. Talk about harsh things too, and good things.” He added, as others had, the National Park Service should “end the story where it comes out now. Even if things may not be the way everybody wants them, they still progressed to a degree.” Blacks are among the professional people now, and that should be made clear. Still, said another who found the slavery topic difficult, “if you must talk about it, then get into it and get out”; do not dwell on it.

Few black respondents discussed the emotional pain their parents and grandparents might have experienced at the plantation or Natchitoches parish in general. One, however, recalled how tearful her father became when describing what older people said and how difficult it was for him to talk to her about it. This same woman added that people refused to discuss the past, whether the topic was slavery, abolition, or Jim Crow eras, because they were too hurt and angry; they don’t want to remember a past that robbed them of their humanity. “Why did black men hang from the trees?” she asked rhetorically. And “how could some people tell other people to go to the back of the bus or not drink from their water fountain or get off the sidewalk? God wouldn’t be a just God if he would let this still happen.” Its difficult to talk about, this individual recognized, but, if the National Park Service is to discuss those days, “the Lord will show you how to talk about this in a way that doesn’t offend people, but to speak as necessary; not to hurt people or create pain, but to make them understand more.”

Whites Suggest Topics on Slavery and its Aftermath

Several suggestions were made about sequential changes that would express the plantation’s evolution and also give visitors a sense of a dynamic rural scenario. One proposed sequence is:

- Indigenous occupations;
- Slavery;
- Abolition and emancipation;
- Reconstruction;
- 1910 Boll Weevil infestation;

- The Great Depression;
- World War II;
- Mechanization;
- Rural depopulation;
- Out-migration to Natchitoches and elsewhere.

Another suggestion was to organize interpretation around major decision points, such as:

- How to cultivate a plantation without mechanization.
- Why feudal management styles were pursued.
- Whether to rebuild the plantation house after the Civil War.
- Strategies for responding to the 1930s economic crisis.
- How to manage pressures for mechanization and economic diversification.
- Choosing tenancy and sharecropping arrangements.

Whites also suggested discussing occupational diversity among slaves as a way to describe social as well as economic and political relationships between enslaved people and their owners. Another potential topic was the hierarchical relationships within the slave community that were based partly on the different occupational roles and could lead to greater advantages for some slaves. Concubinage as an acceptable relationship between French Creoles and Creoles of color in the 19th century was another suggestion.

Whites also raised the economics of slavery as another possibility. They thought it would be instructive to show that slaves were defined and treated like commodities in an economic system in which decisions to use slaves reflected business considerations and market-based economic rational choices. Another suggestion was to consider the operation of the plantation commissary and the forms of debt peonage based on payment with scrip/coins that perpetuated the system of labor dependency even after slavery was abolished. It would be important, people suggested, to show both sides of the system, using ledgers and other historic documents that tell a story about people and the economics of slavery over the past few hundred years. The story might also be told by using different cabins at Magnolia to interpret the historical sequence from slavery to the end of tenancy.

The potential racial composition of the interpretive staff raised some interest. One white person wondered about the race of the future park interpreters and mentioned his own discomfort—a feeling of being targeted—when he visited colonial Williamsburg and a black interpreter told the story of plantation slavery. The respondent was not suggesting limiting the staff to white people but raising the relationship between ethnicity and interpretive roles as a discussion point.

CREOLES OF COLOR VIEWS ON SLAVERY

Creole participants in this study came primarily from the heritage area, not Magnolia. Many were the offspring of planters or landowners themselves, mostly of modest holdings, and some were offspring of people who once sharecropped or rented plantation land along Upper Cane River. They necessarily brought a different personal history and interpretive grid to the discussion of slavery, partly because some of their ancestors might have been slaves and others were recalled as landholders who depended on slaves themselves. At different times in their own family histories, different ancestors might have played both roles. Interpreting slavery to the visiting public was not a difficult or contentious issue to this group. They seemed to agree that slavery “should be presented like it was a sign of the time, not that anyone blessed it or thought it was right.”

Noting that their Creole ancestors also ran slave-driven plantations, some people perceived slavery as a rational economic choice that responded to labor needs prior to the introduction of mechanized farm equipment. As one

person commented, “If you had land, you had to have some help in the days before John Deere.” He added, “If you had any intention of surviving in business then you use the labor that’s available; in this case it was slaves and it happened that slaves were darker skinned.” It was business, not morality, that prompted planters to buy and sell slaves, he argued.

Considering slavery as implying a reciprocal economic relationship, one person remarked that the owner was responsible for people from birth to death. Slaves, on the other hand, had a job to do and were paid for it in food, clothing, and shelter. In addition, Magnolia’s brick quarters were cool, making for a more comfortable, healthy, cabin. One person illustrated his argument about slavery as a rational economic choice by adding that use of bricks did not reflect the landowners’ graciousness as much as the need to have slaves making bricks for other structures. Further, he said, it was important to keep slaves occupied throughout the year, even when agricultural demands had peaked, and brick-making kept the workers busy. The Creole respondents also perceived their landed ancestors as having given slaves relative freedom and no mistreatment in order to avoid encouraging counter-productive, unsatisfactory job performance or runaways. Compared to South Louisiana where, they said, cruelty to slaves was common, Cane River planters were lenient.

A point no others had made about slave history was offered by one Creole woman who observed that slaves had their own complex history. Slaves were often “real classy” people when they were in Africa but were brought here to be treated without dignity. Despite that treatment, she continued, some blacks were very smart and capable and became mechanics, carpenters, and preachers.

