

“System, Papa, in Everything”: Plantation Networks in the late Antebellum Deep South

Emilie Katherine Johnson
Memphis, Tennessee

B.A., Wake Forest University, 2001
M.A. Williams College Graduate Program in the History of Art, 2006

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Abstract

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This dissertation combines careful study of physical evidence and documentary records to explore multiple plantation properties under a single owner in the Deep South in the 1840s and 1850s. Relying on methodologies developed by vernacular architectural historians and scholars of material culture, plantation networks frame the full plantation landscape, contextualizing mansion houses with agricultural buildings, working landscapes, and great houses on contributing plantations, filling the spaces with objects, and exploring spatial and social hierarchies. Three types of networks are case studies to understand ways plantation networks shaped the landscape, built environment, and material culture of hub and contributing properties, which, in turn, affected the lived experiences of elite whites and enslaved people on plantations.

The first chapter defines three types of plantation networks represented by Millford, Melrose, and Ashland, as well as the ways John Manning, John McMurran, and Duncan Kenner acquired and managed them. Agricultural buildings of the working plantation landscapes are the subjects of the second chapter. The third chapter discusses architectural influences and design concerns of the mansion houses, great houses, and domestic cores. The fourth chapter fills the houses with furniture and goods, investigating consumption patterns and the role of fashion. The fifth chapter moves the reader through the landscape to the mansion house, through rooms of furniture, into

social gatherings to understand circulation, access, spatial hierarchies, and social landscapes.

The research documents how powerfully plantation networks altered the plantation landscape. Networks allowed planters to share resources – buildings, materials, and enslaved people – with material and psychological implications for the landscape and people involved. Networks changed the scope of architectural and material consumption, allowing Southern planters to participate in fashionable trends sweeping the United States in the 1840s and 1850s. Finally, plantation networks created significant differences in social and spatial hierarchies in houses across the network. Networks answer questions about how people lived on and experienced plantations in the past and offer a framework for future plantation scholarship.

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- 3-61 C.J. Laughlin. *Cajun Girls*. Williams Research Center, Historic New Orleans Collection, 1983.47.4-695.
- 3-62 James Gallier, Sr., St. Charles Hotel, New Orleans, LA, 1837-1851. old-new-orleans.com

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America: 1665-1865. New York: Privately printed for the Jockey Club, volume 2.

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- 5-37 Mantelpiece. Killarney, Concordia Parish, LA. National Historic Register Nomination Form, 1999. Louisiana Office of Cultural Development, Division of Historic Preservation, National Register of Historic Places Database:
www.crt.state.la.us/hp/nationalregister/historicplacesdatabase.aspx

Introduction

“Mr. Byers was an old citizen of Natchez.... He was an eminent architect and builder, - having made the plan and superintended the erection of the palace mansion of J.T. McMurren, Esq., by many considered the best edifice in the State of Mississippi.”¹

For master builder Jacob Byers, the project that made him memorable to readers of the *Mississippi Free Trader* was Melrose, the “palace mansion” he built for John McMurren on a large lot outside of Natchez, Mississippi. Undoubtedly, Melrose was and is a remarkable house. Its size, grand, double-height columns, and contrasting red brick and white trim make it a fine example of a wealthy Southern planter’s mansion house. Even so, Melrose is more than just a “palace mansion.” It has the most complete collection of domestic support buildings from antebellum Mississippi. But Melrose was not just a singular plantation; it was also the hub of a five-property plantation network ranging from Arkansas to Louisiana to Mississippi. Together with the surviving structures on these contributing properties, Melrose is properly understood as a huge network of building and landscapes ranging from the famous mansion to kitchens, fields, quarters, and overseer’s houses spread over 9,486 total acres on five properties.² Even more remarkable than the survival of the mansion house, Melrose has documentary and physical resources that allow for contextualized and in depth studies of southern plantations. Situating the mansion house within a larger context of domestic core and plantation network raises a host of questions about the architecture, material culture,

¹ *Mississippi Free Trader*, Natchez, June 23, 1852

² This figure is the combined acreage of Melrose, Riverside, Moro, Killarney, Fairchild’s Island, and Wood Cottage. Acreage taken from “John T. & Mary L. McMurren Plantations,” unpublished document in the offices of Melrose Estate, Natchez National Historical Park, Natchez, MS, seen by author in 2009.

organization, and use of agricultural and residential spaces by elite whites and enslaved people in the 1840s and 1850s. This dissertation explores three varieties to understand how plantation networks shaped plantation landscapes, buildings, and material culture.

While romantic views of the Southern plantation mansion house remain popular tourist destinations and potent mythologies in the popular imagination—mythologies of honor and Southern gentility abound—many studies of Southern architecture perpetuate such sentimentalized views by focusing narrowly on the details, materials, and architectural style of the mansion house. The easiest explanations for this approach are that the mansion house featured the most significant “architecture” found on the plantation and that, more often than not, the mansion house might be the only surviving building remaining on the property. Outbuildings, agricultural structures, and transportation infrastructure usually are relegated to the background or ignored; scholars hardly ever mention the surrounding landscapes.³ The presence of plantation networks divorced the hub from the working landscapes of the contributing properties, contributing

³ This is a common approach in older scholarship. J. Frazier Smith’s *White Pillars* and Harnett Kanes’ *Plantation Parade*, both published in the 1940s, are early examples. The approach has been remarkably persistent – Mills Lane’s ten volume set on architecture in the Southern states is primarily concerned with the aesthetics of the great house. Even contemporary books like *Vestiges of Grandeur* and *Lost Plantations of the South* are primarily great house focused. The recent book on Destrehan Plantation is a biography of the house and the family who inhabited it – the authors do not attempt an in depth study of the plantation landscape or the property’s relationship to other lands owned by the family. *Vestiges of Grandeur* has a chapter entitled “Cultural Landscapes” which is primarily a discussion of European cultural amalgamations in Louisiana, religious practices, and foodways – i.e. not a discussion of buildings’ cultural imprints on the landscape. J. Frazier Smith, *White Pillars: Early Life and Architecture of the Lower Mississippi Valley Country* (New York: W. Helburn, 1941); Harnett T. Kane, *Plantation Parade: The Grand Manner in Louisiana* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1945); Mills Lane, *Architecture of the Old South*, 10 Volume Series (Savannah: The Beehive Press, 1984-1997); Richard Sexton, *Vestiges of Grandeur: The Plantations of Louisiana’s River Road* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1999); Marc R. Matrana, *Lost Plantations of the South* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2009); Eugene D. Cizek, John H. Lawrence, Richard Sexton, *Destrehan: The Man, The House, The Legacy* (Destrehan, LA: River Road Historical Society, 2008)

to Hollywood interpretations of palatial plantation mansions solely inhabited by elite whites. Studying the mansion house in solitary splendor divorces the planter's house from the other structures found on the complex and ignores the scale on which plantations were understood, built, and occupied. Plantation networks offer a corrective framework to reconstruct relationships between properties, agricultural buildings, residences, domestic cores, and the objects that filled them.

This dissertation bridges and expands upon traditional approaches to Antebellum Southern plantation houses and vernacular studies of outbuildings, by investigating these vast settlements as cultural landscapes. In this dissertation, cultural landscapes include property organization, the built environment, relationships between buildings and spaces, and discussions of use, access, and circulation in the consideration of the plantation. It is a mixture of physical places and structures with recreated use patterns and routes of circulation that enable scholars to better understand how architecture and material culture shaped elite and enslaved peoples' experiences of plantations.

This integrative approach to plantations as cultural landscapes depends on careful reconstruction of these properties at the height of their functionality, not on their current condition. Ashland, Duncan Kenner's sugar property in Ascension Parish, Louisiana, is a good example of how the passage of time and change of use has altered modern perceptions of plantations.⁴ Now, only the mansion house remains on a small property

⁴ The contemporary name of the property is Ashland/Belle Hélène. Belle Hélène was the name the Reuss family gave the plantation when they purchased it from the Kenners in 1889, after Duncan F. Kenner's death. Since I focus on the period of Kenner ownership and occupation, I use the name Ashland in the dissertation.

surrounded by the infrastructure of an oil refinery. According to an 1847 plat, Ashland was replete with auxiliary structures during its time as a working plantation (Figure I-1). The plat shows the main house surrounded by four domestic dependencies, a separate residence to the back of the domestic core, a warehouse near the river, a hospital, at least two stables, two rows of houses for enslaved people, overseers' houses, the massive, brick sugar house, sheds for storing corn and other plantation supplies, and a race track. The building complex at Ashland included almost fifty structures and spanned approximately a mile from the riverbank back into the cane fields. Focusing only on the mansion house obscures the vast scale of Ashland and ignores the presence of networks within the plantation and among similar properties, giving an incomplete account of how people lived on the complex.

Central to this dissertation is the concept of a plantation network. Such a network is simultaneously a collection of integrated physical spaces and a management strategy employed by wealthy planters who owned multiple properties. Letters, supplies, orders, reports, and requests traveled from the planter at the primary residence to the overseers or managers at the contributing plantations, between the properties, and back to the slaveholder. Diversifying property made sense agriculturally and economically; mid-nineteenth century farming practices quickly wore out the soil and cultivating crops on varied farms insulated a planter from potential revenue loss caused by misfortunes like illness among enslaved workers, fires, and meteorological calamities including floods and late frosts. Plantation networks generated various crops to weather fluctuating markets, supplied foodstuffs to the master's table, and flowers and plantings to beautify the

master's grounds. At the plantation hub, formal gardens, lawns, and cultivated woods occupied most of the acreage; contributing plantations supplied much of the food consumed by the slaveholding family and enslaved workers at the hub.

Secondary plantations might be quite a distance from the primary estate to take advantage of cheaper land or property in a different climate, conditions better suited the crop. Millford, John L. Manning's South Carolina mansion house, is an excellent example. The planter's residence sat on only 300 acres in upcountry South Carolina, while his vast sugar-producing operations took place in Ascension Parish, Louisiana. Others, like John McMurran at Melrose in Natchez, bought properties close to the central hub to secure his position in the planter class, while continuing his legal work. For McMurran, the secondary properties provided an opportunity for his son, John McMurran, Jr., to get a few years' experience managing enslaved people and operating a plantation before he inherited his father's estate and took his position as a Natchez nabob. At Ashland, Duncan Kenner capitalized on his already successful sugar cultivating and processing operations by purchasing neighboring estates and expanding his acreage and enslaved populations as opportunities arose.

Recognizing plantations as cultural landscapes created by enslaved people and slaveholders exposes these places as interconnected networks of properties, buildings, landscapes, objects, and people shaped by and reacting to social, cultural, and economic forces. Engaging plantations as cultural landscapes crystallize the sites as synthetic cultural and social wholes, which enslaved people and slaveholders actively designed, constructed, and experienced in the early nineteenth century. Examples of long-distance,

scattered, and condensed networks, spread between Louisiana, Mississippi, and South Carolina, allow investigations of relationships between primary (hub) and secondary (contributing) plantations. They also demonstrate the intangible interactions of physical plantation components within a property, such as the relationships of people among buildings and landscapes. Considering plantations on this larger scale avoids binaries that characterize much scholarship on the South and its architecture: whites versus blacks, high style versus vernacular, refinement versus the hard-scrabble realities of life in isolated settings.

Millford was a high-style villa in up-country South Carolina, near the town of Sumter (Figure I-2). Built by John L. Manning around 1840 to plans by and with the assistance of Nathaniel Potter, a contractor/architect originally from Providence, Rhode Island, the house features extremely high-style architectural details taken straight from patternbooks. Millford's immediate plantation complex only included two domestic outbuildings, a stable, and a few quarters for enslaved workers. Millford's agricultural landscape was located in Louisiana, at Manning's two sugar plantations in Ascension Parish, Point Houmas and Riverton (Figure I-3). Millford was the hub of a long-distance network, with Manning acting as an absentee owner and infrequent visitor to the working plantation properties.

Melrose, often celebrated as a model of Grecian Revival plantation architecture, was a suburban villa on 133 acres outside of Natchez, Mississippi (Figure I-4). Like Millford, the immediate plantation complex at Melrose supported John McMurran, his family, and the domestic enslaved people, stable keepers, and gardeners who ran the

property. Melrose was the hub of a scattered network of cotton plantations, separate properties in Wilkinson and Adams Counties, in Mississippi, across the river in Concordia Parish, Louisiana, even stretching up to Arkansas (Figure I-5). Like Millford, Melrose's agricultural landscapes existed elsewhere, the secondary properties reported to the planter at the primary site.

Ashland, a sugar plantation on the Mississippi River in Ascension Parish, Louisiana, represents a third example of a plantation network (Figure I-6). Ashland was a vast working plantation with a large enslaved population on the same property as the planter's mansion house. Ashland's owner, Duncan F. Kenner, had familial connections to a vast network of sugar and cotton plantations in Mississippi and Louisiana and created a condensed plantation network concentrated at his primary plantation (Figure I-7). With the foundation of his plantation network stemming from his inheritance, Duncan Kenner consolidated his real estate holdings around Ashland in the last three decades of the antebellum period.

Four main criteria determined the selection of these plantation networks for this project. The primary plantations had well-preserved mansion houses and domestic outbuildings and some original furnishings connected to the property. The mansion houses, constructed in the 1840s, are each examples of Grecian Revival architecture. Stylistic similarity was important for this project, to make comparisons between sources and the different ways elite families and enslaved people inhabited spaces. On the plantation networks, agricultural buildings, houses of enslaved people, and elements of the transportation infrastructure either survived, or had informative documentation, often

archaeological. The final requirement was the survival of strong collections of family letters, papers, and plantation correspondence and record books. Each plantation network had a different type of evidence; this diversity determined their roles in the thematic chapters. For example, Millford has resources that chronicle almost every detail of the decisions John Manning made in furnishing the mansion house. Ashland was the subject of archeological excavations of the sugarhouse and the warehouse, providing unparalleled insights into the position, materials, developmental chronologies, and use of these structures. This project relied heavily on letters, journals, receipts, and maps to recover long-demolished buildings in the plantation networks and reconstruct plantation landscapes. The combination of documentary research and fieldwork shaped the interdisciplinary approach of my dissertation.

In order to present a fuller picture of the Antebellum Southern plantation network, this dissertation depends on methods of traditional architectural history and decorative arts scholarship integrated together with methods honed by scholars of vernacular architecture and material culture. In this way, the chapters integrate the mansion house with the slave quarters, the formal gardens with the fields and surrounding woods. The inspiration to look beyond the mansion house to the more inclusive scope of plantation buildings, landscapes, and networks comes from studies of vernacular architecture, but this project does more than simply bridge traditional and vernacular approaches to architectural history. Studying the full scale of plantation landscapes and introducing the concept of plantation networks fulfills the goal of vernacular studies to uncover “cultural wholes.” Vernacular architectural historians emphasize links between structures and

cultures in local and regional contexts. The field focuses on ordinary and regionally specific buildings to deepen understandings of ways people lived in the past, drawing on trends in new social history that began incorporating narratives of women, workers, and minorities into mainstream history in the late 1960s and early 1970s.⁵ Bringing an entirely new scope of buildings, landscapes, and objects together as historical documents in an investigation of ways planters and enslaved people expressed and reacted to power on antebellum southern plantations is a broad application of vernacular principles, resulting in a more complete understanding of the physical framework of power relationships.

Evidence for the dissertation comes from the buildings and landscapes themselves, archaeological investigations of plantation spaces, the objects that populated the interiors, and family papers, letters, and plantation records to present a nuanced analysis of the varied and complex relationships between and amongst plantation occupants. The agricultural spaces become as important as the mansion house, as a location of covert landscapes created by enslaved people out of the purview of, and often unrecognized by, the slaveholder or overseer. Original furnishings from the mansion

⁵ Thomas Carter and Bernard Herman, "Introduction: Toward a New Architectural History" *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture* IV (1991): 1-6; Clifton Ellis, "The Mansion House at Berry Hill: Architecture and the Changing Nature of Slavery in Antebellum Virginia" in *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture* 13, no. 1(2006): 22-48; Henry Glassie, *Folk Housing in Middle Virginia: A Structural Analysis of Historic Artifacts* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1975); Bernard Herman, *Town House: Architecture and Material Life in the Early American City, 1780-1830* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005); Dell Upton, "Black and White Landscapes in Eighteenth Century Virginia," in *Places* 2, no. 2 (1984): 59-72; Dell Upton, *Holy Things and Profane: Anglican Parish Churches in Colonial Virginia* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1986); Dell Upton and John Michael Vlach, "Introduction" in *Common Places: Readings in American Vernacular Architecture* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1986); John Michael Vlach, *Back of the Big House: The Architecture of Plantation Slavery* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993).

house and objects recovered from former slave quarters communicate how enslaved people and slaveholders created personal identities and gain an authoritative voice when considered in context with their associated buildings. Combining the landscape with buildings and objects brings enslaved people and masters together in an inclusive image of the Southern plantation, one largely neglected by historians of the material world.

Several works deserve specific mention for the profound ways they have inspired and guided this project using vernacular architecture methodologies. Originally published in 1978, Catherine Bishir's essay "The Montmorenci-Prospect Hill School," investigated a group of houses in North Carolina, built by members of the same family, with shared, distinctive, architectural forms. The example of relatives using architectural elements as an identifying statement about family identity influenced this project's investigation of plantation networks.⁶ In 1986, Dell Upton and John Michael Vlach outlined reasons for using approaches honed by vernacular architectural historians for a project that studies plantation complexes and networks in their introduction to the anthology, *Common Places*. Upton and Vlach outline the primary concerns of vernacular studies, focusing on content, construction, function, history, and design. They discuss the wide range of buildings that potentially fit under the umbrella term of "vernacular" and the builders' essential role in translating cultural norms and values into buildings that embody community identity and architectural conventions. Understanding the detailed process of how buildings came to be is another part of unraveling vernacular practices.

⁶ Catherine Bishir, "The Montmorenci-Prospect Hill School: A Study of High-Style Vernacular Architecture in the Roanoke Valley" in *Southern Built: American Architecture, Regional Practice* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2006): 159-187.

Without intensive investigation of the construction details, it would be impossible to identify local specificities. Once the building processes and the cultural influences and intentions of the builders become familiar, the functions of spaces can be determined and the relationships between spaces, objects, and social interactions can be questioned.⁷ In his 1984 article, “Black and White Landscapes in Eighteenth Century Virginia,” Dell Upton mapped the multiple landscapes found at Mt. Airy, an eighteenth-century plantation in Virginia.⁸ Upton outlined the different landscapes found on the plantation, showed who occupied which ones, and situated the multiple landscapes as the locations where everyday life took place and where rituals were performed. This dissertation, considering plantation complexes and networks in the Deep South, takes this approach and transports it to Mississippi and Louisiana circa 1840 to uncover the multiple landscapes of plantations in a different time and place. More recent scholarship continues to use vernacular methodologies developed in the 1980s. *Temples of Grace*, Gretchen Buggeln’s 2003 book, has been a model of how to read structures and extract meaning from the building process. An inspiration for this project in structure and approach, Buggeln used a small, specific sample of church buildings in Connecticut, delved into the physical and psychological aspects of construction, and grounded the significance of philosophical change in the buildings themselves.⁹ Maurie McInnis’ 2005 book, *The Politics of Taste in Antebellum Charleston*, identified a specific set of symbols, in this case, Classical forms deployed via buildings, furnishings, and objects, illuminating

⁷ Dell Upton and John Michael Vlach, “Introduction” in *Common Places*

⁸ Dell Upton, “Black and White Landscapes in Eighteenth Century Virginia,”

⁹ Gretchen Buggeln, *Temples of Grace: The Material Transformation of Connecticut’s Churches, 1790-1840* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 2003).

how Charleston's aristocracy expressed social power and domination.¹⁰

Following the tenets of vernacular architecture, this study uses buildings as evidence of cultural trends, values, and behaviors, believing that buildings offer insights into thought-processes and activities of people in the past. The vernacular approach identifies buildings within communities or cultural landscapes and emphasizes common or typical structures; in this case, the examples come from the community of large, antebellum, Southern plantations.¹¹ While most vernacular studies avoid high-style buildings, this study understands that "architecturally significant" main houses co-exist in a vernacular landscape with outbuildings, slave quarters, agricultural structures, landscapes, and the built environments of the plantation networks. Vernacular methodology moves beyond stylistic description of a grand house like Melrose, to include outlying properties, owned by the same family, that have regionally-specific houses and outbuildings, functional gardens, and mundane furnishings.

The contributing plantations in Melrose's network are not architecturally remarkable, but the links between the properties make it impossible to fully understand Melrose without engaging the contributing properties. Scholars have not yet studied the relationships of secondary plantations to large-scale properties under the same ownership and have missed the vital contributions made by middling plantations in the development of some of the antebellum South's most idealized slaveholding estates. Considering

¹⁰ Maurie McInnis, *The Politics of Taste in Antebellum Charleston* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005).

¹¹ Thomas Carter and Elizabeth Collins Cromley, *Invitation to Vernacular Architecture: A Guide to the Study of Ordinary Buildings and Landscapes* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2005): xiii-xxv, 7-15.

plantation networks opens a woefully understudied subject, middling plantations in Mississippi and Louisiana, to scholarly investigation. Middling properties and farmers left relatively few documentary records and their buildings have not survived well. Fortunately, the documentary record connected to houses like Ashland, Millford, and Melrose often contains information about middling plantations in the network. Until the last few decades, architectural historians barely acknowledged the buildings of the plantation complex. With rising interest in vernacular architecture and a willingness to look beyond the mansion house, scholars are beginning to catalogue slave quarters and agricultural buildings, and to understand workaday structures as meaningful and essential contributors to the plantation complex. Going beyond even the study of these more mundane buildings, this dissertation considers the expanded scale of the entire plantation complex. Enslaved people and masters interacted, expressed, and negotiated over each other's expectations in the farm buildings, fields, but also the spaces in between. The buildings and landscapes of the complex were the places where plantation life took shape.

