

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Magnolia Lane Plantation House was probably built sometime towards the end of the first third of the nineteenth century. It is a two story residence featuring a combination of Creole, Federal, and Greek Revival elements. Located on the Mississippi River at Nine Mile Point, Magnolia Lane enjoys a plantation setting in an otherwise rather industrialized area. Despite a number of changes over the years, the house retains its National Register eligibility.

Some discrepancy exists concerning the original date of the house. Family history pinpoints a date of 1814. But this seems rather early given the fact that the house has a dominant central hall, a feature one does not normally expect to see even in the New Orleans area prior to the 1820's. Also, the house has certain Greek Revival touches which would tend to put the date even later. (This, of course, assumes that the Greek Revival features are original 2 which seems probable but not certain.)

A pre-1915 photograph shows the house more or less as it was probably built, It shows a fully raised hip roofed house almost completely encircled by galleries. The lower story is of brick and the main (upper) story is of bousillage.

The main story at Magnolia Lane consists of four large rooms, a central hall, two rear cabinets, and an enclosed staircase leading to the attic, The front of the house is symmetrically articulated with a central front doorway and two French doors on either side. The extra wide front door is encompassed by a transom and side lights. All French doors have complex Greek Revival transoms. The open galleries are fitted with baseboards identical to those in the house. Federal features include intricate cornices, elaborately planed, extra deep baseboards, and the six panel interior doors with their delicate bolection moldings. The mantel in what is now the parlor has a Greek Revival aedicule shape but with Federal-looking planed boards Greek Revival elements include the aforementioned transoms as well as the three plain aedicule style mantels, the square gallery columns, and the front doorway with its pediment shaped top. The gallery columns are particularly unusual because of their bolection molded panels. Other original features include the floor boards, the ceiling boards, the fixed louvre shutters, and the 12 over 12 windows.

#### Changes:

1. Originally there were two enclosed rooms on the ground story. Sometime in the late nineteenth century two more rooms were added.
2. Also about that time the gallery balustrades were evidently replaced.
3. In 1915 a hurricane blew the original hip roof off. A new pitched roof was built and a separate skirting roof was placed over the galleries. Installing this lower gallery roof necessitated cutting the tops off the original columns.
4. After the hurricane, clapboarding was installed on the second story exterior walls, Previously the plastered bousillage wall surface had been exposed.
5. Two bathrooms were installed on the side galleries.
6. A beaded board ceiling was installed in the central hall.
7. About fifteen years ago the present dormers were added. They were designed to duplicate the appearance of earlier dormers

Despite these changes, the house still retains the features which establish its architectural significance (see Item 8).

#### Outbuildings

To the rear of the house is a roughly contemporaneous frame kitchen which is listed as a contributing element.

The property also includes three c.1900 cabins, a c.1930 garage, a much reworked barn, a c.1900 well house, a c.1900 tool house, and a modern well cover. Because these structures do not

date from the period of Magnolia Lane's architectural significance, they are listed as non-contributing elements.

Specific dates                   c.1830 (based upon architectural evidence)  
Builder/Architect            Builder: Edgar Fortier

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)  
Criterion C

Magnolia Lane Plantation House is locally significant in the area of architecture as a rare surviving example of Jefferson Parish's early plantation house architecture.

In the past fifty years Jefferson Parish has experienced considerable development as an industrial and residential suburb of New Orleans. One of the by-products of this has been the loss of most of the parish's plantations along with their associated structures. Of course, at one time Jefferson was a rural planting parish.

The extent of this loss was dramatically documented recently in Preserving the Past for the Future, a comprehensive parishwide archaeological and historical study. Volume I contains a list of some forty-six major plantations which existed at one time. However, there are only four plantation houses still standing. One is pure Greek Revival, while the other three feature some Federal details, Magnolia Lane, of course, belongs to the latter group, and as such represents the earliest period of surviving patrimony in the parish. In addition, of these three, Magnolia Lane is the most intact, retaining most of its vital features -- i.e., the mantels, the bousillage walls, most of the basic form, the plan, the fenestration, the cornices, the baseboards, most of the columns, and the doors. The other two have been modified largely beyond recognition, For example, Cedar Grove (now known as Tchoupitoulas Restaurant) retains only a few interior details' It has been lowered from two stories to one, its gallery columns are completely replaced, and its front elevation has received a large porte-cochere addition.

Historical Note:

Magnolia Lane was purchased from the Fortier family in 1867 by Francis A. Quinette. Shortly after acquiring the property, Quinette established a nursery there. Apparently this nursery became a major source of plant material for the New Orleans area. Magnolia Lane is still owned and operated as a nursery by the Quinette family.

Major Bibliographical References

Preserving the Past for the Future: A Comprehensive Archaeological & Historic Sites Inventor, Of Jefferson Parish, Louisiana. R, Christopher Goodwin & Associates, Inc. March 1985. On file in LA Division of Archaeology.

Historical material submitted by owner. In Register file, LA SHPO.

Swanson, Betsy. Historic Jefferson Parish. Gretna: Pelican Publishing, 1975.