EVENTS, ACTIVITIES, AND PERSPECTIVES TO AVOID

Black Concerns

These emphasized the need to be treated with dignity and not stereotyped:

- Don’t refer to us as slaves or to our houses as slave quarters. We were free laborers when we lived there at the Hertzogs’.
- Don’t get dressed as old mammies or try speaking the way you think slaves must have sounded. In effect, don’t mimic or mock them.
- Don’t try to act the way you think slaves did. Again, don’t mimic or mock them.

White Concerns:

- Discourage heavily capitalized hotel development in historic Natchitoches which would create traffic problems, reduce the historic qualities of west Natchitoches by choking narrow streets and bridges, threaten historic streets with widening, and unfairly compete with historic inns.
- Help preserve the environmental and cultural qualities of the area. “Keep it from becoming too civilized,” overpopulated, overbuilt, and converted to a playground where new water sports, for example, or development leads to degeneration of habitat and lifeways.
- Hire local people as Magnolia storekeepers and park managers or people with experience in Natchitoches and Magnolia in order to respond to public queries in a knowledgeable manner.
- Don’t portray us as forcing poverty, such as keeping blacks barefoot, and powerlessness on black people.
- Be aware of southern sensitivities by conveying non-judgmental portrayals of southern culture and sensitivity to potentially adverse effects of tourism and development.

Creole of Color Concerns:

- Direct people and vehicles to a cultural center in Derry to learn about Creole culture, and discourage them from going to Upper Cane River on Highways 484 and 119. Channel traffic away from side roads. Keep Magnolia traffic on Highway 1, straight to Magnolia, and avoid roads used by working tractors and trailers. Teach visitors to respect privacy of Creole homes and driveways, and avoid creating heavy traffic.
- Avoid bringing people from National Park Service offices in Natchitoches or New Mexico or from Cajun areas to interpret Creole culture. Interpret it through oral histories or other activity, and hire local Creole people.
- Work with Creole preservationists. Use sensitive local people qualified for interpretive work. Don't use people to work as National Park Service guides and make them wear aprons and antebellum dress.
- Cajuns are not wanted here to tell visitors what Creoles do. We wouldn't tell visitors what Cajuns do or what they are about.
- Don't just have people reading something from a book.
- Don't do living history (no consensus about this activity).
- Discourage visitors from taking Creole children's photos (no consensus, its acceptable to do so if prior permission is given).
- Protect and respect Creole privacy by reducing the National Park Service presence. Keep the area a quiet community without motels and restaurants on the river. Discourage wealthy subdivisions with locked gated communities or trailer parks. Keep wealthy people in subdivisions from putting retaining walls around the river banks because the walls are threatening the integrity of their own banks downstream.
- Avoid having the park become so touristy and commercial that local people become "like monkeys in a zoo that tourists drive by to see how Creoles look. Photos should not be taken of us. Don't make this place like Santa Fe where all those people (Indian vendors in the plaza) were selling their wares."
- Staff at the park tourist center should be informed about all local tourist opportunities, be prepared with readable area maps and brochures, and learn enough about visitor interests and schedules to direct them appropriately. For example, visitors should know that Melrose closes at 4 P.M., and that they can use Highway 1 or take the river tour. Installing restroom facilities at the center and the park is essential.

CHAPTER 12: IMPLICATIONS: “CANE RIVER CREOLE NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK”

The park name disturbs some local residents by seeming to disenfranchise them, insult their ethnicity, and eliminate their past as worthy of note in the new National Park Service unit. Black people particularly see the park's name as symbolic of longstanding disregard and disrespect for them. “Creole” is neither what they call themselves nor are called by others. On the other hand, the name pleases others whose ways of life seem to be highlighted and legitimized by the new park. Whites, including people of French ancestry, think the park is about architectural and various other expressions of French heritage. Creoles of color perceive the park as intended to highlight their own special heritage and status. While this exclusive view is the prevailing one, there was some discomfort with it and concern that the park name unfairly ignored the black community and culture. Some Creoles of color noted that the black community is another participant in the Cane River heritage, should be considered as such by the park, and interpreted alongside the Creole culture. As they saw it, it is problematic to talk of a Creole park and allow the black community to feel it is disowned from being part of the park or the Cane River story. Black people could not agree more.

CHAPTER 13: CONCLUSION

“Cane River Creole NHP” might suggest a park that focuses on French heritage as expressed in ways of life, language, and architecture. The park does that, of course, but the Cane River story is considerably more complex. This brief ethnography, undertaken to meet immediate planning needs, intended to highlight those complexities by making ordinarily muted voices more audible and ethnographically sensitive resources more visible. Research shows that the plantation locally called “the Hertzogs” signifies ethnically different peoples: the whites, including planters of French Creole descent, the labor force of black peoples, and Creoles of color – their adaptations to each other and to local, regional, and national conditions. Ethnic differences found expression in religious affiliation, celebrations, and language patterns as well as in jobs, residence, and social status. Each of the three major groups differed in ways that were complementary and essential to the plantation’s inception, development, and success as a commercial enterprise and community. Ethnicity and relationship to resources or occupation stratified the plantation, a rural company town. Earlier, it was organized along manorial lines under the hereditary stewardship of the white French Creole Hertzogs, with enslaved black peoples providing labor. The social pyramid following abolition included sharecroppers, mostly Creoles of color, and day laborers, mostly black occupants of the quarters, which formerly housed enslaved workers.