Vernacular architecture is not the only methodology driving this dissertation; material culture scholarship shaped interpretations of furnishings, building finishes, and domestic objects. Maurie McInnis' *Politics of Taste* is an important example of an interdisciplinary methodology that utilized resources very similar to the evidence available for studies of the Millford, Melrose, and Ashland networks. McInnis' use of buildings, objects, paintings, furnishings, probate inventories, and letters has inspired the approaches taken to plantation complexes in this project. Bernard Herman used a similar methodology in *Town House*, which brings architectural history, with its emphases on the

construction process and design of buildings, together with documentary sources into a material culture strategy that uses object and written evidence to explain how and why people acted in the ways they did. In both McInnis' and Herman's work, objects are not illustrations, but become essential testimony to understanding the past. McInnis began with Charleston, while Herman began with the typology of urban houses. To the physical evidence, both scholars add information from texts, and make conclusions based on a balanced exploration of the materials.¹² In "Makers, Buyers, and Consumers: Consumerism as a Material Culture Framework," Ann Smart Martin offers consumerism, the relationship between people and objects or services with economic or symbolic value, to mine objects for meaning. Because consumerism emphasizes the symbolic relationship between person and object and recognizes the role of personal choice, the framework addresses ways material goods confer social standing, the role of fashion, and ways people imbue objects with their own meanings. Her approach is useful for the relationships between the planter families and the furnishings they purchased, passed down, and displayed in the most public spaces of their homes. It also works remarkably well to explain enslaved people's relationships with the goods they purchased and used in their cabins, often recovered through archaeological investigations. According to Martin and adapted from Edward Chappell, buildings represent a category of material goods, considered as players in the relationships between people and the furnishings and objects they covet and purchase.¹³ Studies of furnishings and objects at the plantation emphasize place, identity making, and the significance of consumption patterns. This project

¹² McInnis, *Politics of Taste*; Herman, *Town House*

¹³ Ann Smart Martin. "Makers, Buyers, and Consumers: Consumerism as a Material Culture Framework," *Winterthur Portfolio* 28 (1993), 141-157.

examines objects found throughout the plantation landscape, from the high-style dining room table and chairs in the planter's house to ceramic and porcelain shards uncovered by archaeological investigations of the quarters for information about how people in the past communicated information about themselves, their families, and their position in society.¹⁴

Each site offers a variation on the ideal Classical Revival house that dominated antebellum Southern architecture around 1840. Each complex raises questions about meanings of classical forms in the construction of planters' homes and the arrangement, appearance, and use of agricultural and support buildings. The presence of plantation networks, owned, inhabited, operated, and worked by members of the same families, sets up comparative studies of plantation buildings. Through the lens of networks, contexts for mansion houses, barns, processing structures, and slave quarters become clearer. Examples of building forms, architectural details, furnishings, and the objects that appear throughout slaveholder and enslaved families, spanning class distinctions, imparts information about what forms and objects held meanings and value for people in the past. Considering each complex in the context of its surroundings addresses how plantation buildings related to buildings on other farms, and what planters accomplished, socially and economically, through their building programs. Stylistic, hierarchical, and personal relationships between buildings are essential components of networks of interconnected plantations and demonstrate inter-dependence between the contributing properties and the

¹⁴ Jules Prown, "Mind in Matter: An Introduction to Material Culture Theory and Method," in Robert Blair St. George, ed., *Material Life in America: 1600-1860* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1988) 17-37; Dell Upton, "Pattern Books and Professionalism: Aspects of the Transformation of Domestic Architecture in America, 1800-1860," *Winterthur Portfolio* 19 (1984): 107-150.

hub. This approach to plantation complexes and networks has been tested on some of the wealthiest slaveholders in the antebellum South. For a family to own multiple properties, large landholdings, many enslaved people, and fine furniture from New York and Philadelphia, they had to live at the top of the social hierarchy, which, in these newly developed parts of the South, was determined largely by wealth. Even so, the project is not limited to the largest landowners. Relationships between the planters and their wives and children, the overseers or plantation managers on the secondary properties, and with the enslaved people populating the plantation networks, prevent this from becoming a narrative restricted to the highest levels of society.

The dissertation chapters flow thematically and have been organized in terms of diminishing scale, from the networks, to the landscapes, buildings, furnishings, and objects, to encompass the complexity and take full advantage of the evidence offered by each plantation network. The first chapter defines three types of plantation networks that appear in Louisiana and Mississippi in the 1840s and 1850s and investigates the ways that planters acquired and managed them. The second chapter explores the working plantation landscapes, from houses of enslaved people to processing and storage structures, to the transportation infrastructure used to move the finished crop from the plantation to the market. The third chapter considers the decision making process and design concerns for mansion houses and great houses in the plantation network, specifically looking at the sources planters and builders consulted for architectural inspiration. The fourth chapter fills houses in the plantation network with furniture and goods, studying planters' consumption patterns and choices and the role of fashion. The

fifth chapter literally moves the reader through the landscape, into the mansion house, through rooms of furniture, and into social gatherings to understand circulation, access, spatial hierarchies, and social landscapes across the plantation network. Throughout the chapters, a constant theme is the influence of plantation networks on the built environments and material culture of the working and residential plantation landscapes. Investigations of architectural and material culture sources and inspirations and spatial and social hierarchies offer a critical look at the intended audiences for plantation landscapes, particularly at the mansion house, but also at the great house. Consideration of audience frames planters' decision-making processes about buildings and furniture. Plantation networks and the planters' intended audience shaped the working landscapes of the contributing plantations, the mansion houses, great houses, and domestic cores, and the material culture choices made by elite whites and enslaved people.

A thorough investigation of the Millford, Melrose, and Ashland plantation networks, including the full scope of structures and landscapes, situated in relationship with the other properties in the network, offers an altered approach to the goals of vernacular architectural historians. This project expands on their examples, not only recognizing the value of plantation outbuildings, slave quarters, agricultural structures, and landscapes, but also pulling them together to understand the full context of the plantation. The search for context leads to the phenomenon of plantation networks, series of properties interconnected by management, labor, goods, services, people, and objects. By widening the perspective to include all buildings and landscapes and the organizational framework established by plantation networks, this project goes beyond

structural identification into an analysis of how masters and enslaved people lived on and used plantations.

Networks

“A desire continually to purchase land and negroes appears to be a characteristic of many of the planters of your state [Louisiana], and is, I think, greatly to be deprecated; as its only tendency is to prevent all ornamental improvements, and to bring upon them pecuniary embarrassment, and its attendant miseries.”¹⁵

Like all fathers, Thomas Butler cautioned his son against overextending his capacity. In this case, the subject of the warning was the lure of purchasing additional properties and enslaved people to create a plantation network. Plantation networks involved thousands of acres, hundreds of enslaved people, and multiple properties often spread over county and state lines. Networks required complicated ownership and management structures on an industrialized scale. They were expensive to maintain and required intensive organization and record keeping, relying on trusted employees to manage daily operations. No wonder Butler cautioned his son against developing a network. Without ample resources and disciplined management, they were doomed to failure. Numerous historians have identified plantation networks as critical to the economics of the plantation south. This chapter defines three types of plantation networks present in Louisiana and Mississippi in the late antebellum period and explores how planters acquired and managed them.

Even inclusive views of plantation complexes fail to fully account for the existence and importance of plantation networks. Many of the largest landowners in the antebellum South owned multiple properties. In this dissertation, plantation networks

¹⁵ Edward G.W. Butler to Thomas Butler, May 5, 1830, in Thomas Butler and Family Papers, Louisiana Lower Mississippi Valley Collection, Louisiana State University Libraries, quoted in William Kauffman Scarborough, *Masters of the Big House: Elite Slaveholders of the Mid-Nineteenth-Century South* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2003), 122, 140

often include a primary house, suburban villa, or plantation (the hub) and a range of other farming properties (the contributing properties). The hub was the site of the mansion house and the home of the planter, who managed and operated the network through plantation managers, overseers, or by posting a young male relative to run the contributing farms. The contributing plantations came in a range of sizes, between 500 and 2500 acres, often located across county and state lines from the hub, in scattered and long-distance networks. In some instances, planters collected an agglomeration of adjacent properties, resulting in condensed networks.¹⁶ Within all varieties of networks, plantations shared supplies and farming implements such as seeds, materials, and enslaved people, who often moved between farms, as labor needs shifted. The contributing plantations supplied the hub with revenue from the cash crop and other staples, as well as treats for the planter family's direct consumption. The concept of a network provides a framework to think about the interdependent relationships between contributing plantations and the hub. An appreciation for plantation networks encourages us to see the Southern landscape as an economic whole, including both well-known mansion houses and the more modest agricultural and residential buildings of contributing plantations.

In *Masters of the Big House*, a study of the largest slaveholders of the mid-nineteenth-century, historian William Scarborough described how the presence of

¹⁶ John Hebron Moore defines an ideal cotton plantation in Mississippi during the late 1830s as having between 1,000 and 1,500 acres and between seventy-five and 100 enslaved workers as field hands. The figures for sugar estates in Louisiana at the same time seem comparable. In many cases, the contributing plantations in this study were larger and had more enslaved people than Moore's ideal. John Hebron Moore, *The Emergence of the Cotton Kingdom in the Old Southwest* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1988), 17

plantation networks challenged his methodology. Using information from 1850 and 1860 United States Census, Scarborough identified planters who owned more than 250 enslaved people in the late antebellum period. Through his research, he recognized that wealthy planters owned multiple properties in different counties and states, and that he had to account for all of the holdings to create a representative study group. Of slaveholders who owned more than 500 enslaved people on a single property, the 1850 census revealed eleven slaveholders at this level, and fourteen in 1860. When including plantation networks, those numbers shot to twenty-six in 1850 and fifty in 1860.¹⁷

Appendices in *Masters of the Big House* list planters with more than 500 enslaved people in 1850 and 1860, locations where that person owned property, and the number of enslaved people on each property. Of the twenty-six slaveholders in the 1850 census with more than 500 enslaved people, only seven did not have multiple properties. In 1860, only twelve of fifty slaveholders with more than 500 enslaved people owned a single property. Low-country South Carolina rice growers appear frequently on this list, including William Aiken, the fifth-largest slaveholder in America in 1850, who owned seven enslaved people at his Charleston residence, and 897 on his property in Colleton-St. John. Natchez cotton nabobs were also prominent on the list. Francis Surget, Sr., the second-largest slave owner in the country in 1850, owned 596 people on his home plantation in Adams County, Mississippi. His other properties included plantations in Wilkinson County, Mississippi, with 183 enslaved people, in Concordia Parish, Louisiana, with 430 enslaved people, and in Madison Parish, Louisiana, with eighty-nine

¹⁷ Scarborough, *Masters of the Big House*, 3-6

people.¹⁸ Scarborough also included people who owned more than 250 enslaved people, based on their state of residence from the 1850 and 1860 census. In 1850, of 160 slaveholders who owned more than 250 enslaved people, seventy-three had multiple properties spread over county or state lines. By 1860, those numbers swelled to 270 slaveholders who owned more than 250 enslaved people, with 144 who owned plantation networks that expanded beyond a single county.¹⁹ By the end of the antebellum period, more than half of all large holdings of enslaved people were in plantation networks. Their frequency and size proves that planters found plantation networks to be useful management models for large-scale agriculture.

This chapter begins by defining plantation networks and investigates three variations: the scattered network (the example of Melrose and its contributing plantations), the long-distance network (the Millford network), and the condensed network (found at Ashland and its contributing properties). The next section outlines the characteristics shared across network types and discusses the economic and political climate of the late 1830s and 1840s in the Deep South that allowed plantation networks to flourish. An examination of the planters who created plantation networks follows, which introduces John T. McMurren, John L. Manning, and Duncan F. Kenner, the respective architects of the Melrose, Millford, and Ashland networks. After discussing the what, when, and who behind plantation networks, the final section considers how McMurren,

¹⁸ Scarborough, *Masters of the Big House*, Appendix A and B, 427-438

¹⁹ Scarborough, *Masters of the Big House*, Appendix C and D, 439-484. There could be a potential fault with my methodology in counting the number of plantation networks among elite slaveholders. For example, Duncan Kenner, one of the case studies of this dissertation, owned multiple properties in Ascension Parish, Louisiana. Based on the quick counts through Scarborough's appendixes, Kenner would not appear to have a plantation network, although I argue that he does have one. If anything, my numbers for the relative frequency of plantation networks are too low.

Manning, and Kenner assembled their plantation networks and the overseers, plantation managers, and co-owners who assisted them in the management of the networks.

Three Types of Plantation Networks

The system of interconnected, contributing plantations belonging to John T. McMurran, a lawyer and planter in Natchez, Mississippi is a prime example of a scattered plantation network (Figure I-5). The McMurrans organized their real estate empire from Melrose, their palatial estate on 133 acres on the outskirts of Natchez. From Melrose, John McMurran managed his plantation managers and overseers, ordered supplies for the properties, and arranged shipment and sale of the crop. At the height of their property holdings in the 1850s, the McMurrans owned, alone or in partnership, six plantations in Mississippi, Louisiana, and Arkansas. These outlying plantations generated revenues from the sale of their cash crop and supplied Melrose with valued comestibles like poultry, butter, vegetables, and fruits, contributing significantly to the McMurran's genteel existence in town. Family letters from the 1850s discuss methods of managing the various farms, the movement of materials and enslaved persons between properties, and describe the physical features, natural and man-made, of each plantation, providing direct commentary on the operations of a plantation network. Letters between Mary Louisa McMurran, John T. McMurran's wife, and her daughter-in-law Alie Austen McMurran were particularly rich in information on plantation management.²⁰ Born and raised on a farm outside of Baltimore, Maryland, Alie Austen married John McMurran,

²⁰ McMurran-Austen Family Papers, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collection, LSU Libraries, Baton Rouge, LA (hereafter abbreviated at LLMVC, LSU Libraries)

Jr. in 1856. A stranger to the Natchez area, Mary Louisa's lessons about the role of the plantation mistress and Alie's descriptions of the McMurran properties, social rituals, and everyday life on the various plantations are extremely valuable in reconstructing links between properties in the plantation network.

Scattered networks were popular among the wealthy planters who lived in and on the outskirts of Natchez. The wealthiest landowners arrived in the Natchez area during the earliest decades of Anglo settlement in the late eighteenth- and early-nineteenth centuries, and bought land surrounding the settlement at Natchez. As settlers poured into the area in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, the price for good land with access to transportation nodes soared as availability became scarcer. Many Natchez residents, both established families and relative newcomers, moved towards establishing plantation networks by purchasing land across the river in Concordia Parish, Louisiana, or in other counties in Mississippi. In 1859, a resident of Vidalia, the parish seat, noted that two of the largest cotton producers in Natchez actually cultivated most of their crop in their Louisiana and surrounding states' landholdings.²¹ The scattered network was a model for planters to preserve estates in town, in close proximity to religious, social, cultural, and political activities, while pursuing large-scale plantation agriculture.

John Laurence Manning ran a long-distance plantation network that spanned from Milford, in South Carolina to two large sugar plantations in Ascension Parish, Louisiana—Point Houmas and Riverton (Figure I-3). Manning kept his residence in

²¹ Morton Rothstein, "The Natchez Nabobs: Kinship and Friendship in an Economic Elite," in *Towards a New View of America: Essays in Honor of Arthur C. Cole*. Ed. Hans L. Trefusse (New York: Burt Franklin & Company, Inc., 1977), 97-112; Moore, *The Emergence of the Cotton Kingdom*, 117

South Carolina, to take advantage of a strong web of powerful relations to advance his political inclinations. The son, grandnephew, nephew, and uncle of South Carolina governors, Manning filled the position himself between 1852 and 1854. Manning benefitted from his mother's properties in Alabama and his first wife's valuable inheritance, one-third of a successful sugar estate called Houmas, in Louisiana. The long-distance network relied on hired plantation overseers to manage the daily operations on the far-flung properties and required deep trust between the planter and the overseer. At Millford, Manning was a strenuous five-day journey from his Louisiana holdings. Fortunately, many letters and reports from his managers survived; these are valuable resources for understanding the operation of a plantation network.

Duncan Farrar Kenner organized a condensed network centered on his hub plantation at Ashland (Figure I-7). Splitting his residences between a townhouse in New Orleans and Ashland in Ascension Parish, Kenner founded his plantation network on property inherited from his father. Between the 1830s and 1850s, Kenner bought out his siblings' shares in the property and acquired surrounding farms, enlarging his primary sugar estate and eventually incorporating four properties into Ashland with two sugarhouses and multiple managers. By incorporating fully functioning sugar plantations into his network, Kenner was able to capitalize on improvements, including up to date sugar processing machinery that benefitted his overall network. At Ashland, surviving plantation journals kept by the overseer reveal how Kenner and his overseer divided duties of plantation management.

Plantation networks were not limited to Mississippi and Louisiana. Historians of plantation economies have recognized that very wealthy planters across the American South owned numerous, distinct properties as early as the mid-eighteenth century.²² Henry Laurens, the powerful eighteenth-century planter in low-country South Carolina, collected properties through outright purchase and partnerships with family members and peers between 1756 and his death in 1792. Eventually owning five plantations, the Laurens family lived most of the year in Charleston and sporadically visited Mepkin Plantation, the only one of the outlying plantations with appropriately genteel facilities to support the family in residence. His other properties, which included New Hope, Broughton, and Wright's Savannah, were dispersed among the vast river systems of South Carolina and Georgia. Laurens sent ships to take the rice crop from these outlying properties and to provide instructions and supplies needed at these widely separated plantations, some as far as 100 miles from Charleston. Laurens himself hardly ever visited the contributing farms, but created the hub of his plantation network at his suburban Charleston home, the management center and source of directives and materials. The fine house, furnishings, wharves and storehouses at Ansonborough, the Laurens's Charleston compound, were the results of profits from immense plantation holdings.²³ Laurens was the proprietor and manager of a scattered plantation network,

²² S. Max Edelson, *Plantation Enterprise in Colonial South Carolina* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), especially Chapter 6: Henry Laurens's Empire, 200-254; Richard Follett, *The Sugar Masters: Planters and Slaves in Louisiana's Cane World, 1820-1860* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2005); D. Clayton James, *Antebellum Natchez* (Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1968), 136-161; Roderick McDonald, *The Economy and Material Culture of Slaves: Goods and Chattels on the Sugar Plantations of Jamaica and Louisiana* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1993); Scarborough, *Masters of the Big House*, especially Chapter 4, "Agrarian Empires"

²³ Edelson, *Plantation Enterprise in Colonial South Carolina*, 200-203

the same type found in the example of the Melrose network. Even Thomas Jefferson's quarter farm system, with Monticello as the hub, and Tufton, Lego, and Shadwell as contributing plantations were a version of a plantation network – an example of a condensed network, like Ashland. Scholars of the plantation Caribbean frequently describe plantation networks that fit the long-distance network model, with planters living in England and plantation attorneys managing estates on Jamaica.²⁴

Characteristics and Economic Background

The three varieties of plantation networks in this study shared general characteristics. The first was that plantation networks often began with inheritance or gifts of property, either from a parent or through a marriage. John L. Manning established his plantation network through the inheritance from his first wife. Duncan Kenner inherited the land that became the hub of his plantation network from his father's estate. John T. McMurran began his planting career with a property given to him by his wife's parents, but proceeded to purchase land and enslaved people as an individual, and in partnership with others. The next characteristic is that plantation networks developed among the wealthiest planters. This is not surprising; great wealth granted planters easy access to generous credit, which helped them make payments, invest in plantation buildings and supplies, purchase more enslaved people, and outlast inevitable crop failures and market downturns. Most of the largest slaveholders in the United States in the 1840s and 1850s had multiple properties. When added together, massive acreages

²⁴ Barry Higman, *Plantation Jamaica, 1750-1850: Capital and Control in a Colonial Economy* (Kingston: University of the West Indies Press, 2005)

and large enslaved populations across networks created enormous profits on these properties, making large planters some of the wealthiest men in the United States in the first half of the nineteenth century. Plantation networks flourished in the alluvial lowlands along the lower Mississippi River (Figure 1-1). Alluvial lowlands had rich, poorly drained soil that was extremely fertile and generally had efficient, water-borne transportation systems in place to get the crop from the plantation to the market. Planters valued productive lands, and paid top dollar for properties with rich lands. Wealth created opportunities for planters to establish plantation networks in desirable agricultural zones. The final characteristic is the presence of a showplace residence for the planter family at the hub. Powerful symbols of planter success and power, plantation mansions were declarations of a prosperous network in operation, a testimony to the organizational and management skills of the planter who ran a profitable enterprise through the force of his will, the intuitiveness of his instructions, the quality of his plantation managers and overseers, and the labor of his enslaved people.

Specific economic circumstances in the late 1830s opened the door for a proliferation of plantation networks in Mississippi and Louisiana. Territorial expansion, land speculation, the Crisis of 1837, fluctuations, and eventual booms in the sugar and cotton prices until the beginning of the Civil War enabled people with ready resources to take advantage of an unstable real estate market. Even though plantation networks existed since the eighteenth century, the territorial expansion of the United States in the early nineteenth century and the government's land-granting policies set the stage for their explosion in the 1830s and 1840s. The 1830s were a decade of highly speculative

land purchasing practices in the Deep South. After the US government ousted Native Americans from their traditional homelands, the land reverted to the government to sell to settlers. Between 1833 and 1836, the government sold 8.3 million acres of land in Mississippi and 4.5 million acres of land in Alabama.

In 1836, the United States Treasury changed its policy, requiring land purchased from the federal government to be paid in gold or silver coin rather than bank notes. Unfortunately for land purchasers, there was very little coin in circulation at the time; bank notes were the most common forms of currency. When the Treasury department began demanding payments for land in scarce gold and silver coin in July 1836, many purchasers were stuck with bills and payment agreements that they did not have the capabilities to meet.²⁵ Individuals and land companies had bought up many thousands of acres of land under the more relaxed payment policies of the early 1830s, hoping to resell at a higher profit to other settlers. With the change in policy, many new landowners suddenly found themselves in default to the US government. The banks and commission merchants that loaned bank notes to the purchasers also found themselves in default to the government, creating a real estate bubble and an economic panic similar to the one experienced in 2008-2011. The shift from credit payments to hard specie forced many planters who had recently moved to Mississippi, Alabama, and Louisiana to sell quickly and cheaply, allowing wealthy, established planters to buy land easily. The economic crisis lasted about eight years, creating opportunities for those with means in the early 1840s to capitalize on undervalued properties. As a lawyer, John McMurran was

²⁵ Moore, *The Emergence of the Cotton Kingdom*, 18

particularly aware of the financial crises of the late 1830s. With capital available from his law practice, McMurran was an active participant in the real estate market of the early 1840s.

Market stability and technological developments in the 1840s convinced many planters that sugar cultivation was a sure path to wealth, even though it was a distant dream for all but the wealthiest planters. In the 1830s, the United States government weakened tariffs supporting domestic sugar production in the United States, which had kept prices relatively stable for Louisiana sugar against competition from the West Indies. Weak tariffs revealed how much sugar planters' relied on government protection and only a reinvigoration of the tariffs in 1842 revived the profitability of Louisiana sugar.²⁶ Sugar offered possibilities for great wealth, as long as an arbitrarily supported market continued.

