

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Enterprise Plantation is located in the community of Patoutville between New Iberia and Jeanerette. The Plantation land was acquired in a series of grants and purchases beginning in 1825. The Patout family originally planned to start a vineyard, but the land and weather were unsuitable and sugar cane was raised. In 1829 the first small sugar mill was constructed.

The Plantation house was completed in 1835. It is a two-story wood and brick structure that originally had two complementary dependencies. One of the "young men's houses" or garconiere remains, but the other, the old kitchen which was restored in the 1940's by German prisoner labor used on the plantation, has since been destroyed by a storm.

The first floor of the main house is of brick, and the upper story is cypress. Six square columns adorn the front and support the second floor gallery; the entablature is unornamented. The floor under the gallery is paved with brick, and the upper gallery is wooden with a simple balustrade surrounding it. The double entrance doors at either end of both floors have simple sidelights. Smaller porches are across the back.

The cypress frame is pegged. Bricks and nails were apparently made on the Plantation, as was the shell mortar. The walls are insulated with bousillage.

The house was laid with halls running east-west, possibly to catch breezes and avoid cold northern and hot southern winds. Both floors have a central hall with four large rooms. First floor ceilings are 10' and the second floor rooms have 12' ceilings. The living room and dining room were originally located on the second floor and food from the kitchen building was carried up a concealed staircase off the back gallery by the service area on the first floor to the upstairs hall and then the dining room.

Original outbuildings included a wine house, a separate kitchen the garconiere, a smoke house, the laundry house, stables, and a chicken house. In 1882 two wings were added to the main building, on the south and north sides. The north wing was removed in 1942. Only one garconiere remains, and the kitchen (along with the dining room) has been moved to the wing.

The present sugar mill was built in 1959 after the old mill was destroyed by fire and the construction completed in time for the very next grinding season. Present capacity of the mill is 5,000 tons of cane per day. The structures in the northeast portion of the plantation complex are former slave cabins. The buildings west of the canal are the sugar mill complex and another - possibly earlier - set of former slave cabins not now used as residences.

The canal is known as Patout Bayou. It is a natural canal first dredged in the 1870's. It still connects to the Gulf of Mexico by way of a series of canals and is still used by the family business as a route for transporting materials.

The boundaries chosen concentrate on the two original property parcels plus the community of Patoutville. The community has "belonged" to the plantation for some 100 years.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Enterprise Plantation has played a vital role in the economy of the Patoutville area for over a century. It is an estate with its own sugar mill that has grown from the production of a few hogsheads a year in 1835 to a mill that presently grinds 5,000 tons of cane per day. M. A. Patout &

Son, Ltd. has the distinction of being the oldest sugar producing and sugar cane agricultural company in the 50 United States, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands, and it is owned by the fourth generation of the founding family.

Enterprise Plantation was founded in 1825 by Simeon Patout of Usay, France. Patout had come to America because his marriage to his sister-in-law was considered incest by the French government and therefore illegal. He planned to establish a vineyard on his land, originally a grant from the Spanish government. The soil and climate proved unsuitable for grapes and so the family turned to sugar cane. The first small sugar mill was constructed in 1829. Documents signed by Andrew Jackson, Martin Van Buren, and James K. Polk attest to the growth of the Plantation.

The Plantation house was built using Plantation laborers and materials and construction was completed in 1835. Wings were added to the house in 1882, and one was subsequently removed in 1942. The dependency repaired by German prison labor was later destroyed by a storm.

Simeon Patout returned to France on business and died there. His wife, Appoline, took over the plantation. "Dame Veuve Patout" was quite successful at business, but in 1845 was stricken with yellow fever. Upon her recovery she built a chapel for the plantation on a ten arpent plot at Chicot Noir and named it in honor of St. Nicholas. "La Chapelle de Madame Patout" was apparently the only church between Cypremort Point and New Iberia at the time. Both blacks and whites attended the small church, and family correspondence indicates that the widow would have liked to have a priest there more often. Madame Patout died in 1879 and was buried in the middle isle of the church which was eventually demolished after being severely damaged by a hurricane in 1964. The tombstone, now in an empty field, reads: "ICI REPOSE LA FONDATRICE DE CETTE EGLISE DAME N. PAULINE PATOUT, ELLE A PASSE EN FAISANT LE BIEN PRIEZ POUR ELLE."

Beginning in 1850, the plantation was run by Simeon and Appoline's youngest son, Hippolyte. His brother Isidore also worked at the estate, and before his death in 1857, had pumped out swamp land and used it for growing sugar cane. Hippolyte's wife, Mary Ann, and their son Hypolite [sic] came into control when the elder Hippolyte died in 1882. It was at this time that the two wings were added to the main house. Mary Ann was able to restore the plantation to solvency after the Reconstruction era, and the estate still bears her name (M. A. Patout & Son, Ltd.). Hypolite died in 1930 and his brother, William Schwing took over the estate; today the property is managed by William, Jr. and his sons.

While the firm dates from the mid-nineteenth century, the present , sugar factory is one of the newest Louisiana "houses." After being totally destroyed by fire in 1959, it was rebuilt for that year's cane season and has increased in size every year since. The present crushing capacity of this privately owned mill is 5,000 tons of sugar cane per day.

The process of producing sugar is relatively simple. The juice is removed from the cane by crushing. It is then "clarified" to remove mud and impurities and boiled under vacuum and condensed to a syrup. This syrup is further processed until the sugar crystal grows to proper grain size when it is separated by centrifugals. The two byproducts of the sugar factory are molasses and bagasse. The molasses is used as a supplement to cattle feeds, in bakery projects, and in the food processing industry. Bagasse, the pith and fiber remaining from the sugar cane, is used as the main boiler fuel for the steam power, although it can be processed and sold under the brand name "celotex."

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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