Bitterness about poverty and powerlessness might have dominated black reminiscences of life at Magnolia, but it did not. Memories were undoubtedly reconfigured by the passage of time. Peoples’ continuing membership in the local social system also influenced perceptions or descriptions of the past, and some experiences were not retrieved or shared with outsiders. Still, although former residents expressed deep pain about past indignities and their struggles to make ends meet, they also tended to recall living full and relatively satisfying lives at Magnolia. They described the times they played as children, met and married their mates, reared their own children, fed families partly from their small gardens, and balanced long working days with recreational, religious, and secular events. The quarters provided full lives with social, spiritual, educational, and economic support. Black residents left that behind by the mid-1960s when mechanized agriculture made their labor surplus, undermining the community, transforming rural aspects of culture, and prompting emigration to urban Natchitoches and elsewhere.

The June 19th celebrations may be seen as a metaphor of changing plantation relationships, the severing of traditional power relationships between enslaved blacks and their white owners, and new formulations of their interdependence. The Hertzog family continued to support the event into this century, dispensing largesse by donating foods and giving workers a holiday. The labor community accepted this support, reaffirming its own ties to the plantation community. Mechanization and the associated rural exodus changed, but did not completely sever the relationships among black families as well as between them and white landowners. Concomitantly, the former type of June 19th celebrations, perceived as a “black” event, was waning in many areas. After a period of regrouping and redefinition, interest in acknowledging June 19th recently began to re-surface. While the celebration still marks change in ethnic relationships, in some communities it is becoming a more inclusive event that is no longer exclusively identified as a “black” holiday. White participation in the present celebrations might be an acknowledgement of their own roles in framing the black political experience. To the extent that the holidays people chose to celebrate and the forms those celebrations take express aspects of their social positions, the recent expressions of June 19th reflect continued change, strengthened black voices, and greater equity in some respects, locally and in American society more generally.

The Magnolia portion of Cane River Creole NHP is a circumscribed area with clearly defined fixed boundaries, but the ethnographically relevant landscape is more extensive than the 19-acre park. Places assigned cultural meaning by former residents were located within the park; others were dispersed within the larger plantation or located elsewhere in the Cane River Heritage Area. Some places, such as the AME Church or Ms. Lizzie’s house, no longer supported physical structures, but they remained named place markers in the conceptual map of former residents. Importantly, while the structures are ephemeral, their stories have longevity. Ethnicity influenced peoples’ identification of certain ethnographically important resources. Black people, for example, not only

attached importance to the quarters. They also valued the former St. James AME Church, sites in the sharecropper area, and certain Baptist Churches outside the plantation, such as St. Andrew, which partnered in community life with Magnolia's AME Church. Creoles of color attached greater importance to St. Augustine Catholic Church and other physical evidence of their culture. White people, including French descendents, valued a viable natural environment along with Magnolia's farm buildings and the larger plantation. Everyone accorded importance to the Big House and the store. Pride in the Hertzogs' place was also common, expressed by black people as pride in community and their contributions to the plantation's success and longevity and by whites as pride in the continuing family management and the ability to survive economic and natural hardships. Identification with the Hertzog community was shared, but faceted by different experiences.

Slavery seemed to be the most troubling topic. Although initially viewed as a tabu subject by blacks and whites alike, interviewees came to agree on its legitimacy as an interpretive topic. People were concerned about potentially insensitive interpretations of southern cultures and the introduction of biases and misunderstandings by NPS staff from different backgrounds and regions. Concerns about having the National Park Service convey a painful and shameful past to the different visiting publics troubled others. Despite their trepidation, people agreed the park could cover the topic, provided it was part of a sequence that also addressed local changes and their contexts since the Civil War. In effect, the community gave the NPS permission to tell the story of a past that local people, as well as the nation, finds painful, contentious, and difficult to address. The NPS is now responsible for conveying a complex past on behalf of a diverse community that finds the subject too difficult or sensitive to address itself. In this regard, the community is challenging and trusting the Service to maneuver a minefield of sensitive feelings and divergent perspectives so that it projects the many dimensions of traditional plantation systems in ways that inform national visitors while respecting the concerns of all Magnolia families.

In the future, the NPS might consider periodically conducting focus groups with plantation owners, former tenants, former sharecroppers, and other interested groups to explore and test potential interpretive approaches to slavery or other topics. Hosting a workshop on the public interpretation of slavery in concert with other private and public plantation parks experienced in addressing the issues could be useful. Magnolia staff may also keep contact with local groups as well as the public by making available a section for comments on their web page.

Strong local interest in the park coupled with ethnic diversity would make it beneficial to develop separate alliances and formal agreements with Creole of color, white, and black groups. The benefits would include development of cooperative interpretive or other programs that incorporate local expertise, give the park regular access to community views, and enhance interactions with local groups. Alliances might be a mechanism for disseminating information on employment. Separate alliances with St. Andrew Missionary Baptist Church and St. Augustine Catholic Church or St. John the Baptist Catholic Church, the Black Heritage Society, or the Louisiana Creole Heritage Center at NSU, could make knowledgeable partners available. Contact with the Hertzogs presently occurs through activities associated with the National Heritage Area and Magnolia itself, but the park might find it useful to expand its networks through a small informal discussion group that included the Prud'hommes of Oakland and other local plantation owners.