The introduction of technologically advanced sugar extraction and processing methods in the early 1840s, through steam-powered mills, vacuum pans, centrifugal clarifying machines, and cleaner filtering and draining equipment significantly increased efficiency and profits for planters able to invest in the equipment. Steam powered mills, for grinding the cane, had been introduced as early as 1822; mass production and a drop in price made steam powered mills more palatable for a larger number of planters, in particular those on farms along the Mississippi River, who adopted the new technology

²⁶ Follett, *Sugar Masters*, 26-28

earlier and more completely than their neighbors on the bayous.²⁷ Even though the crop benefitted from government protection and technology created significantly more efficient processing equipment, sugar planting was only for the wealthiest planters. Planters expected to spend between \$75,000 and \$150,000 dollars for equipment and enslaved people to cultivate and process 100 hogsheads of sugar.²⁸

Necessary processing infrastructure, land availability, and the northern boundary of sugar's semi-tropical climate placed significant limits on who was able to become a sugar planter. Whereas the economic instability of the late 1830s offered many opportunities to purchase land for cotton cultivation, sugar properties were less available. Neither John Manning nor Duncan Kenner purchased sugar properties in the late 1830s; they both inherited properties originally purchased earlier in the nineteenth century. Kenner returned to the real estate market in the 1850s, buying properties to expand his plantation network from the estates of former owners. When it came up for sale, sugar land sold on a local market, with properties often subsumed by nearby planters. Sugar cultivation had a northern boundary near Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Further north, the growing season was too short and the risks of frost too high to justify the great expenditure on sugar land, equipment, and people. Even though planters pushed the northern boundary, expanding sugar production into northern Louisiana, they inevitably

²⁷ Mark Schmitz, *Economic Analysis of Antebellum Sugar Plantations in Louisiana* (New York: Arno Press, 1977), 25-27; Follett, *Sugar Masters*, 23-24

²⁸ Follett, *Sugar Masters*, 28-29

met with failure in the forms of too-early frosts.²⁹ For all but the wealthiest planters, the risks of sugar cultivation outweighed the rewards.

Network Builders: McMurran, Manning, and Kenner

John T. McMurran was one of many young men trained in a professional skill who moved south in the first decades of the nineteenth century to capitalize on opportunities there. McMurran was part of the last generation to arrive in Mississippi as the social structure matured and constricted; as his wife's family had a generation earlier, McMurran moved to the frontier. Mary Louisa Turner McMurran's father, Edward Turner, was a prominent judge who eventually served on the Mississippi Supreme Court. Born in Virginia, but raised in Kentucky, Edward followed his brother Henry to Natchez in 1801, where he established his law practice and married the daughter of the Secretary of the Mississippi Territory.³⁰ Edward Turner's second wife, Betsy Baker Turner, came to Natchez from New Jersey in 1809. Like so many emigrants, Looe Baker, Betsy Baker Turner's brother, described what drew him to Natchez, writing "what induced me to think favourably of it, I thought I saw a fairer prospect of advancing my interests than I could discover in Trenton or Philadelphia."³¹ Upon reaching Natchez, Looe Baker's mercantile business flourished. His sister, Sallie, married Henry Turner in 1807; they bought seventy-one acres of land on the outskirts of Natchez and built a one-story house

²⁹ Rehder, *Delta Sugar*, 49-50

³⁰ Ann Beha Associates, *Melrose Estate, Natchez National Historical Park, Natchez Mississippi, Historic Structures Report*, Volume I (Boston: Ann Beha Associates, 1997), 12

³¹ Letters of Looe and Eliza Baker from 1801 to 1821, Edited and Compiled by Looe Baker, Esq. also Reminiscences and Sketch of the Family and of Looe and William C. Baker by Eliza Wardell Baker, March 1924, the Whole Being Collected by Kate Stuart Lowry (nd, np), quoted in Beha, *Melrose Historic Structures Report*, Volume I, 12

surrounded by galleries called Woodlands. Looe Baker's other sister, Betsy, married Edward Turner, the brother of her sister's husband, in 1812, and had Mary Louisa in 1814.³² The Baker and Turner families arrived in Natchez while society was fluid, and established themselves as members of the social elite by prospering economically and establishing strong kinship bonds. During the early decades of the nineteenth century, when Natchez was more of a frontier outpost than a settled social and economic center, wealth and property were more important indicators of social standing than family connections. By the 1830s, family connections eclipsed money and property as the primary social arbiters, resulting in numerous intermarriages between elite Natchez families. The Baker and Turner families were prime examples of people who arrived in Natchez while society was fluid, and who participated in intermarriages in the subsequent generations to insure social position.³³

Born in Franklin County, Pennsylvania on April 29, 1801, John T. McMurren grew up near McConnellsburg, Pennsylvania (Figure 1-2). McMurren was educated at a nearby schoolhouse before he left Pennsylvania to study law in Chillicothe, Ohio under his uncle John Thompson, a judge on the Ohio Middle District Court of Common Pleas. This court, a forerunner to the Court of Common Pleas, ruled on civil matters between individuals, covering almost every possible legal interaction. In North America, it was one of the first judicial institutions established in newly settled regions. According to historian Harvey R. Keeler, the court of common pleas was the key to establishing civility in newly settled land and was able to do this by adjudicating on a vast range of

³² Letters of Looe and Eliza Baker; quoted in Beha, *Melrose Historic Structures Report*, Volume I, 13

³³ Beha, *Melrose Historic Structures Report*, Volume I, 4; James, *Antebellum Natchez*, 137

civil matters, ranging from the large to the small.³⁴ Keeler noted that cases before the Court of Common Pleas often involved issues and precedents from financial, domestic, property, probate, and testamentary cases. Exposure to such a vast range of legal experiences must have been an ideal training ground for a lawyer who practiced in a thriving, wealthy commercial and social center.

McMurran moved to Mississippi after finishing his legal studies, leaving two sisters in McConnellsburg, whom he and his family frequently visited in the 1830s, 1840s, and 1850s. McMurran came to Mississippi in 1821, spent a few years as a teacher near Port Gibson, Mississippi, and, as tutor to the Brandon family, arrived in Natchez around 1825. McMurran must not have remained a tutor long after he came to Natchez; his name appears on court dockets of Adams County in November 1825.³⁵ McMurran participated in an informal tradition of men in the first decades of the nineteenth century who came to Natchez as tutors for private families and eventually rose to positions of prominence in local society. John McMurran returned to law and quickly found himself in a practice with his friend John A. Quitman, with whom he studied in Ohio, and William Griffith.³⁶ Quitman was enthusiastic about his opportunities in Natchez, and wrote to his father “no part of the United States holds out better prospects for a young lawyer... Cotton planting is the most lucrative business that can be followed. Some of

³⁴ Keeler, H.R., “Ohio Court of Common Pleas: Origin, History, and Duties,” *Ohio Law Bulletin*, v 55 (October 31, 1910), 356-360

³⁵ Beha, *Melrose Historic Structures Report*, Volume I, 16

³⁶ Beha, *Melrose Historic Structures Report*, Volume I, 4-5

the planters net \$50,000 from a single crop.”³⁷ As Edward Turner did the generation before them, McMurran and Quitman took advantage of the possibilities for financial gain that Natchez offered, in particular the ability to combine professional work with planting. While their legal work rendered financial success, they realized that engaging in agriculture positioned them firmly in the city’s social elite.

John McMurran joined the law office of John Quitman and William Griffith and became a partner after Griffith’s death in 1827.³⁸ After establishing his practice, McMurran married Mary Louisa Turner, the daughter of Edward Turner, by then a highly respected judge on the Mississippi Supreme Court, and Betsy Baker Turner (Figure 1-3).³⁹ Humorously, his good friend and partner John Quitman foretold McMurran’s wedding. In 1829, Quitman wrote a sketch, teasing McMurran about some of his personality traits, and forecasting McMurran’s marriage and first child. He wrote,

"John T. McMurran in 1832.

Mr. M. will be married on the 17th of Feb'y 1830 to a young lady of a fine disposition, great intelligence & black eyes. He will be the father of a fine girl on the 3d of March 1831, who will be remarkable for a striking resemblance[sic] to its Mother, he will be a candidate for the chancellorship of the state, the present incumbent[i.e., Quitman] having been elected to the Senate of the U.S. a few months before. He will be about 5 feet 7 inches in height, rather thin & quite grey headed. Mrs. Mac. will be very fond of her husband & of pickled peppers. The baby will have brown hair, a short nose & be rather colicky. Mr. M. will be a little pompous upon legal matters, but very modest as regards every other subject. He will be rich for a young man & suffer a great deal from a bilious cholic, brought on by eating green fruit at

³⁷ Katharine Jones, *The Plantation South* (Indianapolis and New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1957), 236; quoted in Beha, *Melrose Historic Structures Report*, Volume I, 15

³⁸ Adams County, Mississippi, Office of the Chancery Clerk, Deed Book V: 371

³⁹ Adams County, Mississippi, Office of the Chancery Clerk, Marriage Book, 5:284

Claypoole's wedding--His general health will be good, tho' he will never cease to be fond of green corn[?] onions & cucumbers."⁴⁰

Quitman almost told the future. McMurren married Mary Louisa Turner in January 1831.

Their first child was a girl named Mary Elizabeth, born in October 1831. McMurren remained “rather thin” throughout his life and became “quite rich for a young man” through his law practice. References in letters reveal that Mrs. McMurren was very fond of her husband, although it is unknown if she also liked pickled peppers. Quitman’s light remarks provide valuable insight into John McMurren’s personality, habits, and relationships with those closest to him, sides of McMurren that are more difficult to discern through legal documents and real estate agreements.

After the marriage, John and Mary Louisa McMurren settled into a house called Holly Hedges, a two story, framed, clapboard house that faced Washington Street in downtown Natchez.⁴¹ While living at Holly Hedges, the couple had a son and a daughter who lived to adulthood, John T. McMurren, Jr. and Mary Elizabeth McMurren Conner. Tragically, their first daughter, predicted in John Quitman’s story, died in 1833. In 1833, the Turners deeded the newlyweds Hope Farm Plantation, 645 11/100 acres and twenty-four slaves in Adams County, Mississippi.⁴² McMurren sold the property in 1836 for \$108,800, having increased the population to sixty-three enslaved persons in the three years he owned the property. Adams County deed books do not record further land purchases for this property; the sharp rise in the number of enslaved people suggests that

⁴⁰ Quitman papers, Series 3.1, Volume 6, 1829, 36, Southern Historical Center, University of North Carolina Libraries, Chapel Hill, NC (hereafter abbreviated as SHC, UNC)

⁴¹ Adams County, Mississippi, Office of the Chancery Clerk, Deed Book T:460

⁴² Adams County, Mississippi, Office of the Chancery Clerk, Deed Book U:21

McMurran raised the property value by actively purchasing workers and enhancing agricultural production on the property.⁴³ The gift from his in-laws provided McMurran an entrance into planter-dominated society in Natchez and marked the beginning of his planting career. John T. McMurran was not as politically active as John Manning or Duncan Kenner. He served as the Secretary of the Bar of Natchez and was elected to the Mississippi House of Representatives in 1835, but resigned his seat a year later for health reasons and to return to his law practice.⁴⁴ In 1841, McMurran purchased land on the outskirts of Natchez and constructed Melrose, which became the hub of his plantation network once completed in late 1848 (Figure I-4).⁴⁵ He turned more attention to planting in the 1850s, investing in multiple properties. The Civil War was financially damaging to the McMurran family, forcing the sale of Melrose in 1865.⁴⁶ The war years were terrible personally, as the family lost several infant grandchildren and their daughter, Mary Elizabeth McMurran Conner. McMurran died from injuries sustained in a steamboat accident on the Mississippi River on December 30, 1866, leaving his wife as executrix to continue agricultural production on the plantation network.⁴⁷

John Laurence Manning, the oldest son of Governor Richard I. Manning, was a member of the powerful Richardson family, related through both his mother and his paternal grandmother (Figure 1-4). The Richardsons settled in the Sumter District of South Carolina before the Revolutionary War and were some of the largest landowners in

⁴³ Adams County, Mississippi, Office of the Chancery Clerk, Deed Book Y:131

⁴⁴ Beha, *Melrose Historic Structures Report*, Volume I, 16-17

⁴⁵ Beha, *Melrose Historic Structures Report*, Volume I, 23

⁴⁶ Beha, *Melrose Historic Structures Report*, Volume I, 41-42

⁴⁷ Beha, *Melrose Historic Structures Report*, Volume I, 42

the district in the first quarter of the nineteenth-century. Richard I. Manning married Elizabeth Peyre Richardson, daughter of John Peter Richardson and Floride Richardson, in 1814. John Peter Richardson was a significantly younger half-brother of Susannah Richardson Manning, Richard I. Manning's mother. Richard I. Manning was politically active, serving as the Governor of South Carolina between 1824 and 1826, a representative in the state Senate, and won a seat in the United States House of Representatives in 1833. In addition to his political career, Richard I. Manning was a planter who owned fifty enslaved people at the time of his death in 1836.⁴⁸ A map of Sumter District, compiled from S. H. Boykin's surveys and published in the *Mills Atlas* in 1825, showed the numerous Richardson holdings, as well as the location of Col. Richard I. Manning's plantation, very close to the road, near Tavern Creek (Figure 1-5).⁴⁹ John Manning's father lived surrounded by members of the Richardson family, Richard Richardson, Charles Richardson, and Col. James B. Richardson were three of his four immediate neighbors, all either uncles or cousins to the Manning family. The fourth neighbor, listed as Dow, was also a relative; Dorcas Richardson Dow was the oldest sister of John L. Manning's grandmother, Susannah Richardson Manning.

Richard I. Manning died unexpectedly in 1836, leaving behind a will in which he granted power of attorney to his wife's brother, Col. John P. Richardson, to conduct his business in his place. Manning's will did not specify which of his children would inherit what part or percentage of his property; his most specific bequest granted his wife

⁴⁸ "Richard Irvine Manning," *Biographical Dictionary of the South Carolina Senate, 1776-1985*, Volume II (Hines – Singleton) (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1986) 1044-1045

⁴⁹ Robert Mills, "Sumter District, South Carolina," in *Atlas of the State of South Carolina* (Baltimore: F. Lucas, Jr., 1825)

Elizabeth four enslaved people, William, Hardy C., Ned, and Felia, in addition to the equal share to which she was entitled.⁵⁰ A 1949 book on noteworthy residents of South Carolina reported the tale that a relative promised a young John Laurence Manning that he could choose a location for his home and, upon his marriage, it would become his. According to the story, Manning chose a crest of a hill near Tavern Creek, which became the site of Millford.⁵¹ In all likelihood as the eldest son, John Manning inherited the bulk of his father's property, which placed Millford on land that had been part of his father's estate. Manning's father took pains to insure that his wife's inheritance was secure for the use of him and his children, with no possibility that another Richardson heir could claim it. In April 1816, Richard I. Manning petitioned the court for his wife's share in her father's estate, which resulted in the property labeled on the Mills Atlas of 1825, thirty-two enslaved people, a portion of the estate's proceeds, and one-eighth of the livestock coming under Richard Manning's ownership.⁵² Comparing the Mills Atlas to contemporary maps confirms this as the site of Millford.

Born January 29, 1816, John L. Manning attended Princeton between 1833 and 1836, but returned to South Carolina and finished his education at South Carolina College in 1837 because of his father's death. On April 11, 1838, he married Susan Frances Hampton, the youngest daughter of Wade Hampton I, considered by many the richest

⁵⁰ Richard I Manning, will dated December 14, 1835, recorded December 20, 1845, Will Book D, Sumter District, South Carolina, South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia SC (hereafter abbreviated as SCDAH)

⁵¹ Helen Kohn Hennig. *Great South Carolinians of a Later Date* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1949), 257-259. Not the most trustworthy resource, as she describes the furniture in Millford as having been purchased in Europe, when, in fact, it came from New York City.

⁵² John Peter Richardson, will dated January 11, 1811, recorded April 20, 1811, Will Book A, Folio 91, Sumter District, South Carolina, SCDAH; Sumter County, South Carolina, Deeds, Volume H, Folio 381-383, SCDAH

man in the South in the first third of the nineteenth-century (Figure 1-6). Manning's uncle John P. Richardson, a South Carolina senator and future Governor of the state, wrote to him in New Orleans in 1838 with congratulations for Manning's impending marriage. Richardson commented on the brightness of his younger relative's prospects of happiness, and lauded Manning's intended.

“But when as in your case it is associated with the additional and inestimable advantages of forming agreeable connection and associating your life with the utmost loveliness of female character, it presents a life embedded in roses, which nothing but the serpent of vicious passions can disturb, or Heavens vengeance destroy. Be happy then my dear boy and be assured that none can offer you more sincere or heartfelt congratulations.”⁵³

Manning's marriage made him heir to one third of Hampton's massive land-holdings in Mississippi and Louisiana. With Susan's inheritance, Manning instantaneously became the proprietor of a large sugar-producing complex and numerous enslaved people. With revenues from his sugar holdings, Manning began the construction of Millford in Clarendon District, South Carolina in 1839, keeping his primary residence in the state where he had strong social connections and political backing (Figure I-2). Like his father, and many of his Richardson relatives, Manning was very active politically, and represented Clarendon in the South Carolina House and Senate during the 1840s. In 1852, Manning served a two-year term as Governor of South Carolina and continued to serve the state Senate during and after the Civil War.

⁵³ J.P. Richardson to John L. Manning, Washington, February 19, 1838, Williams Chesnut Manning Papers, Folder 79, South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC (hereafter abbreviated as WCM Papers, SCL, USC)

Susan Hampton Manning died on November 8, 1845, and, in April 1848, Manning married Sallie Bland Clarke of Virginia. At the time of her marriage, Sallie was only nineteen years old. The age difference (Manning was thirty-two) and the fact that Manning was a widower with three children concerned Sallie's parents, who feared she would be a glorified governess. Even with unanimous approval of Manning's sterling reputation, Sallie's mother, Mary Clarke, urged her to remember that her happiness was their primary concern, not Manning's wealth and social standing. In October 1847, her mother wrote, "So my dear Sallie, if he is the prize your Sister, Mrs. Gordon, and every body else thinks him, we consider you the greater of the two."⁵⁴ Surviving correspondence suggests the marriage was a happy one, notwithstanding the Clarke's initial worries, and the couple had four children. Manning was the wealthiest attendee of the Secession Conventions in 1860. His estate had an estimated value of two million dollars and he owned 643 enslaved people before the Civil War.⁵⁵ The war devastated Manning financially, and forced him to sell his Louisiana sugar properties. He retained Millford through the rest of his life, although he left the house to spend his last ten years living with his daughter on her estate near Camden, South Carolina.⁵⁶

Duncan Farrar Kenner was a second-generation scion, whose place in the social and economic culture of antebellum Louisiana was the result of the hard work and luck of his father and the changing social landscape in Louisiana as it came into the United States

⁵⁴ Mary Goode Lyle Clarke to Sallie Bland Clarke, Warner Hall, October 7, 1847, WCM Papers R962b, SCL, USC

⁵⁵ Wooster, Ralph H., "An Analysis of the Membership of Secession Conventions in the Lower South," *The Journal of Southern History*, Volume 24, No. 3 (Aug., 1958), 363-364

⁵⁶ "John L. Manning," *Biographical Dictionary of the South Carolina Senate, 1776-1985*, Volume II, 1041-1044

(Figure 1-7). As a former French and Spanish colony, Louisiana's elites at the turn of the nineteenth century were primarily French. Culturally, religiously, and linguistically distinct from the Anglos who moved into the area beginning in the late eighteenth century, the French Creole elite distrusted the social claims of most Anglos. The Kenner family was able to breach this distance in several ways. William Kenner was an early arrival in the region who connected himself through marriage with a powerful Anglo family. His work brought him into contact with wealthy French creole families. Duncan Kenner was born in the region, into a financially successful and socially prominent family. He converted to Catholicism, married into an "ancienne" family, which was rare for an American, and spoke French fluently.⁵⁷

Duncan Kenner's father, William Kenner, was born in Augusta County, Virginia in 1776. Very few records exist from Kenner's childhood in Virginia; the family Bible holds the only record of his place of birth.⁵⁸ Scholars have unearthed nothing about his early life or his education. In the mid-1790s, Kenner left Virginia, severed all ties to his family there, and settled in Natchez to make his fortune. Kenner had a keen eye for business opportunity and invested in the mercantile business and a large property on St. Catherine's Creek in Adams County, Mississippi.⁵⁹ Through his business successes, he became acquainted with Stephen Minor, the adjutant major of Natchez who served as the interim governor of the Spanish colony during the final months before the United States

⁵⁷ Craig Bauer, *A Leader Among Peers: The Life and Times of Duncan Farrar Kenner* (Lafayette: Center for Louisiana Studies, University of Southwestern Louisiana, 1993), 74-77

⁵⁸ Bauer, *A Leader Among Peers*, 3, 292

⁵⁹ Bauer, *A Leader Among Peers*, 6, 292

enveloped the territory.⁶⁰ In 1798, the United States set up a territorial government headed by Winthrop Sargent. Although Stephen Minor no longer controlled the government, he remained a powerful figure in Natchez. Kenner's association with Minor probably resulted in his appointment as the justice of the peace in Adams County in 1798 at the age of twenty-two. The position was powerful, as the justice of the peace had administrative and judicial responsibilities, including basic peacekeeping and adjudication of legal infractions in Adams County. It is unclear if Kenner had any legal training, but his position in the merchant elite of Natchez and his association with prominent leaders were enough to secure him the post.⁶¹

William Kenner had another, more personal, link to Stephen Minor. In November 1801, he married Stephen Minor's daughter Mary. At the time of the marriage, Kenner was twenty-five years old and Mary was fourteen. Shortly after their marriage, the Kenners moved to a house on Bienville Street in New Orleans. Enhanced economic opportunities, as well as a shift in Natchez's political leanings, explain the young couple's move, and Kenner established a mercantile and commission business in partnership with Stephen Henderson. In the antebellum South, commission merchants supported planters by purchasing and selling enslaved persons, advising planters on the state of the market, buying supplies and equipment, furnishing credit, and even making arrangements for the planters' children's schooling. For this work, commission merchants received a percentage commission on the services they provided.⁶² Kenner's

⁶⁰ Bauer, *A Leader Among Peers*, 6

⁶¹ Bauer, *A Leader Among Peers*, 7, 293

⁶² Bauer, *A Leader Among Peers*, 15

contacts with wealthy Natchez area planters through his wife's relations helped the firm corner a large portion of the extremely profitable Natchez market.⁶³ Through profitable business dealings, civic and religious leadership, and support of the American forces during the War of 1812, William Kenner rose to the top of American society in New Orleans.