The park might treat June 19th as a time for workshops, storytelling, or other events generally related to the transformation of agricultural systems and rural community life from the Civil War through mechanization. Melrose has its Arts and Crafts festival, Creoles of color in Upper Cane River have their heritage celebrations, individual plantations in the Heritage Area participate in special country tours, and American Indian powwows are held at Fort St. Jean Baptiste. No rural site is known to mark June 19th as symbolizing the end of slavery and the start of the long process of transforming the nation and its peoples.

Informational brochures for visitors, including one on the etiquette of visiting Cane River and interacting with area residents, might consider ethnicity as different local groups perceive it. Interactive computer programs might be developed to raise and answer questions on local ethnicity, agricultural production, horse racing, and the like. Another pragmatic step to meet local concerns about tourism impacts, yet not inappropriately involve the National

Park Service in politically sensitive development issues, might be to co-sponsor workshops on community-based preservation and gateway communities, perhaps with speakers from selected gateway communities.

One useful interpretive approach to demonstrating Magnolia's social dynamics and acknowledging the essential role of black labor families would be to portray the lives of selected families whose past is intimately associated with Magnolia. No doubt the Hertzog family history will be a prominent part of the Magnolia story; the story of families, such as Ms. Lizzie's and the Verchers', should be told alongside it.

Cane River Creole NHP in general and Magnolia in particular help further traditional National Park Service values of protecting resources and educating the public about nationally important sites, structures, natural features, and landscapes. On the other hand, the park also enjoys uniquely unprecedented opportunities to highlight these resources in human terms. Identifying the ethnographic dimensions of these resources by giving visibility to the meanings assigned by Magnolia's ethnic/class groups will deepen and enrich the Cane River story. Drafting the content of interpretive programs in collaboration with French Creole and other whites, black people, and Creoles of color will demonstrate respect for their perspectives about the pasts and the messages they wish to convey to visitors to a park that once was, and for some still is, home.

It is important to recall that the park is embedded in a larger context. It includes the entire Magnolia plantation with its sharecropper area and the St. James AME church and its partner, St. Andrew. These places might not appear in formal Cultural Landscape reports and may be unmarked by historic plaques, although places such as the former AME Church deserve official notice. Life in the quarters was not tenable – nor did it occur – without relationships with people and at places beyond its boundaries. Cloutierville, Derry, and other resources in the National Heritage Area are important parts of the plantation community and story. A vision of community that is broad enough to include these places and relationships is imperative to telling the Magnolia, or better yet, the Cane River story.

Finally, despite its brevity, this ethnographic work had penetrated certain social boundaries deeply enough to highlight local people, views, and resources that might have otherwise eluded attention. One resulting pragmatic lesson is that cultural anthropology or ethnography, as it is known in NPS, can go where other research strategies do not and, with community cooperation, bring planners' insights into the concerns of people whose intimate knowledge of the resources is unmatchedable.

CHAPTER 14: FUTURE RESEARCH

Skimming the surfaces of this complex and “recalled community” revealed rich stores of untapped information and deep gaps in existing data on the Cane River area, its black people, the French Creole, and other whites. Ideally, the problem would be addressed by a comprehensive professional and phased area research plan of cultural anthropological and multidisciplinary work. Research would consider the mosaic of Cane River people and cultures along with ties between the town and the countryside and between them and regional and national events. An expansive view is imperative. Neither the Hertzogs’ place nor the Prud’hommes’, the people who lived and worked there, or the larger group of heritage area resources are comprehensible without reference to each other and to more inclusive events, circumstances, and people. By phasing the studies, each would build on the results of earlier work and produce data that informs the design of subsequent work. Teamwork and appropriate professionals working collaboratively with local experts and some continuity in staff would be essential.

Focussing on Magnolia in particular, the National Park Service interpretive programs as well as future planning would benefit from the following studies. They would also produce information for use in the Ethnographic Resource Inventory (ERI). The following are suggested, in priority order (see Directors Order #28 Cultural Resource Management Chapter 10):

- **Ethnographic Overview and Assessment:** This basic required comprehensive study informs management about culturally meaningful park resources and the peoples traditionally associated with them. Cultural anthropologists would systematically review, annotate, and assess the available literature, in addition to ethnographically interviewing past and present members of the culturally diverse plantation community about ways of life associated with park resources. They would conduct site visits with representatives of the different ethnic groups and map meaningful and storied places. Ethnographic Resource Inventory data, potential National Register sites, and particular gaps in the available data would be identified.
- **Traditional Use Study:** These studies would describe and analyze the plantation’s transformation from a traditional rural company town to an agribusiness. Attention is directed, for example, to changing resource uses for large-scale ranching and agriculture, sharecropping, gardening and residences, religious places, social trails, ferry landings, and so on. The consequences of change for the entire resident community, management as well as tenant workers and tenant farmers, are addressed. Included would be details of decision-making about: allocating space to crops, pastures, residence, recreation, and the like; marketing and non-cash exchanges of surplus; changes in residence patterns and family organization; and changing relationships among plantations and Cloutierville, Derry and other nearby settlements.
- **Ethnographic Landscape:** This is a detailed study of ethnographic landscapes within Magnolia, as well as the heritage area. It examines the stories, names, and locales of the cultural and natural features perceived as meaningful by people with traditional associations to Magnolia. This might be combined with either of the above studies or the following one.
- **Ethnohistories and ethnographic oral histories:** Cultural anthropologists research each ethnic group to reconstruct its past, transformations in family and community ways of life, and perceptions of inter-ethnic relations. Extended interviews are combined with analyses of published and unpublished information on particular themes. Another theme is the transformation of black, Creole of color, and white communities from the turn of the 20th century to the present, including the creation of new mechanisms for community building or stability. This would include consideration of churches as supporting viable and dynamic communities and as forces in efforts to gain economic, social, and political parity. This might be combined with the above ethnographic study and include the evolution of ethnic terms that local groups use for themselves and others and the relationships between language changes and changes in the political, social, and economic contexts.

- Social/Cultural Impacts Assessments and baseline studies: Baseline data are needed on the present-day heritage area, including demography, resource allocations, community and ethnicity, and potential for income generation. This multidisciplinary study would be used in periodically evaluating the local impacts of Cane River Creole NHP, the National Heritage Area, and tourism projects. It would also be used to make needed mid-course corrections in land use, zoning, and the transportation facilities, particular tours, and other features of the anticipated tourism industry.

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MRS. LIZZIE JOHNSON.
Photo: M. Crespi.



MRS. BERTHA SIMMONS.
Photo: M. Crespi.

Our indebtedness extends to several African Americans, or “black” people, as many prefer to call themselves. Born at Magnolia, where they lived and worked as day laborers or sharecroppers most of their lives, they taught us about the plantation community through interviews and walks through the quarters. These residents included the members of three proud generations of Magnolia-born women, Mrs. Lizzie Johnson, her daughter Mrs. Bertha Simmons, and her granddaughter, Ms. Dorothy West. Permission to use their words and their photographs here is greatly appreciated. We regret the recent demise of Ms. Lizzie, the respected traditional expert on black Magnolia life. The Verchers, another enduring Magnolia family, were represented by Mr. Ellis Vercher and his wife, Leola Rachal Vercher, and their children. They invited us into their Alexandria home and shared their rich memories of life in the Magnolia community. We were saddened to later learn of Ellis Vercher’s untimely accidental death. Another family member, Mrs. Rosetta Turner, shared memories of her youth at Magnolia and neighboring communities, further enriching our insights into the area.



MS. DOROTHY
WEST. Photo: M.
Crespi.

Deacons and other members of St. Andrew Missionary Baptist Church, including Dr. Herbert and Pearline Baptiste, and members of St. Augustine Catholic Church lent gracious assistance by offering written and verbal information about Church history and inviting other congregation members to join group discussions about the area.

Thanks to former overseers or supervisors and families, including Mr. George Lynn, the Thompsons, and Mr. Don Gallien, and former cowhands such as Mr. Isaac Dupree, who recalled daily life at Magnolia. Ms. Ruby Fuller’s fine food and conversation at the Derry Mercantile restaurant further enriched our understandings of local culture and cuisine. We appreciate the help of several residents of urban Natchitoches, including Mr. Robert (Bobby) DeBlieux, the L.J. Melders, Mr. Ed Ward, and the Palmers who shared their experiences and insights into Magnolia, preservation and tourism, and cotton farming. Mr. John L. Mayer, archeologist at the United States Forest Service (USFS) Kisatchie District, offered information and hard-to-find publications. Additionally, people interviewed for the subsequent study of Oakland Plantation related their experiences with Magnolia, as did Ms. Theresa Sarpy of the Clifton Choctaw Tribe, and urban Natchitoches residents, including Reverend Turner and Mr. Rogers Roque, and Cloutierville resident Mr. Edward Metoyer.

The owners of Metoyer’s Arts and Crafts in Derry, Betty Metoyer and her husband Tony Metoyer, whose untimely death was mourned near and far, supported this project by sharing their first-hand knowledge of the Creole of color community. They also organized group meetings when Matthew and Elenor Metoyer and Celena Rachel discussed Cane River life. We are grateful for the sharp memories of Derry and Cloutierville residents, such as Ms. Lucille Carnahan, who, with Mrs. Myra Friedman, helped reconstruct the area’s past. We were helped

by additional group interviews with participants who included Mr. Mickey Moran, Ms. Judith Moran, and Ms. Vera Severin. The Jones, Listach, Rachal, Williams, Cyriaque, Cyiark, Morris, Roque, Sarpy and Metoyer families all furthered our insights into the Cane River area.

Ms. Mary Linn Wernet, University Archivist assisted the project staff by identifying information sources and providing access to the rich collections at the Cammie G. Henry Research Center, Watson Memorial Library, Northwestern State University. Mr. John Vander Syden, Supervisor with the Natchitoches Parish School Board generously tracked down data on the establishment of several rural schools of importance to Magnolia children. Both he and Nancy Harrington, former secretary to the Superintendent of Schools, provided leads to other educators.

Thanks to Ms. Laura Soulliere Gates, the caring superintendent of Cane River Creole National Historical Park, for comments on a previous draft, support and enormous patience while this document was being completed. I appreciated the insightful comments offered by Park Interpreters Ms. Carla Cowles and her summer sidekick, Ms. Amy Williams. Former staff of Cane River Creole NHP assisted too, including ranger Mrs. Carolyn Breedlove who provided copies of critical documents in the park collections, and Mr. Lee Jordan, program manager, who provided leads to potential consultants. The humor and patience of former superintendent Mr. Randy Clement and his introductions to key community members helped move this project ahead.