As his mercantile business flourished, Kenner invested in sugar plantations in Ascension Parish and at the Cannes Brûlées settlement in Jefferson Parish. Kenner co-owned property in Ascension Parish, named Linwood, with Philip Minor, his wife's uncle. Kenner bought the Jefferson Parish tract, named Oakland, with Benjamin Morgan, but soon bought out his partner and owned the entire property.⁶⁴ William Kenner understood that profitable sugar cane production required a large outlay of capital, even before the crop was planted. In 1806, the *Louisiana Gazette* breathlessly reported that an 800-acre sugar estate with 60 slaves could produce 250,000 pounds of sugar and 160 hogsheads of molasses a year, valued at \$22,000. To do this, an average outlay for infrastructure, land, and slaves was \$84,000, but subsequently, only \$3000 a year was required to keep things running. With these figures, a planter expected to make a profit in less than five seasons.⁶⁵ Kenner's position as a commission merchant gave him unprecedented access to credit and resources for establishing a profitable sugar works. Before long, William Kenner made greater revenue from his sugar plantations than he did from his successful mercantile business.

⁶³ Bauer, *A Leader Among Peers*, 8-10

⁶⁴ Bauer, *A Leader Among Peers*, 16

⁶⁵ Follett, *The Sugar Masters*, 18

Born in New Orleans on February 11, 1813, Duncan Farrar Kenner was the youngest of six children. His mother died in 1814, and Duncan Kenner and his next oldest brother spent significant time with relatives in Natchez until they were old enough to begin school in New Orleans. In 1824, William Kenner suffered a stroke and died, leaving Duncan orphaned at the age of eleven. He continued to live with family and at school until he went to college. He attended Miami University in Ohio, finishing his studies there at age eighteen in 1831.⁶⁶ Kenner spent 1833 and 1834 in Europe, traveling on a Grand Tour-style itinerary. Based on commentaries from his travel diaries, it is clear that Duncan Kenner was well versed in popular literature and poetry of his day, had interests in and opinions on the fine arts, especially music, painting, and sculpture, and a facility with languages. Few details about Kenner's childhood exist, but the evidence of his interests, opinions, and experiences suggest that his family valued the fine arts and exposed their children to a wide-ranging education. In almost every city during his journey, Kenner visited the opera or the theater. He claimed that this was not for amusement, but the best way to learn a language. He visited the fine arts collections of the city he was in, often making several trips to fully experience the works of art, as well as cathedrals and other tourist sites.⁶⁷

Upon Kenner's return to the United States, he studied law under John Slidell, a friend of William Kenner, who had a long and successful political career. Though

⁶⁶ *The Alumni and Former Student Catalogue of Miami University, Including Members of the Board of Trustees and Faculty, 1809-1892* (Oxford, OH: Press of the Oxford News, 1892), 10

⁶⁷ Duncan F. Kenner, *A Man of Pleasure and a Man of Business: The European Travel Diaries of Duncan Farrar Kenner, 1833-1834*, Garner Ranney, ed. (Lafayette: Center for Louisiana Studies, University of Southwestern Louisiana, 1991)

Kenner did not practice law formally, the experience shaped Kenner's business acumen and fed his political ambitions. He inherited his share of his father's property in 1834, upon reaching the age of twenty-one, and, in partnership with his brother George, began building infrastructure for sugar cultivation and processing on their half of the Linwood property. In 1837, he was elected to local political office in Ascension Parish, the Police Jury, which governed the parish, allocated money for roads and levees, and discussed issues surrounding the establishment of a school in Donaldsonville.⁶⁸

On June 1, 1839, Kenner married Nanine Bringier, a daughter of Michel Doradou Bringier, the owner of L'Hermitage plantation in Ascension Parish.⁶⁹ The Bringiers were wealthy and socially prominent; in fact, Duncan Kenner probably borrowed a significant amount of money from his in-laws to begin construction of his hub plantation, which he renamed Ashland, in honor of Henry Clay's home in Kentucky (Figure I-6).⁷⁰ In the 1840s, Kenner established himself as a successful planter, buying out his brother's share of the estate in 1844, and pursued political office. He was a member of the Louisiana State Legislature between 1836 and 1850, and was an unsuccessful candidate for the United States Senate in 1852. Kenner was active in the Confederate government during the Civil War, serving in the Confederate Congress and as a special emissary to England and France in 1864, to elicit support from those countries for the South.⁷¹

⁶⁸ Ascension Parish Police Jury Records, Volume I, June 5, 1837 – March 3, 1856, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

⁶⁹ Duncan Kenner and Nanine Bringier Marriage Contract, May 31, 1839, Personal Documents Collection, 1671-1959, Manuscripts Collection 525, Box 2, Folder 23, Louisiana Research Collection, Howard-Tilton Memorial Library, Tulane University

⁷⁰ Bauer, *A Leader Among Peers*, 78

⁷¹ *The Alumni and Former Student Catalogue of Miami University*, 10

Kenner was the unusual planter nabob who remained financially solvent after the Civil War. In the 1870s, Kenner purchased or entered into partial ownership agreements with many members of his wife's family, the Bringiers, to try to keep properties in the family. While not always popular with his siblings-in-law, by the time of his death in 1887, Kenner owned the Hermitage Plantation, the center of the Bringier plantation network, almost a quarter of the Houmas plantation, and significant real estate in New Orleans, including Melpomene, the Bringier city house.⁷²

Constructing Plantation Networks

Unlike many of his Natchez peers, John T. McMurran did not rely entirely on profits from his plantations for his livelihood. McMurran was a successful attorney in Natchez, who profited from the economic disaster of 1837 by handling the legal aspects of his neighbors' and clients' property sales, bankruptcies, and defaults. John McMurran had not overextended his finances with property purchases during the boom years, instead benefitting from gifts of property from his wife's parents. Not only did Edward and Betsy Turner give John McMurran and his new wife Mary Louisa Turner McMurran a Natchez residence at the corner of Washington and Wall Streets in 1832, in 1833, McMurran's in-laws deeded Hope Farm Plantation, 645 11/100 acres and twenty-four

⁷²I do not discuss Kenner's post-Civil War purchases here, because they were done to preserve family standing, not to be incorporated as working, profit-generating plantation in Kenner's preexisting network. Plus, I am trying to keep the scope of this narrative primarily pre-Civil War, between the years 1840 and 1861. For more information on Kenner's post war activities, please see Bauer, *A Leader Among Peers*; Duncan Farrar Kenner Papers, Inventory of Property in Ascension Parish Belonging to Duncan F. Kenner, July 22, 1887, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

enslaved people in Adams County, Mississippi to the newlyweds.⁷³ McMurren sold the property in 1836 for \$108,800, having increased the population to sixty-three enslaved persons in the three years he owned the property. Adams County deed books do not indicate that McMurren purchased additional land to what the Turners deeded to him; the sharp rise in the number of slaves on the property suggests that McMurren purchased enslaved people and significantly expanded agricultural production on the property.⁷⁴ As an attorney and small planter when the economy collapsed, McMurren did not have unwieldy mortgages on land and slaves, which enabled him to take advantage of lower land prices and desperate sellers in the early 1840s. At its apex in the mid 1850s, McMurren properties included the main house, Melrose, on the outskirts of Natchez, Riverside, in Wilkinson County, Mississippi, Killarney and Moro, both in Concordia Parish, Louisiana, among others (Figure 1-8).

His appetite for plantation ownership whetted by his experience with Hope Farm in Adams County, John McMurren became a real estate magnate in the 1840s and 1850s. In 1840, John McMurren bought a half-interest in Clarksville Plantation, near Fort Adams in Wilkinson County, Mississippi with his cousin James Thompson, the son of the judge McMurren studied law under in Ohio. The 1840 United States Census, taken a few months after the purchase, shows J. F. Thompson as a resident of Wilkinson County, Mississippi, along with five other men and five women, who may have been family

⁷³ Beha, *Melrose Historic Structures Report*, Volume 1, 16; Adams County, Mississippi, Office of the Chancery Clerk, Deed Book T, Folio 460, Adams County, Mississippi, Office of the Chancery Clerk, Deed Book U, Folio 21

⁷⁴ Beha, *Melrose Estate Historic Structures Report*, Volume 1, 18, Adams County, Mississippi, Office of the Chancery Clerk, Deed Book Y, Folio 131

members or people hired to help establish cultivation at the property. At the time, the estate was the home of fifty-seven enslaved people, most between the ages of ten and thirty-six, with forty-two listed as agricultural workers.⁷⁵ Renamed Riverside in 1846, this was the plantation where McMurren's son, John McMurren Jr. and his wife Alie Austen McMurren, lived and farmed after their marriage in 1856 (Figure 1-9). In 1843, McMurren bought Spring Hill Plantation, a 704-acre property in Adams County, Mississippi with twenty-five enslaved people, at public auction for \$9000.⁷⁶ In 1853, after the slump had ended, McMurren sold his two-thirds interest in the property for \$66,000, having sold one-third of the property to his law partner, James Carson, in 1844. At its largest, Spring Hill had 1,818 acres and was the home of eighty-four slaves when McMurren sold his interest.⁷⁷

After approximately ten years without a plantation purchase, which coincides directly with the years of construction at Melrose, McMurren continued to accumulate plantations in the 1850s, shifting his occupational focus from his law practice to cotton planting. Between 1852 and 1858, McMurren bought four plantations, adding 6785 acres and 220 enslaved people to his already substantial real estate and slave holdings.⁷⁸

McMurren purchased the lower half of a plantation in Concordia Parish, Louisiana about nine miles below Vidalia called Moro in partnership with A. M. Vardeman offered in a

⁷⁵ United States Census 1840, Wilkinson County, Mississippi, Population Schedule, folio 285

⁷⁶ Beha, *Melrose Estate Historic Structures Report*, Volume 1, 21; Adams County, Mississippi, Office of the Chancery Clerk, Deed Book EE, Folio 41; Adams County, Mississippi, Office of the Chancery Clerk, Deed Book EE, Folio 19

⁷⁷ "John T. & Mary L. McMurren Plantations," unpublished document in the offices of Melrose Estate, Natchez National Historical Park, Natchez, MS, seen by author in 2009

⁷⁸ Beha, *Melrose Estate Historic Structures Report*, Volume 1, 35

sheriff's sale in December 1851 (Figure 1-10).⁷⁹ As described in a letter from Mary Louisa McMurren to her sister, Fanny Conner, the plantation was about 1200 to 1300 acres, the home to about fifty enslaved people, and the partners expected to begin work at the property immediately. According to Mary Louisa McMurren, Vardeman was a very good plantation manager, someone John McMurren had known for years, and he was to live on the property and operate it.⁸⁰ Period maps of the Mississippi from Natchez to New Orleans shows the property with the names McMurren and Vardeman attached to it.⁸¹ By the 1860 Census, Moro had 127 enslaved people living on the plantation, suggesting that McMurren and Vardeman actively purchased people to increase cultivation on the property.⁸²

In 1856, McMurren again purchased property in Concordia Parish, a cotton plantation of 1279 acres on the east side of Lake St. John (Figure 1-11). A letter between John McMurren and his friend and business partner, John Quitman, McMurren mentioned he had just bought property in the spring of 1855 in Concordia on credit, and might need to sell some of his other plantations while prices remained high to pay his

⁷⁹ *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, December 23, 1851, 3

⁸⁰ Mary Louisa McMurren to Frances Conner, no date, probably late January 1852, Edward Turner Papers, Folder 1:16, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

⁸¹ The Persac Map and others like it is an extremely useful document. While it only suggests the broadest outlines of properties and is more useful for large landowners with sizeable tracts of land, it is very helpful for understanding distances between properties and towns, relationships between different plantations, and the ways that people capitalized on the snaky path of the Mississippi River to improve their individual holdings. For these maps, especially since John McMurren's plantation network extends beyond the boundaries of the Persac Map, I relied on *Lloyd's Map of the Lower Mississippi River from St. Louis to the Gulf of Mexico*, which clearly drew on Persac's work between Natchez and New Orleans. Adrien Marie Persac, *Norman's Chart of the Lower Mississippi River*, 1858; James T. Lloyd, *Lloyd's Map of the Lower Mississippi River from St. Louis to the Gulf of Mexico*, 1862.

⁸² United States Census 1860, Concordia Parish, Louisiana, Slave Schedule, Folio 99-101

debts.⁸³ This property was Killarney, named, like Melrose, in honor of Sir Walter Scott, the author whom the McMurrans particularly adored. However, John McMurren intended Killarney to serve a specific purpose; in 1857, John McMurren sold two-thirds of the property to Farar B. Conner, his son-in-law as of his daughter's wedding in January 1856. McMurren, through the renunciation of her dowry by his wife, which was legal in Louisiana, gave Mary Eliza and Farar Conner the other third as a gift. The sale and gift included all the plantation buildings, livestock, agricultural implements, and seventy-six enslaved people, and the two-thirds portion of the property, including land, livestock, buildings, and people had a value of \$83,703.79.⁸⁴ The McMurren's gift provided Mary Eliza and Farar Conner with a fully stocked, ready to cultivate cotton plantation, a home, and an occupation for Farar, about whom Mary Louisa McMurren reported in early 1857 seemed to be enjoying his position as a planter, even though Mary Eliza had not permanently joined him at Killarney.⁸⁵ The 1860 Slave Schedule for Concordia Parish proved Conner's success at Killarney; by 1860, the enslaved population had risen to ninety-seven people and, at twenty-five years old, Conner commanded a property with a combined personal and real estate value of \$255,000.⁸⁶

Fairchild's Island was a 1,388-acre landmass in the Mississippi River about twelve miles upriver from Natchez, very close to Killarney Plantation (Figure 1-12).

McMurren purchased the property in 1855, in partnership with his nephew, Thomas M.

⁸³ John T. McMurren to John Quitman, Natchez, February 28, 1856, Quitman Family Papers, Subseries 1.1, Folder 87, SHC, UNC

⁸⁴ Concordia Parish, Louisiana, Clerk of Court, Deed Book N, Folio 133-136

⁸⁵ Mary Louisa McMurren to Mrs. John T. McMurren, Jr., Melrose, February 28, 1857, McMurren-Austen Family Papers 1857 Correspondence 1:3, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

⁸⁶ United States Census 1860, Concordia Parish, Slave Schedule, Folio 46-48; United States Census 1860, Concordia Parish, Population Schedule, Folio 7

Jordan, and paid \$17,400 for the land. Records indicate that the land did not have any enslaved people living on it or attached to the sale, which suggests that Fairchild's Island might have been an investment property for McMurran. The property might have been a place where he sent workers seasonally, to cut wood, pasture livestock, or cultivate hay or another non-labor intensive staple, possibly for sale to urban residents in Natchez.⁸⁷ Its position in the river made Fairchild's Island vulnerable to the Mississippi River's damaging floods, which might explain why it did not have permanent residents. As late as the 1890s, long after the peak of the McMurran family's plantation network, family letters mention that "the Island" was "beginning to emerge from the water."⁸⁸

McMurran expanded his real estate holdings into Arkansas, buying Wood Cottage in Phillips County in 1858, again in partnership with his law associate James Carson (Figure 1-13).⁸⁹ The property was 1,570 acres and was valued at \$57,746 at the time of purchase.⁹⁰ The 1860 United States Slave Schedule listed H.H. Hankins and J.M. Cullpepper as managers for James Carson and J.T. McMurran in the Phillips County census, with thirty-five female and forty male enslaved people on the property.⁹¹ The Population Schedule for the 1860 Population Schedule listed Hankins as a thirty-five year

⁸⁷ Eliza Quitman to Mr. Jordan, Monmouth, December 17, 1853, Quitman Family Papers, Subseries 1.1, Folder 81, SHC, UNC; "John T. and Mary L. McMurran Plantations Document," (computer printout, National Park Service Natchez National Historic Park, Melrose Estate Office). I would also like to thank Dr. James Robertson for his suggestions about alternate uses for a large property with no enslaved population.

⁸⁸ Lemuel P. Conner, Jr. to Fanny E. Conner, Natchez, July 24, 1892, Lemuel Parker Conner Family Papers, Series 1, Folder 10:115, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

⁸⁹ Wood Cottage is right on the county line between Phillips and Desha Counties. It is probably on the Phillips County side, supported by evidence from the United States Census, but there is a chance it could be considered Desha.

⁹⁰ "John T. & Mary L. McMurran Plantations," unpublished document in the offices of Melrose Estate, Natchez National Historical Park, Natchez, MS, seen by author in 2009

⁹¹ United States Census 1860, Phillips County, Arkansas, Slave Schedule, Folio 22-23

old clergyman, born in Tennessee, with real estate valued at \$4000 and personal property appraised at \$300. He lived with his wife and eight children.⁹² J.M. Cullpepper was the next entry; a forty-two year old manager originally from North Carolina, the census recorded the value of his real estate at \$48,000 and his personal estate at \$80,000, one of the most valuable estates in the Mooney Township section of Phillips County. His household included his wife and one daughter.⁹³

John L. Manning was twenty years old when his father died, and could not inherit property outright until his twenty-first birthday in January 1837. In addition to his massive inheritance of Louisiana sugar lands from his wife, Susan Hampton Manning, John Manning added 200 acres to his South Carolina holdings in a purchase from his uncle Richard Richardson in 1843. The United States Census of 1840 and 1850 reveal that Manning did not pursue large-scale agriculture in South Carolina like his uncles, the Richardsons.⁹⁴ In the census for Sumter District, South Carolina in 1840, Manning had twenty enslaved people living on his property. Of the twenty, only four were agricultural laborers, with the rest listed as working under manufactures and trades.⁹⁵ In 1850,

⁹² United States Census 1860, Phillips County, Arkansas, Population Schedule, Folio 47-48

⁹³ It is not certain, but I assume, that the extremely high values associated with Cullpepper's estate reflect the values of the land and enslaved people at Wood Cottage, not just his personal holdings. United States Census 1860, Phillips County, Arkansas, Population Schedule, Folio 48

⁹⁴ Richard Richardson to John L. Manning, January 6, 1843, WCM Papers, Folder 113, SCL, USC. The purchase price for 200 acres was a staggeringly low \$500.00. On the Mills Atlas, Richard Richardson's property is just across the road from Colonel Richard I. Manning's land. Either John Manning wished to add to his property at Millford, or perhaps he solidified his claim on the land. As already discussed, Millford was very close to Hawthorne Hill, which John Manning's youngest brother Brown eventually inhabited. Maybe these extra 200 acres allowed each brother adequate space for their households.

⁹⁵ United States Census 1840, Sumter District, South Carolina, Population Schedule. The census recorder seems to have accidentally switched the listings for the Mannings with the counts of their enslaved people in this census. I presume that the enslaved people who are listed as trade or manufacturing employees were actually the domestic workers who ran Millford, including cooks, stablemen, carriage drivers, and personal

Manning reported twenty-seven enslaved people as residents of his estate.⁹⁶ Deeds in the 1860s and 1870s reveal that the property of Millford was 300 acres, a substantial suburban villa, but not large enough to support cash crop cultivation.⁹⁷ The size of Manning's enslaved population indicates that these people primarily worked in the house, stables, and gardens that surrounded Millford. To compare, his cousin, John P. Richardson, a politician and planter who cultivated cotton in South Carolina, recorded approximately 190 enslaved people.⁹⁸ Even though he kept his primary residence and the hub of his plantation network in South Carolina, the focus of Manning's large-scale cultivation activity was in Ascension Parish, Louisiana (Figure I-3).

Susan Hampton Manning was the youngest child of General Wade Hampton I, rumored to be the wealthiest landowner and slaveholder in the early nineteenth-century South. Focusing first on large-scale cotton cultivation in Richland District, South Carolina, Hampton speculated on land on a massive scale, including rights to 240,000 acres of land from South Carolina on the present Tennessee-Georgia border.⁹⁹ Wade Hampton I's land purchases extended into Louisiana, where, in 1811, he purchased a considerable segment of the troublesome Houmas Grant, land originally granted to settlers by the Spanish Government of Louisiana, which bedeviled its later owners with

maids and valets. I also presume that the four listed as agricultural workers were gardeners on the property. Their landscapes will be further discussed in the Complexes chapter.

⁹⁶ United States Census 1850, Sumter District, South Carolina, Slave Schedule, Folio 580

⁹⁷ Clarendon County, South Carolina, Deed Book B, Folio 410-412, Deed Book K, Folio 179-180; Sumter County Deed Book UU, Folio 458-460, SCDAB

⁹⁸ United States Census 1850, Sumter District, South Carolina, Slave Schedule, Folio 375

⁹⁹ Scarborough, *Masters of the Big House*, 125-126; Charles E. Cauthen, ed., *Family Letters of the Three Wade Hamptons, 1782-1901* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1953), xii-xiii

bad titles and unclear claims of ownership.¹⁰⁰ In a letter from Christopher Fitzsimons, his factor in Charleston, dated March 15, 1811, Fitzsimons assuaged Hampton's fears that he would not be able to meet the payments for the \$300,000 property transaction.¹⁰¹ A letter from his only surviving son, Wade Hampton II, in 1830 documents the vast scale of sugar production on such a large tract. He claims that his father's sugar is the best quality, which should fetch the highest prices, and that he thinks the plantations can produce 1600 hogsheads of sugar, an enormous amount in 1830, when sugar refining was not at its most efficient. In this letter, Hampton specifies the two parts of the property, the Houmas, on the east side of the Mississippi River, and the Point (or Point Houmas), on the west side.¹⁰² Wade Hampton I died in 1835, and, according to family lore, he named Wade Hampton II the sole inheritor of his entire estate. According to legend, Wade Hampton II tore up the will, and divided his inheritance equally with his two remaining siblings, Susan Hampton and Caroline Hampton Preston, with Susan Hampton and

¹⁰⁰ The Houmas Grant requests a dissertation in and of itself. Allegedly a treaty between the local Houmas Indians, who granted land along the Mississippi River to the Spanish Governor of Louisiana in 1774, the Grant had northern and southern boundaries, but no determined depth. The Spanish governor determined a common depth of forty arpents, and extended that to eighty, upon a further appeal. The tract was estimated at approximately 200,000 acres of what became the most profitable sugar growing land in the country. The original claims suffered from poor documentation under a foreign government and that the United States legally claimed to not recognize land acquired through the Houmas Grant. Throughout the nineteenth century, claimants and eager purchasers pursued legal battles to establish proper title. For discussion of the complications of the Houmas Tract, please see Thomas Curry, *Reports of Cases Argued and Determined in the Supreme Court of the State of Louisiana*, Volume XVI (New Orleans: Benjamin Levy, 1841), 501-508; Washington Correspondence, *The New York Times*, January 12, 1860

¹⁰¹ Christopher Fitzsimons to Wade Hampton I, March 15, 1811, reprinted in Cauthen, ed., *Family Letters of the Three Wade Hamptons*, 14-15.