A warm abrazo goes to Mrs. Allison Peña, anthropologist from Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve. She not only articulated her beliefs that the views of present-day peoples deserved systematic ethnographic attention but acted on them by supporting this study and thoughtfully reviewing earlier draft documents. I also appreciate the careful reviews of earlier drafts made by the Denver Service Center planners, particularly planner Mrs. Ann Van Huizen and cultural anthropologist/ethnographer Dr. Larry Van Horn, and the useful comments of archeologist Dr. Hiram (Pete) Gregory of Northwestern State University. Thanks to the cultural landscape specialists David Hasty in the National Park Service Atlanta office and to Lucy Lawliss and Cari Goetcheus in the Washington office for help in identifying historic maps. David Hesker expertly modified maps in the General Management Plan to fit the needs of this report.

Ms. Jane Gray and Mrs. Sherri Lawson Clark, cultural anthropologists formerly in the Archeology and Ethnography Program in Washington, DC and graduate Anthropology students, and Ms. Laura Bruce, Cultural Anthropology intern in the program from Columbia University, get my endless thanks. They not only offered interested support and comfort throughout this unfortunately prolonged undertaking but also used their considerable computer skills to produce the Figures, help format the document and often save it from inadvertent destruction, lend expert editorial and technical assistance, and integrate the photos.

I appreciated the help extended by all the project supporters, too numerous to name, and hope the resulting report meets their expectations. If not, only I am responsible for its shortcomings.

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**A SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY
ON HISTORIC
MAGNOLIA PLANTATION AND ITS ENVIRONS**

Susan Dollar
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Babb, Arthur. *My Sketchbook, 1926-27*. Edited by Neill Cameron. Natchitoches: Northwestern State University Press, 1996.

A charming visitor's journal, this source is full of descriptions of Natchitoches in the twenties. See, especially, pp. 79-90 (a tour of the Cane River area and Melrose with photographs) and pp. 93-101 (another trip down the river, Isle Brevelle, and Magnolia with photographs). This book's photographs and text can be very helpful with the interpretation of Magnolia, as well as the greater heritage area. This source is a very important one to read.

Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Northwest Louisiana. Nashville: The Southern Publishing Co., 1890. Reproduced in 1976 by Walsworth Publishing Co.

This volume provides detailed, though dated, information on the parish as a whole. Pre-Civil War information is provided on the largest slave holders and landowners in the parish, as well as general information on early businesses in the parish, descriptions of early towns, and biographical information on early leaders. Strangely, information on the Hertzogs is absent. Interesting information on the Henry family of Derry and Melrose is provided.

Cane River Country Louisiana. Natchitoches: Northwestern State University Press, 1979.

This is a coffee-table collection of historical and modern photographs of Natchitoches and its environs, along with selected related historical documents from the Cammie Henry Research Center. Many of these photographs would be helpful in interpretation at Magnolia. See, in particular, p. 117, photos of the slave quarters at Magnolia; pp. 110-111, photos of tools made and used by slaves at Oakland Plantation; p. 90, a photograph of a church on Magnolia Plantation pp. 54-55, photos of the days of building the railroad in the vicinity of Chopin; pp. 40-41, photos of a baptism on Cane River and of one of the early Black churches in the area [unidentified]; and p. 30, a photo of the steamboat *Scovell* at 24-Mile Landing on the Cohen place. An excellent source on scenes of early Natchitoches.

Corley, D.B. *A Visit to Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Chicago: Laird & Lee Publishers, 1893.

This small work gives a brief overview of Natchitoches circa 1890. It gives some background to the legend that the character Simon Legree in of Harriet Beecher Stowe's work *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was based on Robert McAlpin, the owner of a plantation near Derry in the 1850s. Lamy Chopin later bought the McAlpin plantation. There is some interesting interview material here, but nothing specifically on Magnolia Plantation.

Davis, Edwin A. *Louisiana: A Narrative History*. Baton Rouge: Claitor's Publishing, 1971.

This book is a foremost work on the history of the state. It gives a good, basic overview of the colonial twists and turns of Louisiana's history. Perhaps a bit dated, but still an important work.

DeBlieux Collection. Cammie Henry Research Center. Eugene P. Watson Memorial Library. Northwestern State University of Louisiana. Natchitoches, LA.

Folder #573 contains a portfolio of Magnolia photographs, along with a history of the ownership of the property.

Dollar, Susan E. *The Freedman's Bureau Schools of Natchitoches Parish, 1865-1868*. Master's thesis, Northwestern State University of Louisiana, 1994.

Although no specific information about Magnolia appears in this work, there is some information on Hypolite Hertzog of Melrose Plantation and detailed descriptions of the economic situation in Natchitoches Parish in the four years immediately following the Civil War. This work also gives insight into the contract labor system in the parish just after the war, as well as descriptions of freedman life in the parish during that time.

Eakin, Sue. *Louisiana Plantations*.

Focusing on a number of plantations in the state, this small work documents buildings and other aspects of the Louisiana plantation system through photographs. It appears to me that the section on Magnolia relies heavily on the Hertzog family photographs, showing workers in the field, loading hay, etc.

Federal Writers Project Collection. Cammie Henry Research Center. Eugene P. Watson Memorial Library. Northwestern State University of Louisiana. Natchitoches, LA.

Although the material in this collection is wide ranging and covers much of the state of Louisiana, several specific documents pertain to Natchitoches Parish and the plantation system there. Folders #63 (Magnolia), #123 (Cane River Superstitions), and #126 (Free Mulattos on Cane River; Architecture on Red River; Coffee Time) are sources of information which may be useful to the interpretation of the area.

Gilley, B.H., ed. *North Louisiana, Volume One: To 1865, Essays on the Region and Its History*. Ruston, LA: McGinty Trust Fund Publications, 1984.

This collection of essays is very informative on north Louisiana. Of particular interest are the following: "Liberté, Fraternité, and Everything But Egalité: Cane River's Citizens de Couleur," by Gary Mills, which focuses on the Metoyer descendants of Marie Thérèse Coin-Coin; "The Great Raft of the Red River," by Hubert Davis Humphreys, which describes in detail the meanderings of the river and river travel in the days that the river was blocked by logs near Natchitoches; and "Secession and Civil War in North Louisiana," by John D. Winters, giving a brief overview of that time in north Louisiana. Although the information here is not specifically on Magnolia Plantation, it does cover events and situations which affected the plantation and life there.

Gregory, H.F., H.K. Curry, and J.L. McCorkle, Jr. *Natchitoches Parish: Cultural and Historical Resources*. Natchitoches, LA: Natchitoches Parish Planning Commission, 1979.

This source summarizes and synthesizes the cultural data for groups in the parish. Studies previous to this work are reviewed and significant contributors to parish archaeology are cited. Completed for the "purpose of evaluation of sites for National Registry Eligibility," this work gives a good overview and description of historical Indian communities in the parish with site descriptions of known archaeological sites. It also provides an overview of the economic development of colonial Natchitoches, describing French/Spanish/Indian relations from the beginning. It provides a good overview of the lay of the land, goods traded in the area, the great raft on Red River, and the beginnings of the plantation system in the area.

Hardin, J. Fair. *Northwestern Louisiana: A History of the Watershed of the Red River, 1714-1937*. 3 vols. Shreveport: The Historical Record Association, n.d.

Volume I is a good source for Natchitoches Parish history with information on trails, roads, steam boating, railroads, and the log raft on the river. See p. 496 for information on Ambrose Lecomte's race track in town. Volume I also includes the diary of William S. Toumey, a Natchitoches lawyer from 1836 to 1842, who was a friend and contemporary of Matthew Hertzog, ancestor of the Matthew Hertzog of the early 1900s. In addition to this diary, it also contains J.W. Dorr's observations of the town when he visited Natchitoches in 1860 by steamboat from Alexandria. Both of these entries provide interesting data from the 1800s as to the life of the town itself. In Volume III, there is biographical information about Mrs. Ambrose John Hertzog, grandmother to the present Ambrose Hertzog, along with a basic description of the plantation as it was in the late 1930s.

Kadlecek, Mabel C., and Marion C. Bullard. *Louisiana's Kisatchie Hills: History, Tradition, Folklore*. Chelsea, MI: Book Crafters, 1994.

This work provides information on the fringe communities in the hills, along with interesting information on the location of stage coach routes, old trails into Spanish territory, and roads. It also includes information on old sawmills, cotton gins, and the cattle industry, as well as local lore on buried treasure, ghosts, and gangs. Mostly Anglo history.

Kerr, J.A., et al. *Soil Survey of Natchitoches Parish, Louisiana*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1925.

This work contains a detailed map of the area of the Heritage Area, showing old roads, homesites, and waterways. This is an excellent map for reference to the landscape of the past.

Louisiana's Architectural and Archeological Legacies. Natchitoches, LA: Northwestern State University Press, 1982.

On page 110 of this work, there is a sketch of one of the slave quarters and a photograph of the main house at Magnolia Plantation. These are accompanied by a brief narrative description of the plantation. Nothing new here except the sketch.

Maes, Pierre F. *Land Plats of Natchitoches and Its Environs, 1793-1801*. Cammie Henry Research Center. Eugene P. Watson Memorial Library. Northwestern State University of Louisiana. Natchitoches, LA.

These maps are some of the earliest of the area. Map #20, dated 1796, has Ambrose Leconte's [sic] land marked; map #22, dated 1794, has the land of Francois Leconte [sic] marked. Other maps also show the lands of the LaCour family, which may be the lands which later became Ambrose Lecomte's land, eventually to be known as Magnolia.

McCoy Collection. Cammie Henry Research Center. Eugene P. Watson Memorial Library. Northwestern State University of Louisiana. Natchitoches, LA.

This collection contains one photograph of the cotton press at Magnolia.

Melrose Collection. Cammie Henry Research Center. Eugene P. Watson Memorial Library. Northwestern State University of Louisiana. Natchitoches, LA.

This is an immense collection, which contains incredible amounts of information about innumerable events, places, and people. Here and there pieces of information about Magnolia and its environs can be found. Scrapbook #71 contains an article (The Natchitoches *Times*, May 12, 1933) describing the characters from the

Cane River area; Aunt Harriet, who was born a slave on Magnolia, describes her memories of Mrs. Fanny Hertzog during slavery. Scrapbook #71 also contains photographs of the buildings and some of the workers at Magnolia, complete with comments made by Cammie Henry. Scrapbook #70 also has photographs: see pp. 117-18 for photos of the big house; pp. 119-20 for photos of the quarters and servant Aunt Agnes; and pp. 102-4 for photos of Mr. Matt.

Mignon, François. *Plantation Memo: Plantation Life in Louisiana, 1750-1970 and Other Matter*. Baton Rouge: Claitor's Publishing, 1972.