¹⁰² Wade Hampton II to Wade Hampton I, December 30, 1830, reprinted in Cauthen, ed., *Family Letters of the Three Wade Hamptons*, 21-22.

Caroline Hampton inheriting the land in Louisiana, while Wade Hampton II took properties in South Carolina and Mississippi.¹⁰³

Susan Hampton and Caroline Hampton Preston inherited part of the land originally patented by Daniel Clark, William Donaldson and John W. Scott, and William Conway. Given the size of the Houmas Tract, the unverifiable nature of its titles, and the wealth generated by the sugar production on the landscape, it should come as no surprise that Hampton's heirs fought to defend their ownership throughout the nineteenth century, until the Supreme Court finally ruled in 1884. The original claim, granted by the Spanish Government in 1776 and 1777 did not specify the back boundary. The first grant gave Maurice Conway proprietorship over the front forty arpents from the bank of the Mississippi River, and the second granted him backland from which to harvest timber. The common amount of backland to grant was an additional forty arpents, but the vague wording of the grant caused some opportunists to claim land all the way back to the Spanish border. By 1806, when the United States Government requested that claimants file evidence for their land with the Territorial Land Office, Clark, Donaldson and Scott, and Conway presented questionable plats that supported the three claimants' right to over 180,000 acres of land. Land commissioners took these claims and eventually submitted them for approval by Congress, the final act needed to fully determine settlement rights. Congress did not vote on the measures until 1858, despite many efforts to prove the

¹⁰³No will for Wade Hampton I or for Wade Hampton II exists in the collection of the South Carolina Department of Archives and History. This makes sense, if, in fact, Wade Hampton II, who died intestate in 1858, destroyed his father's will in 1835. Cauthen, ed., *Family Letters of the Three Wade Hamptons*, xiv.

claims' validity in the ensuing fifty years.¹⁰⁴ After Wade Hampton I died in 1835, his son-in-law John S. Preston tried to validate his patent. Preston, acting for the Hampton heirs, petitioned Congress on an almost yearly basis to recognize the claim, failing except for the approval granted by Secretary Bibb of the Land Department in 1844.¹⁰⁵ While encouraging, the Secretary did not have the authority to fully approve the claim. Finally, by an act of Congress in 1860, the Hampton heirs' claims to the Houmas properties were confirmed, to a depth of eighty arpents from the riverbank.¹⁰⁶ Even though eventually granted clear title, the legal wrangling surrounding the Houmas properties must have been time and resource consuming. Nevertheless, it did not stop John S. Preston and John L. Manning from developing large-scale sugar cultivation on the properties, produced by large populations of enslaved people. Benefitting from the same inheritance, Manning and Preston worked together extensively, forming a partnership to manage affairs on the Louisiana properties. Overseers and managers communicated with both men, sometimes writing to them together, and account books show the debits and credits of the partnership. The annual Champomier reports identified the properties in the Hampton inheritance under Preston's name in 1845. In 1846, the same properties had Preston, Manning, and Mrs. Hampton as the owners. A break in available reports between 1846 and 1850 clouds the narrative; once reports resume in 1850, the

¹⁰⁴ Supreme Court 1884 Houmas Tract Decision, 111 U.S. 412, 4 S.Ct. 475, 28 L.Ed. 321: SLIDELL and others v. GRANDJEAN. SAME v. RICHARDSON. SAME v. EMLER and others. SAME v. TSCHIRN, *March 3, 1884*, Paragraphs 9-28

¹⁰⁵ October 1844, WCM Papers, Folder 121, SCL, USC; Supreme Court Houmas Tract Decision 1884, Paragraph 28

¹⁰⁶ Supreme Court Houmas Tract Decision 1884, Paragraph 37

sugarhouses listed Manning or Preston as individual owners.¹⁰⁷

The brothers-in-law split the properties into separate entities in the late 1840s, after Susan Hampton Manning's death, and John S. Preston took over the plantation known as Houmas, which included the Donaldson, Conway, and Clark sugarhouses. John Manning assumed management of Riverton and Point Houmas (Figure 1-14).¹⁰⁸ Riverton was on the east bank of the Mississippi River, upriver and adjacent to Houmas plantation. Manning's 1498 84/100-acre portion of the Houmas property, recorded by a surveyor in 1832 as the Donaldson and Scott section of the original grant, had two sugar houses, the original Donaldson factory, and the newer Riverton complex. The Riverton sugarhouse was much closer to the river, possibly to increase efficient movement of the finished product from sugarhouse to the market in New Orleans.¹⁰⁹

Point Houmas Plantation, Manning's other Louisiana property, was directly across the river on the west bank from the Houmas properties, also part of the Wade

¹⁰⁷ P.A. Champomier, *Statement of the Sugar Crop Made in Louisiana*, Combined Harvest Database, available through Documenting Louisiana Sugar, 1845-1917, accessed at <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/louisianasugar/download> on January 16, 2013

¹⁰⁸ In correspondence from the 1840s, the plantation is called Upper Houmas. The annual Champomier reports did not list this property under a specific name until 1854, when it was called Mulberry. In the 1856 report, Champomier listed the property as Riverton, which is also the name used in correspondence between Manning and his overseers during the late 1850s. Around 1858-1859, Manning stops calling this property Upper Houmas, and begins referring to it as Riverton. Preston had just sold his portion of the Houmas properties to John Burnside around this time, and I presume that Manning changes the name of his property to clarify ownership. In the dissertation, I will use the name Riverton to discuss this property. P.A. Champomier, *Statement of the Sugar Crop Made in Louisiana*, Combined Harvest Database, available through Documenting Louisiana Sugar, 1845-1917, accessed at <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/louisianasugar/download> on January 16, 2013

¹⁰⁹ The 1891 plat shows 700 more acres than the 1832, which may reflect the property boundaries established by the Act of 1860, described above in the discussion of the settlement of the Houmas tract. It is the 1891 plat that shows the location of buildings and the railway, which might post date Manning's ownership. <http://www.sldms.doa.la.gov/HistoricalDocument>, accessed July 13, 2011, August 27 and 30, 2012, and September 5, 2012: 522.02943_1 1891 Original Plat of T10S R3E SE; 510.00072_247 Donaldson and Clark T10S R3E Sec 6

Hampton I inheritance through his first marriage. Even though Point Houmas was part of a 1775 Spanish land grant, it was not a piece of the contentious Houmas grant. Wade Hampton purchased the Point Houmas property from Edward Turner after a New Orleans newspaper announced its sale in March 1812. The Louisiana Gazette proclaimed, “Point Houmas Estate will be sold Thursday, the 30th April next...late the residence of the honorable Edward D. Turner. This estate is so well known and so completely established in the sugar business that a particular description would be useless.”¹¹⁰ Edward Turner, not John McMurren’s father-in-law, was a planter in Ascension Parish who died in 1811. The sale must have resulted from the settlement of his estate. Point Houmas was the peninsula created where the Mississippi River almost doubled back on itself, named for a local Native American tribe who occupied the area. The Point Houmas property included approximately 948 23/100 acres, which, when combined with the Riverton property, gave Manning 2447 07/100 acres of prime sugar producing land in Louisiana.

Because the land in Louisiana came to Manning through his marriage to Susan Hampton Manning, it is worthwhile to consider the legal status of her inheritance with her marriage and the distribution of those assets after her death. Susan Manning died in 1845. As her husband, John Manning owned his wife’s property after her death, although their children retained some rights to an inheritance based on their mother’s assets. Doubtless, inheritance laws became more complicated when people owned property, both real estate and enslaved persons, in different jurisdictions. Rules about personal property

¹¹⁰ Mary Ann Sternberg, *Along the River Road: Past and Present on Louisiana’s Historic Byway* (Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1996), 246; *The Louisiana Gazette and New-Orleans Daily Advertiser*, March 31, 1812

followed the rules of the place of domicile of the owner (South Carolina, in this case), while real property, by necessity, followed the rules of its location (Louisiana). For families who owned enslaved people and property in multiple states, inheritance and rights could become complex legal issues.

Louisiana law maintained that real property, slaves, and slaves' children remained the woman's property even after marriage and, at her death, became inheritable by her children. John L. Manning, as the children's father, had to register as a Tutor to the children, to insure that he oversaw the revenues from their property to the children's benefit. As Tutor, Manning received a ten percent commission for his management of the property, paid for the children's support and education, funded the support of their property, and invested the remainder of the profits with a minimum return of five percent to the children. These laws clearly intended to insure that children had opportunities to benefit from their deceased mother's wealth and provided a trust fund for them until they reached majority.¹¹¹

Despite the provisions for her children through inheritance and the relative liberality of Louisiana law, John L. Manning held extensive rights over Susan Hampton Manning's properties and revenues during and after their marriage, because their primary residence continued to be South Carolina. As soon as the enslaved people harvested the crops in Louisiana, by law, they belonged to him. The enslaved people were used as another loophole, considered legal investments in the property that he managed during their marriage, and, by right, his. Because she lived in South Carolina, the balance of

¹¹¹ "Legal Rights of Inheritance, Louisiana," undated, c. November 1845, WCM Papers R962b, SCL, USC

Susan Hampton Manning's income generated from the estates from her father's death in 1835 until her marriage in 1838 belonged to John Manning. The example of Susan Hampton Manning proves how difficult it was for women to retain control over their inheritance upon marriage. When she died, laws that tried to secure revenues from a deceased woman's property in favor of her children were largely nominal and it was easy to find loopholes.¹¹²

One of Manning's real estate transactions in 1847 suggests how some plantation owners tried to simplify property ownership, especially when the land was part of a deceased wife's estate. John Manning purchased Point Houmas Plantation outright from a sheriff's sale in Donaldsonville in November 1847.¹¹³ Manning was the only bidder, and won the property and its resident enslaved people for \$4500, noted as being barely above the appraised value. It seems plausible that, after Susan Hampton Manning's death, John Manning purchased the property to insure his legacy in southern Louisiana. Another possibility is that Manning wanted to separate this part of his property from the rest of the land, whose claims were under question as parts of the Houmas Grant. In either case, the purchase does not indicate Manning expanding his plantation network to a new property. He had been involved in planting at Point Houmas since at least 1843, according to letters from his Louisiana overseers, and probably since he took over Susan's Louisiana inheritance in 1838.¹¹⁴ Before 1847, Manning relied on one overseer to manage the enslaved laborers and sugar production at both Point Houmas and

¹¹² "Legal Rights of Inheritance, Louisiana," undated, c. November 1845, WCM Papers R962b, SCL, USC

¹¹³ John H. Ilsley to John L. Manning, Donaldsonville, December 6, 1847, WCM Papers, Folder 129, SCL, USC

¹¹⁴ Thomas Butterfield to John L. Manning, Houmas, June 29, 1843, WCM Papers, Folder 115, SCL, USC

Riverton. After he purchased Point Houmas, Manning hired a separate overseer for the property across the river.¹¹⁵

Like Manning, Duncan Kenner built his plantation network in Ascension Parish, Louisiana. Unlike Manning, Kenner was a native of Louisiana, and the closest to a full-time residential planter of the case studies presented here. The center of Duncan Kenner's agricultural real estate empire was the property he inherited from his father, William Kenner. Through the 1840s and 1850s, Kenner purchased adjoining properties as they came up for sale, creating a condensed network of continuous plantations (Figure I-5). A commission merchant by trade, William Kenner pursued his own plantation network, buying Oakland Plantation in Jefferson Parish in 1813.¹¹⁶ Oakland was only twelve miles upriver from New Orleans, making it an easy trip for the Kenner family. Situated between Lake Pontchartrain and the Mississippi River, an 1813 letter documented that Kenner grew 90 acres of sugar cane as well as corn. The main house was about one hundred yards off the river, raised to avoid flooding, described as a whitewashed building of hand-hewn cypress timbers. It was probably a planter's cottage, tended by eight enslaved domestic workers. The grounds featured Mary Minor Kenner's ornamental flower gardens, a sugarhouse, an office, and quarters for the fifty-five enslaved field workers.¹¹⁷ Craig Bauer claims that William Kenner personally supervised

¹¹⁵ John L. Manning to Sallie Bland Clarke Manning, Houmas, November 8, 1849, WCM Papers, Folder 135, SCL, USC; WW Bateman to John L. Manning, Upper Houmas, December 3, 1849, WCM Papers, Folder 135, SCL, USC; John L. Manning to Sallie Bland Clarke Manning, Houmas, January 14, 1852, WCM Papers, Folder 140, SCL, USC

¹¹⁶ William Kenner to Stephen Minor, New Orleans, May 10, 1813, William J. Minor Family Papers, Box 1, Folder 4, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

¹¹⁷ Bauer, *A Leader Among Peers*, 16-17

operations at Oakland without the assistance of a manager, although he maintained his primary residence in New Orleans.¹¹⁸

Spurred by his success at Oakland and wanting to expand his holdings, he and his cousin, Philip Minor, began purchasing land in Ascension Parish in 1816, adding section after section until they owned a large parcel on the east bank of the Mississippi River, approximately seven miles upstream from Donaldsonville. On February 10, 1816, Philip Minor wrote to John Minor, stating, “I have at last fixed every thing up in this Business with Mr. Kenner. We have made a new bargain intirely (sic).” Minor continued, outlining the partnership between himself and William Kenner in Ascension Parish. In early 1817, William Kenner wrote to John Minor, citing “La Belle Alliance,” a reference to his partnership with Philip Minor, his work securing an overseer for the property, and telling John Minor that his relative would be present at the property should he stop there on a trip from Natchez to New Orleans.¹¹⁹ From these letters, at least early in their partnership, it appeared that Philip Minor spent more time at Linwood, while Kenner spent more time at Oakland, possibly because it was closer to his business in New Orleans.

Even though Louisiana did not have strict laws requiring surveys when properties changed hands, plats for the seven sections of land purchased by Kenner and Minor between 1816 and Kenner’s death in 1824 exist, housed in the Louisiana State Land

¹¹⁸ Bauer, *A Leader Among Peers*, 17.

¹¹⁹ Philip Minor to John Minor, Oakland, 10 February 1816, William J. Minor Family Papers, Box 1, Folder 6, LLMVC, LSU Libraries; William Kenner to John Minor, New Orleans, January 11, 1817, William J. Minor Family Papers, Box 1, Folder 6, LLMVC, LSU Libraries; William Kenner to John Minor, New Orleans, January 24, 1817, William J. Minor Family Papers, Box 1, Folder 6, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

Office.¹²⁰ Counted together, all these properties totaled approximately 3400 acres.

Kenner and Minor took out an insurance policy on Linwood in 1823 for the sum of \$89,600. The policy described a property eighty-four miles upriver from New Orleans with 26 acres on the river and eighty acres deep that grew cotton and sugarcane under 148 enslaved people. The policy also outlined the Kenner and Minor partnership, granting Minor a quarter of the property.¹²¹

Even in this early land transaction, the Kenner family and the Mannings appear to have been connected. Both Linwood and Houmas, the property secured by Wade Hampton of South Carolina, were fragments of the enormously large Houmas grant.¹²² Wade Hampton sold William Kenner a parcel of land between Linwood and the Houmas Grant that was 1200 acres. As described in the deed,

“adjoining the back line, which shall be legally and finally established to his tract called Linwood and between the same and the Houmas grant, that is to say, between the upper line of that portion of the Houmas grant which was formerly owned by Donaldson and Scott and is now the property of the said Wade Hampton. The said 1200 acres are to be laid off to the said Wm. Kenner the width of the Linwood tract at the aforesaid division line,

¹²⁰ Kenner and Minor witnessed and experienced the problems caused by contested land claims, in particular with parts of their land connected to the Houmas Grant. Louisiana’s complicated territorial history was the reason for so many questions about legal land ownership. Historical records from the Louisiana Office of State Lands are available online, with documents like Old Plats and Land Claims, searchable by township, range, and section numbers. Fortunately, as a territorial expansion to the United States, Louisiana was gridded under the Land Ordinance of 1785, a rectangular survey that assigned a township, range, and section number to each parcel of land. Using this information, I was able to search through land claims and plats to tell this part of the narrative. Plats will also be used in Concordia Parish, Louisiana and Adams and Wilkinson County, Mississippi. South Carolina, as an original colony, was not quantified in this way. <http://www.slodms.doe.la.gov/HistoricalDocument>, accessed July 13, 2011, August 27 and 30, 2012, and September 5, 2012.

¹²¹ Ascension Parish Conveyance Records, October 1820-April 1825, GS 3-22, Volume 6, Folio 91, Louisiana Division, New Orleans Public Library (hereafter abbreviated as NOPL)

¹²² Please see the discussion of the Houmas Grant in Footnote 100.

when the same shall be established, and extend back by parallel lines for complement.”¹²³

Duncan Kenner reached twenty-one, the legal age to claim his inheritance, in February 1834. At that time, he received his share of the Linwood tract, which combined his father’s original land claim with the property purchased from Wade Hampton. William Kenner’s will divided his real estate in New Orleans, Linwood, and Oakland between his six children equally. In the early 1830s, as the siblings respectively attained their majorities, there was a lot of buying, selling, and giving real estate and enslaved people among the Kenner family.¹²⁴

Philip Minor sold his one-quarter share in Linwood and 186 slaves to Minor Kenner, Duncan Kenner’s eldest brother, for \$50,000, payable in one-year installments, in January 1830. In February 1832, Minor Kenner bought his sister Frances Ann Kenner Duncan’s inherited one-eighth share. Combined with Minor Kenner’s inheritance share, he now owned one half of Linwood. In March 1832, Minor Kenner sold his one-half share of Linwood back to Philip Minor for \$100,000, due in five yearly installments. In March 1832, Martha Kenner Humphreys, the eldest Kenner child, sold her one-eighth inherited share to her youngest brother, Duncan, for \$25,000, bringing his share of Linwood to one quarter of the property. The property transfer between Martha Humphreys and Duncan Kenner must have taken place directly before he left for his two-year long trip to Europe. In January 1835, William Butler Kenner sold his inheritance share of Linwood to his brother George, who now had a one-quarter share in the

¹²³ William Kenner Papers, T:30 Box 2, undated, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

¹²⁴ Bauer, *A Leader Among Peers*, 28, 31-34

property. In December 1836, Duncan and George Kenner split the Linwood property with Philip Minor, who took the upper portion of the property and eighty-four enslaved people (Figure 1-15). It has been suggested that Philip Minor's slightly smaller half, twenty arpents front, compared to the Kenners' twenty-four arpents front, might have been a compromise for taking improved land with a house on it.¹²⁵ Linwood remained in the Minor family at least until 1858; Persac shows Linwood under the auspices of a Minor relative in his map of that year.¹²⁶ In 1836, Duncan and George Kenner split the remaining 2,429 acres between themselves along with eighty-four enslaved people and renamed the property Ashland, in honor of Henry Clay's home in Kentucky.¹²⁷ Duncan Kenner proceeded to purchase George Kenner's half of the land in 1844, giving him sole ownership of the almost 2500 acres of prime sugar cultivating land.

Duncan Kenner continued adding to his landholdings. Before Duncan and George Kenner split the land with their great-uncle, George Kenner purchased a small, three-arpent wide tract that belonged to Jean Louis Picou. When the brothers consolidated their holdings, this property split between the two parties, but came back together when Duncan Kenner bought his brother out in 1844. Duncan Kenner bought an additional three-arpent wide tract from Theodore Segond in 1843. With these small additions, Duncan Kenner owned a property of thirty riverfront arpents by 1844. Both of these properties were forty arpents deep, while the land inherited from his father was

¹²⁵ R. Christopher Goodwin and Associates, *Cultural Resources Survey of Five Mississippi River Levee and Revetment Items* (Louisiana State Archaeological Survey 22-976, 1985), 107

¹²⁶ Persac, *Norman's Chart of the Lower Mississippi River*, 1858

¹²⁷ Craig Bauer, *A Leader Among Peers*, 32; Duncan Farrar Kenner Papers, Inventory of Property in Ascension Parish Belonging to Duncan F. Kenner, July 22, 1887, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

eighty arpents deep. According to Duncan Kenner's probate inventory, taken in 1887, the appraised value of this land alone was \$38,900.¹²⁸

Kenner's last significant land purchase was the property downriver and adjacent to Ashland, a plantation called Bowden (Figure 1-16). Hore Browse Trist, a native of Virginia and Duncan Kenner's brother-in-law through his wife's family, died in 1856. Kenner purchased the property at Trist's probate sale in 1858, adding twenty-four additional arpents of riverfront property to his holdings. Bowden, an already profitable sugar plantation with a working sugar mill and its own community of enslaved people, was forty arpents deep. There was an additional four-arpent riverfront tract and two claims of land, respectively 106 acres and six acres, behind Bowden's rear boundary. The real estate at Bowden was even more valuable than that of Ashland, appraised in Kenner's probate inventory at \$58,117.60.¹²⁹

Plantation Network Management

From the hub or primary residence, the planter operated the plantation network, issuing directives, placing orders for necessary supplies, working with the commission merchant or factor to secure credit for each contributing property's use, and to negotiate the best possible price for the crop after harvest. Information to help the planter make these decisions came from the contributing plantations' resident managers or overseers.

Overseer's duties included placing orders for plantation supplies, managing financial

¹²⁸ Inventory of Property in Ascension Parish Belonging to Duncan F. Kenner, July 22, 1887, Duncan Farrar Kenner Papers, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

¹²⁹ Inventory of Property in Ascension Parish Belonging to Duncan F. Kenner, July 22, 1887, Duncan Farrar Kenner Papers, LLMVC, LSU Libraries; Ascension Parish Conveyance Records, Volume 26, Folio 119 (February 1858- February 1862), NOPL

affairs, supervising infrastructure maintenance and improvement, and, most important, keeping the enslaved population healthy and on task.¹³⁰ In essence, the overseer ran the daily operations on the property and the overseers of the various properties answered to him.¹³¹

Overseers on contributing plantation in networks owned by John McMurran, John Manning, and Duncan Kenner often acted as proxy for the owner. These men were literate, practiced agriculturalists, who communicated with the hub through numerous letters that outlined plantation matters. These letters offer a valuable window into the challenges and successes of plantation management in the 1840s and 1850s.¹³² Mail services in the period were efficient enough, if slow, for the plantation owners and overseers to feel confident that their information would reach its intended recipient. Many of these letters contained very specific information about the health of the general enslaved population, reports on specific people, notices of runaways, the state of the crops and the cultivation process, and requests for any supplies, be they extra food stores, agricultural implements, or more enslaved people, that the overseer found necessary.