This is a collection of Mignon's weekly newspaper columns from over thirteen years of writing. Mignon lived at Melrose and took most of his observations from life on the Cane River. There are snippets here that give insight into daily life along the river – valuable, probably, for interpretation of Magnolia. These observations are dated, however, and reveal early, “politically incorrect” attitudes towards African Americans.

Mills, Gary B. *The Forgotten People: Cane River's Creoles of Color*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1977.

This is one of the most complete examinations of the Isle Brevelle Creoles as a distinct ethnic group and their founding as a community. It is not complete, however, and other works should be consulted. It is particularly strong on the early history of the Creole community in Natchitoches Parish.

The Natchitoches Genealogist. The Natchitoches Genealogical and Historical Association.

Various issues of this locally published journal provide details about the Lecompte and Hertzog families. See, among others, Vol. V:2 (April 1981): 19, which has information on the location of succession papers for at least eleven Hertzog family members; “Notes on Early Steamboat Navigation on Cane River, Charles Bertrand to Miss Cammie,” Vol. VI:2 (April, 1982): 29-30, which gives an account of the murder of the overseer at Magnolia; Vol. VIII:1 (October 1983), which has several references to Magnolia and to the Hertzogs - see especially Mrs. Lucille Keator Prudhomme's notes on the landholdings of the Prudhommes (p. 21 has a reference to Magnolia), and pp. 39-42, “Ferry Boat Bonds Issued in Natchitoches Parish,” showing Matthew Hertzog's involvement with local ferries; and Vol. XVI:1 (April 1991):17-19, “Last Will and Testament of Ambrose Lecomte (1807-1883).

Saxon, Lyle. “Cane River.” In *Louisiana Stories*, edited by Ben Forkner, pp. 205-218. Gretna, LA: Pelican Publishing Co., 1990.

Written by an author who lived on Melrose Plantation for many years, this short story is about a young black woman who works on a plantation in the early 1900s. The story itself is fiction however, its view into relationships among workers on a plantation in Louisiana is insightful and informative.

----- *Children of Strangers*. Atlanta: Mockingbird Press, 1986.

First published in 1937, this work is based on Cane River and sheds insight into the Creole community there. Although it is fiction, I have been told that it is truer than most people think. In fact, it appears that many, if not most, of the elements of the story are true. This small work gives clear insight into the curiosities of the Creole community, their lives on the river, and their relationships with each other and with the whites and blacks of the area.

Seebold, Herman de Bache. *Old Louisiana Plantation Homes and Family Trees*. 2 vols. New Orleans: Pelican Press, 1941.

In volume I of this work, there appears a brief description of Magnolia Plantation as it was in the late 1930s.

Seyersted, Per, ed. *The Complete Works of Kate Chopin*. 2 vols. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1969.

This is a collection of the works of Kate Chopin, who lived in Cloutierville between 1879 and 1884 and based many of her works on the people from the Cane River area. An early regional writer and local colorist, Chopin gives detailed descriptions of life on the river, as well as of the people from the area. Specific works to examine include "In and Out of Old Natchitoches," "For Marse Chouchoute" (description of a house party), "Love on the Bon Dieu" (description of Easter egg knocking), "Loka" (description of the hanging cradles traditionally used in the Cane River area), "Ma'am Pélagie" (the setting of this story sounds strangely like Magnolia), "Mamouche" (takes place between the 24-Mile Ferry and Cloutierville), and her first novel, *At Fault* (which is set on the Chopin plantation). Although fiction, Chopin's work can provide insight which one will not find in a historical document or statistical work. These should be consulted for information.

Shugg, Roger W. *Origins of Class Struggle in Louisiana: A Social History of White Farmers and Laborers during Slavery and After, 1840-1875*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1939.

This is the most complete statistical study of the Louisiana plantation system, both pre- and post-civil war, that I am aware of. It provides information on the following: characteristics of the classes; social conditions in the Old Regime; free labor and slavery; government by gentlemen; secession and war; class and race strife; survival of the plantation; rise of the poor whites; and statistics on the agrarian pattern, 1860-1880, within the state of Louisiana. Natchitoches Parish is represented in these statistical breakdowns.

Stallings, Evelyn Tudor. "Hapless Harlequin: Joseph Mark Leveque, 1868-1911," Master's thesis, Northwestern State University of Louisiana, 1986.

This master's thesis, although focused on J.M. Leveque, a newspaper reporter in New Orleans, gives an interesting description of life on the river after the Civil War. Leveque's father was a practicing physician who lived at Oakland with his family. The early chapters of this work, chapters 1 and 2 especially, give insight into the economy, political antagonisms, pastimes, and the coming of the railroad in the years after the Civil War along the Cane/Red Rivers.

Walkes, Joseph A., Jr. *Jno. G. Lewis, Jr. - End of an Era: The History of Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Louisiana, 1842-1979*. 1986.

This source, although specifically on the African-American Freemasons of Louisiana, gives some interesting information on the group which founded The Corinthian Lodge and The Dawn of Light Lodge #22 in Natchitoches. John G. Lewis, of Natchitoches but originally from Canada, was instrumental in the founding of these lodges and served as Grandmaster in Louisiana before his death. Many of the tombstones in St. Andrew's Cemetery are decorated with Masonic symbols indicating the close ties the people of that congregation shared with the lodge once located in Derry, LA. The notes to this work provide some telling insights into Reconstruction, post-reconstruction, and Jim-Crow realities for blacks in Louisiana, relying heavily on *The Plumbline*, a black Masonic monthly journal published in Natchitoches from 1910 into the 1970s.