Based on the information found in these reports, with additional insight gained from a

¹³⁰ William Kauffman Scarborough, *The Overseer: Plantation Management in the Old South* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1966), 178-179

¹³¹ This describes very closely the role of plantation attorneys as outlined in Barry Higman's book, *Plantation Jamaica*. W.W. Bateman at John Manning's Riverton Plantation in Ascension Parish, Louisiana might have been the only overseer in this study to manage more than one property, even though the rest of them seem to have enjoyed as much confidence in their work and judgment as Scarborough describes in the planter/steward relationship.

¹³² William Scarborough addressed the stereotype of the overseer as a crude, uneducated, illiterate brute, finding instead that many were literate, long-term employees at particular plantations. Scarborough attributes the development of the stereotype to the presence of a large group of "amateur" overseers, who charged lower fees but proved untrustworthy or unprepared for the work. Scarborough's purpose is to rehabilitate the stereotype of the overseer in his work; for this reason, I have relied upon him for definitions of overseers, managers, and stewards, but do not want to rely on his readings of members of the profession for the overseers employed in these three plantation networks. Scarborough, *The Overseer*, xii-xiv

planter's visits to the property, the head of the plantation network could make informed decisions about how to allocate resources and plan for coming years.

The planters associated with these three examples visited their contributing properties on a regular basis. Duncan Kenner spent the majority of each year at Ashland, even though he spent considerable time in New Orleans. Kenner could easily take a steamboat between his residences and appeared to take advantage of the ease of travel. John Manning traveled to Louisiana approximately once a year, spending several months supervising his enslaved people, overseers, and properties and acquainting himself with plantation issues. Manning's trip from South Carolina to Louisiana was the longest and most arduous, but railroads, steamboats, and regular packet ships whittled the trip down to about five days in the 1850s. John McMurran traveled to Riverside, Moro, and Killarney frequently. His contributing plantations were a several hour horse or steamboat ride from the hub at Melrose in Natchez, and the short distances made quick visits more possible for him.

Enslaved people also moved between properties in the networks, to supply needed labor or to practice specialized artisanal skills. Once Manning inherited the property in Louisiana, he transferred a group of enslaved people from his mother's plantation in Alabama to start working in Ascension Parish.¹³³ John McMurran moved enslaved people around his plantation network with great frequency. In 1857 and 1858, a group of enslaved field workers moved from Riverside to Moro to address labor shortages at the

¹³³ John Tarlton to John L. Manning, Mobile, January 4, 1839, WCM Papers, Folder 83, SCL, USC

Louisiana property.¹³⁴ McMurran requested an enslaved carpenter named Dixon to bring his tools and travel from Riverside to Melrose.¹³⁵ Unlike planters, enslaved people could not move freely around the plantation network. Movement from property to property introduced instabilities into the family and community lives of enslaved people in plantation networks.

As his plantation network matured through the 1850s, McMurran relied on long-serving, trusted farm managers, who remained in his employment for a long time and often rose to become co-owners of the plantation. His extensive plantation network also provided employment opportunities for his children; he installed his son, John McMurran Jr., as the resident manager at Riverside Plantation in 1856 and his son-in-law, Farar Conner, as the resident manager of Killarney Plantation in 1857. Having family members in charge of daily operations on the plantation insulated planters against possibilities of embezzlement, wasteful management, ostensibly placing someone on the plantation who directly shared the planter's best interests. Of my sample, McMurran was the only one who placed his son and son-in-law in positions of power on the contributing properties. McMurran's age in comparison to Kenner and Manning might explain this difference. McMurran was forty-nine years old in 1850; Kenner was thirty-seven and Manning was thirty-four. McMurran was the only planter in this study to have children old enough to take over property management, even though both Kenner and Manning

¹³⁴ John T. McMurran to John T. McMurran Jr., Natchez, March 9, 1858, McMurran-Austen Papers 1858 Correspondence 1:4, LLMVC, LSU Libraries; Mary Louisa McMurran to John T. McMurran, Jr., Melrose, March 4, 1857, McMurran-Austen Papers 1857 Correspondence 1:3, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

¹³⁵ Mary Louisa McMurran to John T. McMurran, Jr., Melrose, August 10, 1856, McMurran-Austen Family Papers 1856 Correspondence 1:2, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

relied on brothers and in-laws to acquire and share ownership of properties. Aspirations to establish his family in an elite social level may also be part of the story that was more important to McMurran than to Kenner or Manning. McMurran came to Natchez and ascended into the level of social elites through his marriage. Manning, especially, and Kenner inherited high social status, along with their properties, even though both men married into significant fortunes. McMurran may have needed to establish himself as a planter, and groom his son for the position, to completely secure his position in Natchez society. Doubtless, the prospect of spending several years on a contributing plantation with a new spouse was an intensive education for young men who grew up at the hub, surrounded by plantation networks. The younger generation got hands-on experience managing a property, enslaved people, and being responsible for the size and quality of the crop, in preparation for their inheritances.

Valentine O'Bryan supervised and operated Riverside Plantation from the mid-1840s until 1856, becoming a part owner of the property during his tenure. The 1850 United States Census lists O'Bryan (spelled O'Brien in the records) as a planter, the resident of a property valued at \$37,500, with 114 enslaved people on the plantation.¹³⁶ Mary Louisa McMurran specifically praised O'Bryan's quick reaction to a smallpox outbreak at Riverside Plantation in a letter from 1852. John McMurran had a long-standing relationship with A.M. Vardeman, already discussed as the plantation manager and the co-owner of Moro Plantation. Listed in the 1850 Census of Concordia Parish as a thirty-six year old overseer, born in Mississippi, with an estate valued at \$3000, it appears

¹³⁶ United States Census 1850, Wilkinson County, Mississippi, Population Schedule and Slave Schedule

that Vardeman attained a level of financial and social stability by becoming a land-owner himself, with the assistance of McMurran, an already established planter. Interestingly, on the 1858 Persac map, the property adjoining Moro, McMurran and Vardeman's plantation, is a property called Forest, with the name O'Bryan attached to it (Figure 1-17). Is it possible that when O'Bryan left Riverside in 1856, the year that John McMurran Jr. took up residence, that he purchased a plantation near his former partner? Or, did McMurran assist O'Bryan with the purchase, in acknowledgement of his dedicated leadership at Riverside? By 1860, according to the Slave Schedule for Concordia Parish, O'Bryan owned ninety-five enslaved people on his plantation. The census-taker recorded that O'Bryan was not very forthcoming with information about his laborers, noting that O'Bryan "has bought almost all his slaves within a few years past, hence their ages are as seen; he has not raised any."¹³⁷ The next entry in the census was A.M. Vardeman; the proximity of the two households, and the comment by the census-taker about O'Bryan's recent purchases of enslaved people, indicate O'Bryan acquired Forest through a connection with McMurran and that this happened around 1856 or 1857. Vardeman and O'Bryan were examples of William Scarborough's overseer elite, the figures who attained ownership of land and enslaved people, lifting themselves out of the class of professional overseer into positions as small planters.¹³⁸

At least two of the overseers that John Manning hired to manage his Riverton property held the position for long durations. James R. Brock was a native of South Carolina who worked for Manning on the Riverton property from 1839 until the mid-

¹³⁷ United States Census 1860, Concordia Parish, Louisiana, Slave Schedule, Folio 98-99

¹³⁸ Scarborough, *The Overseer*, 158-159

1840s. The 1825 Mills Atlas shows a property labeled Brock close to the plantations of some of the Richardsons, situated between Gun Branch and Jack's Creek. In a letter to Manning in 1839, Brock asked specifically for news from Jack's Creek (Figure 1-18).¹³⁹ John P. Richardson, Manning's uncle, knew Brock and recommended him as a property manager, noting his "strong sense of duty and of gratitude, "but also his sensibility and regret at leaving his friends and family. Richardson suggested that the experience of working for Manning would help Brock attain a better station in life, and reminded his nephew of Brock's long-standing relationship to himself and to Manning's father."¹⁴⁰ Brock was a landowner and planter in his own right; in 1840, the Census recorded thirty-nine enslaved people at Brock's South Carolina home, with twenty-six engaged in agriculture. By 1850, Brock returned to South Carolina full time; the Census listed him as a fifty-nine year old planter with an estate worth \$1000 and sixteen enslaved people.¹⁴¹

Manning hired other overseers and managers, but his other long-term employee was William Bateman, like Brock a native of Sumter District, South Carolina, who worked for him from 1849 at least through 1863 on the Riverton property.¹⁴² In the 1840 United States Census for Sumter District, South Carolina, William Bateman and his wife were between 30 and 40 years of age, and had three boys less than ten years of age. They owned six enslaved people, and only one member of the household was in agriculture. In

¹³⁹ Mills "Sumter District, South Carolina," in *Atlas of the State of South Carolina*; J.R. Brock to John L. Manning, Donaldsonville, November 26, 1839, WCM Papers, SCL, USC

¹⁴⁰ John P. Richardson to John L. Manning, January 26, 1839, WCM Papers, Folder 84, SCL, USC

¹⁴¹ United States Census 1840, Sumter District, South Carolina, Population Schedule; United States Census 1850, Sumter District, South Carolina, Population Schedule, Folio 66; United States Census, 1850 Sumter District, South Carolina, Slave Schedule

¹⁴² W.W. Bateman to John L. Manning, Upper Houmas, July 8, 1849, WCM Papers, Folder 135, SCL. USC; C.B. Hine to John L. Manning, May 29, 1863, Manning, John Laurence (1816-1889) Papers, Folder 3, SCL, USC,

1850, at forty years of age, Bateman was in Ascension Parish, with his wife and six children, his profession listed as overseer.¹⁴³ Even though these men did not become co-owners of Manning's property in the way that McMurren's overseers did, they were not the stereotypical, lower class, impoverished, uneducated overseers of tradition, as their appearances on the Census records and the evidence from their many letters testifies. Brock had a significant estate in South Carolina, and the length of Bateman's service to Manning rendered him an untraditional overseer.¹⁴⁴ Like McMurren, Manning relied upon overseers that he knew personally, men that he trusted to carry out his interests, manage his enslaved people, and produce his crops with efficiency and success. Even though both men reported plantation happenings judiciously to their boss, Manning's position as a largely absentee owner allowed Brock and Bateman significant freedom to run the properties based on their own discernment.

The overseers at Point Houmas experienced higher turnover, and correspondence reveals significantly more dissatisfaction with their management, treatment of the enslaved population, and the efficiency with which they produced sugar than at Riverton. The first mention of an overseer at Point Houmas was in 1849, a man named Harvin. Unhappy with his results, Manning decided to replace him. William Bateman, the overseer at Riverton, preferred to hire someone from South Carolina and offered Manning some suggestions of names. Bateman had another candidate in Louisiana, a Mr. Lynum, who he felt was the best option available if Manning did not want to send

¹⁴³ United States Census 1840, Sumter District, South Carolina, Population Schedule; United States Census 1850, Ascension Parish, Louisiana, Population Schedule, Folio 68.

¹⁴⁴ William Scarborough used Bateman as an example of a member of the supervisory elite in *The Overseer*. Scarborough, *The Overseer*, 171-172

someone from his native state.¹⁴⁵ Lynum remained at Point Houmas until at least 1852, even though Manning was critical of the way he treated the enslaved workers.¹⁴⁶ Correspondence from the mid-1850s through 1863 had no more references to a separate overseer at Point Houmas, suggesting that the management of Manning's entire holdings in Louisiana were under the control of William Bateman.

The records left by the overseers and managers who worked at Ashland suggest that the position experienced much higher turnover than the other examples in this study. Maybe Duncan Kenner took greater personal control over daily operations at Ashland. His frequent visits and the proximity and ease of travel between Ascension Parish and New Orleans rendered him less of an absentee owner than John Manning or John McMurran. George Washington Graves, Duncan Kenner's trusted horse trainer, lived at Ashland for over a decade and is the closest approximation to a long-serving overseer under Kenner's employment. While Graves was a trusted employee, responsible for hiding the family's treasures during the Union Army's movement through Louisiana in 1862, his primary duties seem to have revolved around caring for and training Kenner's extensive racing stables.¹⁴⁷ Evidence that Graves took an active role in plantation management has not appeared. The 1850 Census listed a forty year old, Louisiana born overseer named A.C. Antil as the overseer at Ashland.¹⁴⁸ By 1852, the overseer was

¹⁴⁵ W.W. Bateman to John L. Manning, Upper Houmas, December 3, 1849, WCM Papers, Folder 135, SCL, USC

¹⁴⁶ John L. Manning to Sallie Bland Clarke Manning, Houmas, January 14, 1852, WCM Papers, Folder 140, SCL, USC

¹⁴⁷ Rosella Kenner Brent, *George W. Graves*, Rosella Kenner Brent Papers, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

¹⁴⁸ United States Census 1850, Ascension Parish, Louisiana, Population Schedule

W.C. Wade, the author of the only complete plantation journal that still exists.¹⁴⁹ A fragment of the 1854 plantation journal does not have a name associated with it, but the handwriting and the format this person used to take notes differed from Wade, suggesting that the author was a different overseer.¹⁵⁰ Another record book from Ashland covering the years between 1854-1859 does not give weekly updates on plantation activities like the other journals, but instead charting the locations and dates of planted cane, lists of enslaved people, and clothing rations distributed to the enslaved population in 1854.¹⁵¹ The name of the author of these records does not survive, but the multiple years covered in a single, bound volume suggest that one overseer might have remained employed at Ashland between 1854 and 1859.

Conclusion

As discussed in this chapter, whether scattered, long-distance, or condensed, plantation networks began with inheritance or family gifts, had wealthy patrons, and were located in the most dynamic plantation regions of the time. His initial land ownership in the 1830s was a gift from his father-in-law; by the 1850s, John McMurran's scattered plantation network featured multiple properties spread across county, parish, and state lines, managed from his hub at Millford with the assistance of relatives, co-owners, and trusted managers. The foundation of John Manning's network was land inherited by his wife, Susan Hampton Manning, which he managed alongside his brother-in-law, John S.

¹⁴⁹ W.C. Wade, Ashland Plantation Record Book, 1852, Mss. 534, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

¹⁵⁰ W.C. Wade, Ashland Plantation Record Book, 1852, Mss. 534, LLMVC, LSU Libraries; The few surviving pages cover two weeks at the end of January/beginning of February 1854 and are unbound, stashed in the back of the 1852 plantation record.

¹⁵¹ Ashland Plantation Journal, 1854-1856, Historic New Orleans Collection, New Orleans, LA

Preston. Retaining his primary residence in South Carolina at Millford, Manning established a long-distance network and operated as an absentee landholder through managers and overseers. His most trusted overseers were men he knew from South Carolina, farmers and planters in their own rights, to whom he entrusted his affairs. The core of Duncan Kenner's plantation network was inherited property from his father, expanded through the pursuit of savvy real estate deals. Centered on Ashland, Kenner's condensed plantation network was the result of an agglomeration of properties that functioned with several sugar works and under multiple managers.

Recognizing networks as important elements of the Southern plantation economy introduces architecturally modest contributing properties as necessary counterpoints to studies of plantation mansion houses. Defining types of plantation networks and providing an in-depth study of how they developed and how planters managed them lays groundwork to study the built environments of the contributing plantations, the agricultural storage and processing buildings, houses for enslaved people, and transportation structures. After identifying these buildings on contributing properties, it is possible to begin questioning how they operated within the network structure. The same is true for the mansion house and domestic core, when discussed along with the great houses and domestic cores found on contributing plantations. Study of material culture on the plantation, items at the hub, on a contributing plantation, and in the enslaved quarters, allows us to ask questions about how objects operated in the network and if people used objects to define or negotiate spaces in the plantation landscape. Situating contributing plantation complexes in dialogue with Southern mansion houses,

connected through links of ownership, habitation, goods, and enslaved people, is both corrective and expanding. The chapters that follow will discuss agricultural complexes, domestic cores, and material culture, preserving links and exploring relationships that developed between buildings and objects in the network.

Complexes

Near the shores of Lake St. John in Concordia Parish, Louisiana stands a five-bay, clapboard-sided house with a central doorway under a steeply pitched gable roof (Figure 2-1). The roof incorporates a wide, gracious porch supported by six, square Doric piers. This house, now situated on a small parcel of land and surrounded by contemporary residences along the lakeshore, complete with docks, trailers, and pontoon boats, is a subtle reminder of this area's plantation past. Maps, inventories, and letters document the agricultural practices of Killarney Plantation, naming the enslaved people on the plantation and locating the cotton gin and press, although modern development has obscured physical evidence of large-scale cotton cultivation at the property. This house was once the main residence of a plantation, but in so many ways it does not conform to the popular image of an antebellum plantation house. This is neither surprising, nor unusual. Mansion houses have long been the primary focus of scholarly attention on the plantation, to the detriment of the wide array of other structures on the Southern agricultural landscape. The result, of course, has been a distorted vision of the plantation landscape before the Civil War.¹⁵²

¹⁵² These kinds of books range from older scholarship, including J. Frazier Smith's *White Pillars*, first published in 1941, to more contemporary work, including Mills Lane's state by state inventories of high-style plantation homes, elegiac studies of "lost plantations," and many monographs of plantation houses and suburban villas surrounding towns like Natchez and St. Francisville, Louisiana. Mills Lane, *Architecture of the Old South*, 10 Volume Series (Savannah: The Beehive Press, 1984-1997); older scholarship like J. Frazier Smith, *White Pillars: Early Life and Architecture of the Lower Mississippi Valley Country* (New York: W. Helburn, 1941); and more recent, coffee-table type publications that rely on extraordinary photography paired with short, descriptive entries, including Randolph Delehanty, *Classic Natchez: History, Homes, and Gardens* (Savannah and New Orleans: Martin – St. Martin Publishing Company, 1996); Hugh Howard, *Natchez: The Houses and History of the Jewel of the Mississippi* (New York: Rizzoli, 2003)

Studying the full complement of plantation buildings reveals how planters developed and changed their properties over time and suggests how all inhabitants – planters, overseers, and enslaved people – navigated and negotiated plantation spaces. This chapter studies the buildings of the plantation complex, ranging from houses of the enslaved, to buildings used for agriculture, processing, and transportation, to the fields and spaces that made up the rest of the plantation landscape.¹⁵³ The first section discusses buildings that appeared on all plantations, regardless of crop, in Mississippi and Louisiana in the 1840s and 1850s. These include houses for enslaved people and overseers, stables and barns, light industrial structures like sawmills and cornmills, and transportation infrastructure, to move the crop from the plantation to the market. The next section explores differences between sugar and cotton plantations, focusing on approaches to plantation organization, land cultivation and maintenance, and the processing structures required by sugar and cotton. The final section accounts for the experiences of enslaved people in the plantation landscape, in contrast to the controlled working landscapes created by white planters and overseers.

Long outdated by technological advances and usually removed from the landscape by demolition or decay, houses for enslaved people, processing structures, storage buildings, and transportation systems of plantations and plantation networks in the late antebellum period were the engines that made possible the construction of

¹⁵³ In this chapter, I focus on the buildings of the working plantation landscape, leaving discussions of the great house, quarters for enslaved domestic workers, and support buildings that primarily served the slaveholding family for the next chapter. I realize that separating the houses and domestic cores from the plantation landscape perpetuates the great-house centric problem of much plantation scholarship, but I wanted to insure that the more impermanent buildings of the working plantation received sufficient attention in the narrative.

gracious mansion houses. In this chapter, paintings, maps, journals, account records, and letters offer windows into the buildings and landscapes found on sugar and cotton plantations in Mississippi and Louisiana during the period between 1840 and 1860.¹⁵⁴ Maps, letters, and archaeological reports that describe and locate the buildings on the Melrose, Ashland, and Millford complexes offer comparisons between these sites and offer insight into the range of buildings expected on other contemporary plantations. Unfortunately, detailed, fieldwork-based study of most buildings in the plantation complex is not possible. Changes in agricultural technologies and approaches rendered antebellum plantation work buildings obsolete long ago. Maps, letters, memoirs, old photographs, and publications remain the best evidence available for studying the components of long-vanished plantation complexes.

The plantation complex was the full range of buildings found on the plantation, ranging from the great house, to the kitchens, laundries, offices, smokehouses, privies, slave quarters, storage buildings, warehouses, crop processing structures, stables, corn cribs, and sheds. The complex also included the fields, woods, and swamps of the property, the spaces occupied and used by slaves in ways unrecognized by slaveholders and overseers.¹⁵⁵ This chapter examines evidence from the agricultural complexes of the

¹⁵⁴ For an encyclopedic study, the standard resource for the buildings of the plantation complex, please see John Michael Vlach, *Back of the Big House: The Architecture of Plantation Slavery* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993). Vlach's book used the Historic American Buildings Collection (HABS) as the primary source for the buildings identified. This chapter departs from Vlach's model by introducing evidence from written sources, including maps, inventories, and letters, to identify and discuss the buildings of the plantation complex.

¹⁵⁵ Whereas this dissertation uses the term complex to refer to the specific buildings located on a plantation property, Philip Curtin, a historian of the Atlantic world, uses plantation complex to describe the entire political and economic system based upon slave labor. Philip D. Curtin, *The Rise and Fall of the Plantation Complex* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), xi. For discussions about ways

contributing plantations Ashland and Bowden (Ashland network), Riverton and Point Houmas (Millford network), and Riverside, Killarney, and Moro (Melrose network). The ways planters organized properties and buildings reveals how they intended their plantations to operate, what they prioritized, and where they were willing to compromise. Enslaved people navigated a planter-constructed world of rectilinear fields, work buildings, and cabins, as well as the fluid spaces of rivers and streams, woods and swamps. The constructed landscape and the natural world were places where friendships and family relationships blossomed, making the plantation complex dynamic, full of challenges, negotiations, and compromises, expressed through relationships of buildings, fields, roads, and wooded areas.

Breaking the Millford, Melrose, and Ashland networks into individual components of the plantation landscape exposes the ways that planters, supervisors, and enslaved people occupied, worked, and used the land. The physical similarities of houses for enslaved people and overseers, barns, sawmills, and steamboat landings revealed how uniform plantation structures became in the decades before the Civil War, with little variation between sugar and cotton plantations. Differences between land use, management, and processing structures on sugar and cotton plantations by the late

enslaved people viewed, occupied and used plantation spaces, Rhys Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia, 1740 - 1790* (Chapel Hill: Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture; University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 52-57; Dell Upton, "Black and White Landscapes in Eighteenth-Century Virginia," reprinted in Clifton Ellis and Rebecca Ginsburg, eds., *Cabin, Quarter, Plantation: Architecture and Landscapes of Nineteenth-Century Slavery* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2010) 121-140; Mechal Sobel, *The World They Made Together: Black and White Values in Eighteenth-Century Virginia* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987); Rebecca Ginsburg, "Escaping through a Black Landscape," in Ellis and Ginsburg, eds., *Cabin, Quarter, Plantation: Architecture and Landscapes of North American Slavery* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2010), 51-66

antebellum period resulted from requirements of the crops rather than planter experimentation.

The presence of plantation networks allowed contributing properties to share resources – people and buildings – that altered living and working conditions for enslaved people. The ability to share resources became easier as landscapes standardized over the nineteenth century. This chapter documents the almost universal presence of houses for enslaved people and overseers, storage and support buildings, light industrial structures, and transportation infrastructure on sugar and cotton plantations, many of which followed widely accepted construction details. Within sugarhouses and on cotton plantations, the processing structures standardized in the decades before the Civil War. Increased uniformity in plantation landscapes allowed planters the share resources within plantation networks. Enslaved people regularly moved from property to property within a network as labor requirements changed. Instead of hiring enslaved workers to augment smaller communities, planters with networks had the ability to move people around as needed. Even more than people, planters within networks shared supplies and buildings. A planter with a surplus of timber on one property might ship it to another to take advantage of a more powerful sawmill. The addition of a new plantation to a network encouraged the planter to centralize sugar production in the newly purchased sugarhouse, capitalizing on technologically advanced machinery. Plantation networks resulted in demonstrable changes in the lives of enslaved people in the network and in the appearance and use of the plantation complex.

In the early 1800s, planters experimented with crops, cultivation practices, and ways of organizing the plantation; by the 1840s and 1850s, the period of experimentation in the sugar parishes of Louisiana and the cotton country of Mississippi and Louisiana was over. Organizational models and buildings that promoted efficient management of enslaved people and methodical cultivation and processing practices dominated planting. The examples of sugar and cotton plantations in this chapter participated in the emerging uniformity of the plantation landscape, explored through discussions of houses for enslaved people and overseers, barns, sawmills, and transportation structures. Houses for enslaved people and overseers are the first building type for consideration. Enslaved workers were the engine for the whole plantation system; without them, plantations would not have existed. The organization and construction of houses for enslaved workers underwent significant changes in the early nineteenth-century that speak directly to issues of homogenization at hand.

Architectural Uniformity

By the second quarter of the nineteenth century, most planters regularized the location, organization, materials, and building types of enslaved houses, resulting in row after row of nearly identical structures. In the eighteenth century, the landscape of enslaved houses looked very different. Housing types and locations at Monticello, Thomas Jefferson's plantation in Albemarle County, Virginia provide examples of variations in housing between the 1770s and 1820s. Evidence from buildings on Mulberry Row, the plantation's industrial core, reveals houses for enslaved people in the 1770s between 215 and 260 square feet (Figure 2-2). One example is Building o, which

probably measured twelve feet by twenty and a half feet. Like most of the buildings on Mulberry Row, this structure had log walls, on a laid stone foundation. Building o also featured a sub-floor pit.¹⁵⁶ By the 1790s, buildings shrunk to about 140 square feet; known examples measure twelve by fourteen feet. Buildings r, s, and t, probably constructed during the winter of 1793-4, continued earlier construction practices, with log walls over laid stone foundations, and sub-floor pits present.¹⁵⁷ By the early nineteenth century, houses expanded again. The 1809 Stone House measured seventeen and a half feet by twenty and a half feet for a footprint of almost 360 square feet. Instead of log, the 1809 Stone House had walls and foundation of mortared stone, with a wood plank floor and a stone chimney. Tellingly, this house did not have sub-floor pits.¹⁵⁸ Archaeologists at Monticello have interpreted changes in construction materials, building footprints, and the disappearance of sub-floor pits as indications that enslaved people shifted from communal housing to family-based residences starting in the 1790s.¹⁵⁹

Archaeological excavations of enslaved houses in South Carolina offer examples of building materials and types that differ from houses at Monticello and timber-frame structures now associated with enslaved housing. In South Carolina, many eighteenth-century houses featured clay walls, a combination of woven sticks and clay for “wattle and daub” construction, and impermanent structures that offered shelter from wind and

¹⁵⁶ Martha Hill, Building Summary #3.13: Servants’ Quarter/Building o, unpublished research project, Thomas Jefferson Foundation, 2002

¹⁵⁷ Martha Hill, Building Summary #3.19: Servants’ Houses/Buildings r, s, and t, unpublished research project, Thomas Jefferson Foundation, 2002

¹⁵⁸ Martha Hill, Building Summary #3.12: 1809 Stone House/Levy Tomb, unpublished research project, Thomas Jefferson Foundation, 2002

¹⁵⁹ Fraser D. Neiman, “Changing Landscapes: Slave Housing at Monticello,” <http://www.pbs.org/saf/1301/features/archeology.htm>, accessed August 12, 2013

rain. These buildings drew from African and Native American building and living traditions that placed many residential activities outside. Descriptions of these buildings come from people of European background, who could not recognize enslaved people's preferences. Commenters did not understand that clay or wattle and daub houses and temporary shelters were familiar construction techniques to enslaved people that held links to a lost heritage. No surprise, as the nineteenth-century progressed, these buildings disappeared from the landscape in favor of buildings with European cultural traditions.¹⁶⁰

Changes in the individual houses and in settlement patterns show the process of regularization at work. The location and organization of housing groups at Monticello was a different model than the one used by planters in the 1840s and 1850s. Instead of rows of uniform houses, enslaved people at Monticello lived in small clusters, dispersed around the property, hugging the boundaries of fields (Figure 2-3). With scattered housing spanning the property, Jefferson's overseers built houses in proximity to groups of enslaved people. The broken up settlement pattern rendered constant observation of enslaved peoples' domestic lives and practices impossible. By the 1840s, standardized houses for enslaved people became a feature of plantation organization, as planters throughout the American South attempted to control the design and construction of houses for enslaved people. As a Virginia planter wrote in 1856, "The ends aimed in building negro cabins should be: First, the health and comfort of the occupants; Secondly, the convenience of nursing, surveillance, discipline, and the supply of wood and water;

¹⁶⁰ For more detailed accounts of the types of enslaved houses common to South Carolina in the eighteenth century, see Leland Ferguson, *Uncommon Ground: Archaeology and Early African Americans, 1650-1800* (Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992), 63-82

and Thirdly, economy of construction.”¹⁶¹ The homogeneity of late antebellum plantations versus the varied settlement patterns at Monticello indicated striking changes in plantation management that occurred during the first half of the nineteenth century as planters developed landscapes of control that maximized efficient production.

In the sugar parishes of Louisiana during the nineteenth century, enslaved people usually lived as families, often sharing a two-chamber structure covered by a wooden-shingled gable roof, raised from the ground by brick or log piers with another family. Along the Mississippi River, the form of the Creole house was the most popular, identifiable by the overarching roof that incorporated the front porch under its gable. The two-chambered example of the type was common on the Louisiana landscape; this example from Welham Plantation at the LSU Rural Life Museum is a good example of the scale and materials of houses for enslaved families (Figure 2-4). The building featured two front doors on the long side of the house and a central, double-flue chimneystack. A regular overall dimension for a double cabin, which, when occupied by two families, housed as many as ten or twelve people, was fifteen by thirty-two feet, giving each family a living space of approximately fifteen by sixteen feet, or 240 square feet.¹⁶² Most houses had openings to let in light and to aid in ventilation on the gable ends; houses on larger, wealthier plantations sometimes boasted glazed windows, while most used simple shutters. Brick houses for enslaved people existed on a few plantations,

¹⁶¹ R.W.N.N., “Negro Cabins,” *Southern Planter* 16 (April 1856), 121-22, quoted in James O. Breeden, ed., *Advice Among Masters: The Ideal in Slave Management in the Old South* (Westport and London: Greenwood Press, 1980), 129

¹⁶² Barbara Sorelle Bacot and Jessie Poesch, *Louisiana Buildings, 1720-1940: The Historic American Buildings Survey* (Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 1997), 128-130; John Rehder, *Delta Sugar: Louisiana's Vanishing Plantation Landscape* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 103-106

but wooden buildings were far more common. By the late antebellum period, most planters preferred clapboard-covered, whitewashed, timber frame houses instead of log cabins or mud-walled houses, considering frame buildings healthier, more economical, and easier to keep clean. On most plantations, houses for enslaved people followed strict organizational geometry, with houses spaced at regular intervals, in parallel lines or rows, built from the same materials and on the same plan. Planters hoped that control over enslaved people's domestic environments contributed to control over their actions and activities.¹⁶³

In 1852, W.C. Wade reported the plantation carpenters framing and repairing houses during the weeks of January 25, February 22, February 29, March 7, and raising a house during the weeks of March 14 and March 28.¹⁶⁴ Standardized or not, houses for enslaved people required significant maintenance, performed by enslaved artisans at the direction of the plantation overseer. According to archaeological investigations of the Ashland quarters carried out in the early 1990s, the quarters for enslaved workers were nearly 500 meters behind the great house and were found in a zone about 350 meters long; in other words, nearly a quarter-mile distance, positioned with ready access to the cane fields and works complex (Figure 2-5). Archaeologists identified eleven house sites on the southern row and seven sites on the north row. All but one site had evidence for a chimney; of the seventeen remaining bases, fifteen were double chimneys, suggesting

¹⁶³ For information on planter reforms on enslaved people's housing, please see Breeden, ed., *Advice Among Masters*, 114-139; Leland Ferguson, *Uncommon Ground*, 81-82; John Michael Vlach, "'Snug Li'l House with Flue and Oven': Nineteenth-Century Reforms in Plantation Slave Housing," *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture*, Volume 5: Gender, Class, and Shelter (1995), 118-129; Vlach, *Back of the Big House*, 157, 163

¹⁶⁴ W.C. Wade, Ashland Plantation Record Book, 1852, Mss. 534, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

double cabins that housed two families. The houses had rough dimensions of twenty by forty feet, spaced on intervals of approximately thirty-two feet. Remaining brick piers suggest that the houses were wood frame, covered with whitewashed clapboards, and probably had wooden shingled roofs. In the double cabins, each family had a living space of approximately twenty by twenty feet, or 400 square feet. This was larger than average for enslaved houses in the antebellum period, although it may reflect Kenner's adoption of reform measures for enslaved housing, which advocated larger residential spaces. In agricultural journals like *DeBow's Review* and the *Southern Cultivator*, planters and physicians regularly advised planters to build houses raised from the ground on piers, whitewashed, with dimensions of sixteen by eighteen feet.¹⁶⁵ The footprint of the houses, size of the chimney foundations, and spacing between houses suggests that Kenner planned the quarters as a single plantation entity. As identical as one expects the quarters houses to be, there were variations in building footprints. The differences might be the results of different construction dates, differently processed or sourced materials, work by different crews, or frequent upkeep and expansion.

Archaeological findings support the evidence for the location and number of quarter houses given on historic maps of the Ashland property. The 1847 Powell map showed two rows of fifteen quarters houses framed by roads at Ashland, with two pairs of additional houses closer to the overseer's house and sugarhouse (Figure I-1). Even though archaeologists only found evidence of eighteen houses, there was ample space within the quarter boundaries for fifteen houses per row, the number recorded on the

¹⁶⁵Breeden, *Advice Among Masters*, 119-123

1847 map.¹⁶⁶ If all thirty houses were double cabins, the result was sixty units of housing on Ashland for enslaved workers, assuming a separate family in each unit. Using the figure of five enslaved people per house, Kenner had housing for roughly 300 enslaved people at the maximum.¹⁶⁷ In 1840, Kenner owned 117 enslaved people. By 1850, the number grew to 260 people, and by 1860, he owned 473.¹⁶⁸ Sixty housing units, assuming all the houses were doubles and not counting the buildings beyond the eastern quarter boundary, would have been an appropriate number for the 260 enslaved people recorded in the 1850 US Census, especially if some double-houses had a members of one large family as occupants.¹⁶⁹ As for the two pairs of houses beyond the eastern boundary, these may have housed Branch, Dan, and Phill, the plantation drivers, and their families.¹⁷⁰ Plantation drivers usually lived slightly separate from the rest of the plantation community, a symbol of their planter-granted authority.

The other surprising detail about the quarter houses at Ashland was their relative lack of uniform size. Four excavated double-cabins on the southern row of the quarters at Ashland ranged from 1,372 to 677 square feet. The size of the Ashland cabins was even more striking when compared to double cabins at Evergreen, which consistently

¹⁶⁶ Jill-Karen Yakubik, et. al., *Archaeological Data Recovery at Ashland-Belle Helene Plantation (16AN26), Ascension Parish, Louisiana*, Volume I: Investigations in the Quarters and Archaeological Monitoring, (New Orleans: Earth Search, Inc., 1994), 12-2

¹⁶⁷ The figure of five enslaved people per house originated with Robert Fogel and Stanley Engerman, *Time on the Cross: The Economics of American Negro Slavery* (New York: Little, Brown & Co., 1974), 115

¹⁶⁸ United States Census Slave Schedule 1840, 1850, 1860, Ascension Parish, Louisiana; Yakubik, et. al., *Archaeological Data Recovery at Ashland-Belle Helene Plantation (16AN26)*, Volume I, 5-8

¹⁶⁹ Bacot and Poesch, *Louisiana Buildings*, 130

¹⁷⁰ Memorandum 1854-1859, Duncan F. Kenner Papers, Folder 1:3, LLMVC, LSU Libraries; Yakubik, et. al., *Archaeological Data Recovery at Ashland-Belle Helene Plantation (16AN26)*, Volume I, 5-24

measured 480 square feet.¹⁷¹ The largest house at Ashland measured 1,372 square feet. It may have been a four-chambered house, intended for four families, similar to four-chambered houses at Evergreen (Figure 2-6). In addition, the north and south rows of houses at Ashland were not parallel, but instead were offset slightly. Uncle Sam and Evergreen are plantations of similar size and date as Ashland, with existing buildings (in the case of Evergreen) and good documentation (in the case of Uncle Sam). Both properties had parallel rows of matching cabins, tangible evidence of planter power over the lives of the people who inhabited the quarter. This photograph of the two rows of houses at Evergreen communicates messages of overwhelming uniformity, even today. Given Ashland's size, wealth, and Kenner's prominent status, one would expect an insistence on conformity in houses for his enslaved workers. Historic plats perpetuated this myth. The 1847 Ashland plat shows the quarters with lined-up, equally spaced, same-sized houses. Scholars know that surveyors did not plot in every building on the plantation landscape, especially not quarters for enslaved people. Instead, they marked the quarter boundaries and filled in the appropriate number of buildings.¹⁷² Maybe examples of slightly disorganized quarters were more common than modern scholars have realized, regular quarters being another vestige of the myth of planter control over the lives of enslaved people.

The 1884 Mississippi River Commission Map revealed how the distribution of houses for enslaved laborers emerged as Kenner inherited his brother's enslaved people

¹⁷¹ Yakubik, et. al., *Archaeological Data Recovery at Ashland-Belle Helene Plantation (16AN26)*, Volume I, 5-25 – 5-26

¹⁷² Yakubik, et. al., *Archaeological Data Recovery at Ashland-Belle Helene Plantation (16AN26)*, Volume I, 5-24

and purchased Bowden plantation (Figure 2-7). The 1884 map showed a single row of eleven small structures on the road that connected the Ashland and Bowden sugar mills. The “Texas” quarter had unusual brick houses for enslaved people that Duncan Kenner inherited from his brother’s estate in 1853.¹⁷³ In front of the Bowden sugarhouse, twenty small structures in a double row formed a street, similar to the one found at Ashland.¹⁷⁴ The twenty buildings near the sugarhouse were quarters for the enslaved people, as were some of the fifteen buildings near the Bowden main house. Unfortunately, little information about the size, materials, or plans of these houses survives. The 1860 United States Census slave schedule for Ascension Parish listed Kenner as the owner of 473 enslaved people.¹⁷⁵ When combining the thirty-four houses on Ashland, with the twenty houses at the Texas Quarter, and the thirty-five houses at Bowden, Kenner had ninety-five houses for enslaved people at his plantation network. When divided into the enslaved population, the resulting figure was approximately five people per household unit.

There is less information on the enslaved houses at Riverton and Point Houmas. The 1884 Mississippi River Commission map clearly indicated the locations of houses for enslaved people on the two properties between the bluff of the river and the sugarhouse (Figure 2-8). The surveyor noted the double row with approximately thirty-four houses. The houses at Riverton were probably wooden frame with clapboards,

¹⁷³ David Babson and Charles Orser, *Pillars on the Levee: Archaeological Investigations at Ashland-Belle Helene Plantation, Geismar, Ascension Parish, Louisiana* (Normal: Midwestern Archaeological Research Center, Illinois State University, 1989), 32, 48 – also look at 71-72; Rosella Kenner Brent, *Recollections of the Federal Raid upon Ashland Plantation*, Rosella Kenner Brent Papers, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

¹⁷⁴ Babson, *Pillars on the Levee*, 48

¹⁷⁵ United States Census 1860 Slave Schedule, Ascension Parish, Louisiana

raised on brick piers and some were probably double-cabins with a central, double-hearth fireplace. In 1840, overseer Brock described three “cabbins” built on the plantation that year, which measured thirty by forty feet. If these were double cabins, the inhabitants occupied 600 square feet of living space. The buildings on Riverton may have been four-chambered houses, which offered families a more typical 300 square feet. Four-chambered houses were less common building types, although Evergreen Plantation has two examples of the form.¹⁷⁶ Manning and Preston plantations centralized cooking and eating for the enslaved population; Brock reported building a brick cook house that measured thirty-three by sixty feet and a twenty by thirty foot brick house for the cooks at the Conway property. At Ashland, with weekly food rations distributed by the overseer, it seems that enslaved people were responsible for their own nourishment, which kept food storage and preparation within the individual houses in the quarter. Brock also described a newly constructed, forty by fifty foot hospital on the plantation.¹⁷⁷ Many sugar plantations featured a hospital, although few of these buildings survive. The 1847 Powell plat shows a hospital directly behind the main house at Ashland, although the dimensions and materials of the building are unknown.

Where there were large communities of enslaved people, there were overseers. The common feature of plantation overseers’ houses in the 1840s and 1850s was a location that enabled them to supervise enslaved people’s domestic activities. Typically frame buildings covered in clapboards, overseers’ houses varied widely in size and level

¹⁷⁶ Vlach, “Snug Li’l House,” 121

¹⁷⁷ J.R. Brock to John L. Manning, Donaldsonville, September 17, 1840, WCM Papers (Legal), Folder 21, SCL, USC

of finish, sometimes appearing similar to small plantation houses, other times bearing greater resemblance to large quarter houses. An overseers' house usually had a different orientation from the quarters, and interior walls, trim, and glazed windows to distinguish it from the quarter houses.¹⁷⁸ On plantations like Ashland, the overseer's house was between the quarters and the sugarhouse, allowing the overseer to keep watch over both the activities of the enslaved people and the plantation's industrial core. Other properties, such as Palo Alto in Ascension Parish, placed the overseer's house closer to transportation outlets, the river and roads, to better monitor the movement of people and goods on the property. This detail of a painting by Adrien Marie Persac, a French émigré to New Orleans who had training as an engineer, reveals the overseer's house, a three-bay frame structure oriented toward the river, with the plantation bell located near the back corner of the house (Figure 2-9). The overseer's house is perpendicular to the two rows of double-houses, all enclosed within a fence; the overseer had a clear view of the single, visible gate into the space, to monitor the movement of enslaved people. While the overseer's house was not significantly larger than the enslaved houses, the porch railing and dormers indicate that it had finer finishes. It also offered the overseer and his family more accommodating living space, as two families shared the quarter houses. At Ashland, archaeologists uncovered foundations for a building that matched the location of the overseer's house on the 1847 plat and anecdotal memories of where the overseer lived.¹⁷⁹ Existing brick foundation walls revealed a building that measured twenty-one

¹⁷⁸ Bacot and Poesch, *Louisiana Buildings*, 135

¹⁷⁹ According to Rosella Kenner Brent, Duncan Kenner stopped at the overseers house to give instructions on his way off the property when Union soldiers landed at Ashland in July 1862. Apparently the overseer's house was far enough away from the steamboat landing to permit him to stop without being overtaken.

and a half by twenty feet, with remains of an exterior brick chimneystack. This house had solid brick foundation walls, ten courses tall, instead of piers as at the quarter houses.¹⁸⁰ Even though the building was about the same size as one housing unit in the double cabins, the more liberal use of brick and larger footprint suggests that it was not a building inhabited by an enslaved person. Letters and records do not tell very much about the overseer's residence on Riverton or Point Houmas, except that Brock had to live in the sawmill for a period in 1839.¹⁸¹ Since he took up temporary residence in the sawmill, he probably built a house for himself and his family soon after settling in on the plantation, likely near one of the quarter sites.

Upon arriving in Mississippi from her home in Maryland as a new bride, Alie Austen McMurran made special mention of the houses of enslaved people in her letters back to her family. She described "the cabins nice little white washed house--in a long line about twenty feet apart--and large noble trees in front the effect is very pretty, all having 'galleries.'"¹⁸² Her comments illustrate elements that were typical of enslaved houses on cotton plantations in the 1840s and 1850s. Typical houses were wood-framed, with clapboard siding, raised on brick piers, measuring approximately eighteen by twenty feet, or 360 square feet (Figure 2-10). Brick or clay chimneys with brick foundations were the norm, and most windows had shutters for privacy. Most houses had whitewash on the

Babson, *Pillars on the Levee*, 39; Rosella Kenner Brent, *Recollections of the Federal Raid upon Ashland Plantation*, Rosella Kenner Brent Papers, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

¹⁸⁰ Yakubik, et. al., *Archaeological Data Recovery at Ashland-Belle Helene Plantation (16AN26)*, Volume I, 9-58 – 9-60

¹⁸¹ J.R. Brock to John L. Manning, Houmas, June 4, 1839, WCM Papers (Legal), Folder 20, SCL, USC

¹⁸² Alice Austen McMurran to George Austen, Riverside, November (1856), McMurran-Austen Family Papers, 1856, Correspondence 1:2, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

interior and exterior.¹⁸³ Even though the majority of houses were wood, some were brick.¹⁸⁴ Unlike sugar plantations, most houses on cotton properties were for single families; double-houses were less common on the cotton landscape. An explanation might be the size of the enslaved population on cotton versus sugar properties. Large cotton plantations were likely to have between 100-200 enslaved people, while the largest sugar plantations easily had over 300 enslaved laborers. On sugar plantations, planters needed double-houses to accommodate the larger population without sacrificing cane fields for additional housing units.

Planters arranged houses for enslaved people at equal intervals, lined up in rows. From the planters' perspective, this organization created a neat, orderly community. The quarters at Canebrake in Concordia Parish, a neighboring property of Killarney, fit the model very well (Figure 2-11). Enslaved houses on Canebrake were double-cabins or "saddlebag" houses, with a central chimney that opened into two separate fireboxes that served purposes of heating and cooking. The wood-frame, clapboard covered houses had brick piers, which elevated the buildings off the ground, and wooden plank floors. A gable roof enclosed the original two-room core of the building and included a porch that ran across the full width of the building. The doors were board and batten, and the unglazed windows had batten shutters. If the quarters at Canebrake had ten double houses, that would have been twenty dwelling spaces on the plantation.¹⁸⁵ The 1860 Census recorded thirty-

¹⁸³ John Hebron Moore, *The Emergence of the Cotton Kingdom in the Old Southwest: Mississippi, 1770-1860* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1988), 87

¹⁸⁴ Moore, *The Emergence of the Cotton Kingdom*, 90

¹⁸⁵ Jack Elliott, Mary W. Miller, and Belinda Stewart, eds., *The Natchez District: Architecture and Cultural Landscape*, Field Guide for the Fourteenth Vernacular Architecture Forum (Natchez, 1993), 75-76

two housing units for 113 enslaved people at Canebrake; either the rows were longer, with eight houses per side, or the owner had another settlement elsewhere on the property.¹⁸⁶

When Alie Austen McMurran arrived at Riverside Plantation in November 1856, she avidly recorded her impressions of the enslaved people and their houses that were now a significant part of her daily life. The McMurran family owned and farmed Riverside since the early 1840s. In 1850, the US Census listed 114 enslaved people in residence on the property. As a newcomer to an established cotton plantation, Alie found herself inserted into a preexisting community with developed relationships and kin networks, all settled in previously constructed houses. Mary Louisa McMurran traveled to Riverside in May 1856, to visit her son and observe the changes and improvements to the property, made in anticipation of Alie's arrival. She noted visiting "'the quarters' and the 'nurseries,' receiving a glad welcome from old & young," but she wrote no further descriptions of the buildings or spaces.¹⁸⁷ Upon seeing Riverside for the first time, Alie related landing "in front of the lower quarters and I had the pleasure of seeing real eighty [sic] cabins looking very pretty--freshly whitewashed & a large china tree in front of each. They are quarter of mile from the house."¹⁸⁸ As she described them, the houses were close together in a tightly packed row, with shade trees and porches to mediate temperatures in the buildings.

Alie's letters raise questions about the size of the enslaved population at Riverside and the number of houses on the plantation. Eighty houses was a transcription error and the

¹⁸⁶ United States Census 1860, Slave Schedule, Concordia Parish, Louisiana

¹⁸⁷ M.L. McMurran to Alice Austen, Melrose, May 10, 1856, McMurran-Austen Family Papers, 1856, Correspondence 1:2, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

¹⁸⁸ Mrs. John T. McMurran, Jr. to Pattie Gilbert, Riverside, November 11 (1856), McMurran-Austen Family Papers, 1856, Correspondence 1:2, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

word is illegible in the original document; the correct figure is probably eighteen or twenty houses. Unfortunately, it was not possible to identify Riverside on the 1860 Slave Schedule of the US Census. In 1850, the plantation had 114 enslaved people, and Alie made a comment in 1856 about being “the only white persons among a hundred & fifty blacks.”¹⁸⁹ As Alie described feeling overwhelmed at her status as a plantation mistress, she may have exaggerated the number of enslaved people. The population probably grew slightly over the decade, and Riverside probably had 120 to 150 enslaved people ten years later. Searching the census for plantations of comparable size suggests that Riverside had between fifteen to thirty enslaved houses for the estimated population.¹⁹⁰ Based on the Census, eighty houses were far too many for a population the size of Riverside, but eighteen or twenty was consistent with neighboring plantations. The other clue in Alie’s letter was her description of the lower quarters, suggesting there was more than one settlement for enslaved people on the plantation. If the lower quarters had eighteen houses, a smaller group of buildings might have been elsewhere on the plantation. Another possibility was that the lower quarters housed field workers, and domestic enslaved people may have lived closer to the main house. Eighteen houses for 120 to 150 people would have been crowded, but many enslaved households were. If there were other places where enslaved people lived at Riverside, Alie did not notice or describe them, preferring to tell her family about the regularly spaced rows of houses expected on plantations by 1856.

¹⁸⁹ Mrs. John T. McMurran, Jr. to Pattie Gilbert, Riverside, November 11 (1856), McMurran-Austen Family Papers, 1856, Correspondence 1:2, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

¹⁹⁰ One planter with 120 people had sixteen houses, while another planter had twenty-eight houses for the same size population. A planter named Brandon had 133 enslaved people with twenty-two houses, and one planter with 150 people had twenty-four houses. Figures taken from the United States Census 1850, Slave Schedule, Wilkinson County, Mississippi

In Concordia Parish, Louisiana, in the 1860 Census, Moro had twenty-six timber-frame houses for 127 enslaved people.¹⁹¹ In the same parish, Killarney, the home of Farar Conner and Mary Elizabeth McMurran Conner, had ninety-seven enslaved people who lived in twenty-two houses.¹⁹² A neighboring plantation that belonged to one of Farar Conner's relatives was Rifle Point, which had a large population of 271 people in seventy houses. In the census, W.G. Conner noted that the houses on his plantation were nineteen feet by twenty-three feet, or 437 square feet, very close to the typical size of houses for enslaved people on cotton plantations.¹⁹³

Riverside, Moro, and Killarney all were large enough plantations to employ overseers to assist with management and operations on the property. On cotton plantations, the location of the overseer's house positioned him to keep watch over plantation supplies and industries in barns, shops, and storehouses, as well as over the enslaved houses. The location was practical, but symbolic as well. Overseers were subordinate to the planter; the positioning of the house near the quarters or between the quarters and great house reinforced this social position. Architectural treatment of the overseer's house further expressed the overseer's subordinate role. As on sugar plantations, overseer's houses would have been larger and more finely finished than the enslaved cabins, but significantly smaller and rougher than a plantation mansion house (Figure 2-12). Two-room and four-room overseer houses were common, with larger

¹⁹¹ United States Census 1860, Slave Schedule, Concordia Parish, Louisiana; *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, December 23, 1851, 3

¹⁹² United States Census 1860, Slave Schedule, Concordia Parish, Louisiana

¹⁹³ United States Census 1860, Slave Schedule, Concordia Parish, Louisiana

overseer's houses more common on wealthier or absentee properties.¹⁹⁴ In plantation networks, where contributing plantation great houses were modest, differences between a planter's house and overseer's residence might not have been as stark; in fact, the same building might serve both purposes at different times. At Canebrake, the five-bay, double-pile, one-and-a-half-story frame house on brick piers, that faced east towards the river was the primary residence on the plantation and probably housed the overseer (Figure 2-13). Essentially, the house was an enlarged quarter house, intended for habitation by a single family. A central passage separated two rooms, with two smaller "cabinet" rooms directly behind. The gable roof enclosed the front porch as well as the back loggia, a space framed by the "cabinet" rooms.¹⁹⁵ Even though its size, plan, and finishes relates this building to a planter's cottage, its close proximity to houses for the plantation's enslaved community was characteristic of an overseer's house. Overseers occupied the social lacuna between enslaved people and plantation masters, and their houses, which combined associations of ownership with aspects of enslaved houses, reveal the unstable position.

Occupied by overseers and plantation managers before John and Alie McMurran, Jr. arrived, the main house on Riverside faced the river, and, at a quarter mile from the enslaved houses, could supervise plantation activities and the domestic lives of the enslaved. Riverside had additional overseers during John and Alie McMurran, Jr.'s residence. This house also would have been along the bluff, placed strategically to observe plantation happenings, with only a few architectural details to differentiate it

¹⁹⁴ Vlach, *Back of the Big House*, 135-136

¹⁹⁵ Elliott, Miller, and Stewart, *The Natchez District*, 75-76

from the enslaved houses. The overseer's house at Moro probably overlooked the river in proximity to the enslaved quarters and other buildings. On Killarney, which probably grouped its buildings similarly to Canebrake, the overseer's house underwent reconstruction when Farar and Mary Elizabeth McMurran Conner moved to the plantation after their 1856 marriage. As combination overseer/planter houses, these buildings will be discussed in the next chapter.

“The stables I will try and complete, but I fear much we will have but lettles (sic) corn to put in it.”¹⁹⁶ In his report to John L. Manning, overseer J.R. Brock captured the multiple functions of storage buildings on plantations. All plantations had numerous, architecturally modest structures and sheds, used for storing everything from the crop waiting for shipment, agricultural implements like carts, plows, and other mechanical farming equipment, shelter and fodder for the livestock, and food stores for enslaved people (Figure 2-14). Although a few of the larger structures might have been built of brick, most of these buildings would have been square or rectangular, timber-framed, covered with wooden siding, under a gable or hipped roof with wooden shingles. Built from materials that were susceptible to rot, few structures from the antebellum period have survived until the present day.¹⁹⁷

On sugar plantations, mules, horses, and oxen were the primary sources of power for plowing, pulling cane carts during harvest, and transporting finished sugar and molasses to the steamboat landing for shipment to the market. The relative warmth of the

¹⁹⁶ J.R. Brock to John L. Manning, Houmas, June 4, 1839, WCM Papers (Legal), Folder 20, SCL, USC

¹⁹⁷ Rehder, *Delta Sugar*, 148-152; Vlach, *Back of the Big House*, 107-111

climate resulted in many farms without shelter for livestock, although those who invested in barns tended to build large, multi-use buildings that offered protection to animals and supplies.¹⁹⁸ Heavy-framed, wooden frame buildings, mule barns could be as large as 100 to 150 feet long by forty to sixty feet wide, under a large gable or hipped roof. The Stoker Barn at the Louisiana State University Rural Life Museum is a good example of an antebellum mule and horse barn (Figure 2-15). A log building, the double-pen structure had cribs to store corn and hay, with a few stalls for mules and horses. Larger mule barns also included storage rooms for supplies and carting implements. Some mule barns were open on the gable ends, for better ventilation and easier access to shelter for the animals. Very few antebellum examples of these buildings survive into the present. During the twentieth century, later owners transformed some barns or stables with open sides into tractor sheds; most were dismantled or allowed to collapse.¹⁹⁹

On wealthier plantations, stables/barns were brick. The stables on the 1847 Powell plat of Ashland were probably the same building as the barn, noted as a landmark throughout the Ashland Plantation Record Book (Figure I-1). The barn at Ashland provided at least temporary or emergency shelter for seventeen work horses, nineteen colts, fifty-two work mules, seventy-six work oxen, 143 sheep, and thirty-nine lambs recorded in an inventory of January 4, 1852.²⁰⁰ The large number of oxen at Ashland is

¹⁹⁸ Given the distinction that stables are structures built for the specific purpose of housing animals, and barns are structures where animals can be sheltered and supplies and implements stored, I have chosen to call the buildings that housed plantation work animals barns, since most of them seem to have also provided storage. Stables seem to have served the animals most closely associated with the planter family, and will be discussed as parts of the domestic core in the following chapter.

¹⁹⁹ Rehder, *Delta Sugar*, 148

²⁰⁰ W.C. Wade, Inventory at Ashland, 4 January 1852, W.C. Wade, Ashland Plantation Record Book, 1852, Mss. 534, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

surprising. Oxen were useful for heavy work like clearing land, and Thomas Spalding, a sugar planter in coastal Georgia, claimed that oxen were superior for plowing, had better temperaments, and were steadier workers than horses or mules. Horses and mules came to largely replace oxen in Louisiana during the late antebellum period, because they were cheaper than heavier draft animals.²⁰¹ The plantation record book of 1852 recorded Kenner using teams of oxen to haul wood and pull plows, cane carts, and finished sugar to the warehouse.²⁰² Perhaps Kenner kept such a large population of oxen because he could afford to purchase the more expensive animals. No matter his reason, the prevalence of oxen in the work force at Ashland hinted that Kenner was a conservative planter.

At Riverton, the barn was probably near the sugarhouse at the plantation's industrial core. As at Ashland and other mule barns in the Louisiana sugar parishes, the structure at Riverton included storage areas for fodder and other supplies related to the property's livestock populations. As the barn at Riverton was under construction in 1839, letters between Brock and Manning revealed information about the size and purposes of the building. In a letter from June 1839, Brock reported that he thought he had enough brick to finish the plantation construction projects, including the stable that he intended to house livestock and feed supplies.²⁰³ By September, Brock noted that the

²⁰¹ Sitterson, *Sugar Country*, 51-52

²⁰² W.C. Wade, Ashland Plantation Record Book, Mss. 534, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

²⁰³ J.R. Brock to John L. Manning, Houmas, June 4, 1839, WCM Papers (Legal), Folder 20, SCL, USC

building was finished.²⁰⁴ In his 1840 report on completed building projects, this was the new barn, which measured thirty by eighty feet.²⁰⁵

In the Melrose network's correspondence, buildings, and records there was little discussion of the working buildings on the contributing plantations. Riverside, Moro, and Killarney had mule barns, storage buildings, and other structures that supported agricultural activities on the properties, but very little information about the size, materials, and locations of these buildings has emerged. The greater architectural requirements of sugar plantations have already been noted. It seems possible that since sugar demanded a distinctive group of buildings, these structures garnered more attention from planters and overseers in their correspondence and records, and may have had more permanent construction methods and materials. With the exception of the gin and the press, cotton cultivation and processing did not involve extensive support buildings. Since the structures were less necessary, planters and overseers may have treated them as more impermanent, both in the landscape, and in the surviving records.

By the 1840s and 1850s, many plantations invested in light industries, particularly in processing timber for use and sale and grinding corn to create food for livestock and enslaved people. The development of these buildings on contributing plantations was a result of plantation networks. It was common for raw materials from one plantation to move to another for processing. Sawmills were surprisingly ubiquitous, an investment

²⁰⁴ J.R. Brock to John L. Manning, Donaldsonville, September 18, 1839, WCM Papers (Legal), Folder 20, SCL, USC

²⁰⁵ J.R. Brock to John L. Manning, Donaldsonville, September 17, 1840, WCM Papers (Legal), Folder 21, SCL, USC

made to help planters eke every bit of productivity out of their properties. Riverton had a sawmill, which probably resembled the working sawmill painted in Persac's 1860 representation of Prairie Sorrel plantation in Lafayette Parish, Louisiana (Figure 2-16). Like so many buildings in an agricultural context, the sawmill and its components served multiple uses. J.R. Brock used the sawmill as a residence in 1839, writing to Manning that "I will have to keep a publick house or open a liberty hall," a telling comment on his neighbors' and peers' curious reactions to his decision to live in the building.²⁰⁶ In 1844, MC Shaffer used the sawmill engines to power pumps to bring water from the Mississippi River for irrigation purposes in the cane fields. Shaffer's ingenuity worked so well that he reported feeling "independent of the rain – but now it has started raining and hasn't stopped."²⁰⁷

Riverside had a sawmill, which probably looked very much like this restored, circa 1861 sawmill at the LSU Rural Life Museum (Figure 2-17). The property extended into the hills of Wilkinson County, Mississippi, and there was plenty of timber to harvest. Mary Louisa McMurran attempted to describe the landscape and the buildings at Riverside to Alie Austen, her son's fiancée. In her letter, she reported,

"One morning he took me through the plantation, to portions of it I had never seen before, far into the Cypress swamp, where is being put up a steam engine for draining and sawing. Mr. McMurran & John have been so much interested in its erection and talked so much about it I wished to see it too, and felt quite repaid for my rough ride."²⁰⁸

²⁰⁶ J.R. Brock to John L. Manning, Houmas, June 4, 1839, WCM Papers (Legal), Folder 20, SCL, USC

²⁰⁷ M.C. Schaffer to John L. Manning, Houmas, November 13, 1844, WCM Papers, Folder 122, SCL, USC

²⁰⁸ Mary Louisa McMurran to Alice Austen, Melrose, May 10, 1856, McMurran-Austen Family Papers, 1856, Correspondence 1:2, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

The McMurrans considered the sawmill a prized plantation structure and an important source of revenue, as Alie Austen McMurren rode three miles to see the sawmill on one of her first mornings in residence at Riverside.²⁰⁹ Timber was already an important cash crop at Riverside, as Mary Louisa McMurren reported a fire in March 1853 that consumed 4000 cords of wood, “all cut and ready to haul to the bank of the river. Besides this we fear the damage is extensive in the standing timber as the fire must have swept through the whole swamp. It is quite a calamity to us in a pecuniary way.”²¹⁰ The completion of a sawmill in August 1856 indicated a new focus on timber harvesting and preparation at Riverside.²¹¹ The sawmill supported plantation construction programs and was an improved source of income on the plantation from milled timber. Unsurprisingly, this plantation upgrade coincided with John and Alie McMurren, Jr.’s wedding and settlement on Riverside.

Moro also had a sawmill. One of the buildings listed on the 1851 advertisement for the sale of the property was a mill, and part of the land had been cleared of timber.²¹² In 1856, A.M. Vardeman advertised timber for sale from Moro in the *New Orleans Daily Picayune*. In the notice, Vardeman described having “fine and well seasoned cotton and gum steamboat wood,” for a lower price than the upriver competitor.²¹³ Plantation sawmills allowed planters to generate income from byproducts of clearing land for more cash crop

²⁰⁹ Mrs. John T. McMurren, Jr. to Pattie Gilbert, Riverside, November 11 (1856), McMurren-Austen Family Papers, 1856, Correspondence 1:2, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

²¹⁰ Mary Louisa McMurren to Frances Conner, Melrose, March 14th, 1853, Lemuel Parker Conner and Family Papers, Series 1, Folder 2:14, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

²¹¹ Mary Louisa McMurren to John T. McMurren, Jr., Melrose, August 10, 1856, McMurren-Austen Family Papers, 1856, Correspondence 1:2, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

²¹² *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, December 23, 1851, 3

²¹³ *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, March 25, 1856, 2

cultivation. The McMurrans owned a property in Arkansas, Wood Cottage, purchased with an eye on the cypress trees on the property. John McMurran figured that he could sell the cypress timber in the process of clearing the land for cultivation. In 1867, it seemed that McMurran's investment would pay off, as two Englishmen expressed interest in buying Wood Cottage to establish a sawmill. Unfortunately, the potential purchasers deemed the amount of available timber insufficient and the levees in ruinous condition, preventing the property from fulfilling the McMurran's expectations of it.²¹⁴

In early 1844, overseer M.C. Shaffer reported to John L. Manning "we have been grinding the corn and cob for the mules since you left. We ground the shuck also for some time but found it very hard on the mill and now have them cut the cob taken from what is shutten for the people is ground along with the others for the mules."²¹⁵ Planters on sugar and cotton plantations found it cost-effective to have a corn mill on the property, no matter whether the plantation grew or ordered the staple. Corn was a primary food source for both stock and enslaved people; it was common for plantations to have mill to process cornmeal for weekly food rations, as well as to grind husks, stalks, grains, and cobs into digestible animal feed. By the 1840s and 1850s, cornmills were animal powered, either by horses or by mules.²¹⁶ M.C. Shaffer, an overseer for John Manning and John Preston, recommended refurbishing a building into a "cobb mill," to cheaply

²¹⁴ James Carson to Mary Louisa McMurran, Natchez, July 2, 1867, McMurran Collection, SC 81-11, Box 1, July-December 1867, Special Collections Library, University of Louisiana, Monroe (hereafter cited as SCL, ULM); James Carson to Mary Louisa McMurran, Natchez, October 17, 1867, McMurran Collection, SC 81-11, Box 1, July-December 1867, SCL, ULM

²¹⁵ M.C. Shaffer to John L. Manning, Houmas, June 22, 1844, WCM Papers, Folder 120, SCL, USC

²¹⁶ Moore, *The Emergence of the Cotton Kingdom*, 66-68

provide fodder for the plantation livestock.²¹⁷ Corn houses or corn cribs were impermanent structures on the plantation landscape and required frequent replacement. As on sugar properties, the buildings had ventilated walls, to keep the corn from rotting. The location of the corn houses would have been in close proximity to the main house or the overseer's living quarters, an attempt to discourage frequent thefts of corn. On Riverside, John McMurran, Sr. reported to his son in 1857 that, "the corn crop is a very full one. The fodder of course was greatly damaged, in saving it, by the rains."²¹⁸ Every year, Moro, Riverside, and Killarney intended to raise sufficient corn for plantation use, although that goal was not always possible. At Moro, the 1865 corn crop failed. McMurran had to order nearly 4000 pounds of corn from a Cincinnati factor to replace what did not grow on the plantation that year.²¹⁹

"We left Nachez [sic] Saturday Afternoon five o'clock in the Princess--one of the finest boats on the river. Carries Mr. M. & John's cotton."²²⁰ In her earliest letters from Mississippi, Alie Austen McMurran recognized the importance of steamboats in her life as a plantation mistress. Every planter considered how to capitalize on transportation infrastructure to efficiently move the finished crop from the plantation to the market and to get people and supplies to contributing plantations. Along the Mississippi River and the navigable bayous of Louisiana, steamboats were the most reliable means of

²¹⁷ M.C. Shaffer to Preston and Manning, Houmas, December 19, 1843, WCM Papers, Folder 118, SCL, USC

²¹⁸ John T. McMurran to John T. McMurran, Jr., August 30, 1857, McMurran-Austen Family Papers 1857 Correspondence 1:3, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

²¹⁹ McMurran and Permenter (Moro Plantation) in account with John T. McMurran, 1864, McMurran, John T. Papers, S:121, Box 1, Volume 1, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

²²⁰ Alice Austen McMurran to George Austen, Riverside, November (1856), McMurran-Austen Family Papers, 1856, Correspondence 1:2, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

transportation; boats delivered plantation supplies including farming implements, food for the enslaved workers, and goods and objects ordered by the planter or overseer. Steamboat landings at riverfront plantations were the point of connection to the outside world and were an almost universal feature of the plantation landscape. On larger, wealthier properties like Ashland and Riverton, there was a warehouse for storing processed sugar and a wharf or a gangplank for loading hogsheads and unloading plantations supplies, rations, or enslaved people from steamboats. Persac's painting of *Palo Alto* plantation in Ascension Parish, Louisiana reveals a small warehouse directly on the bayou (Figure 2-9). Vertical planks suggest a likely post-in-ground building; despite its size and rough, impermanent construction, its very presence indicated a plantation of significant worth. Smaller, poorer plantations would have had a clearing on the levee for wagons to drive up and load or unload goods. At Ashland, archaeological investigations of the Mississippi River bank in the 1980s recorded a fragment of brick foundation in the top of the cutbank overlooking the river, assumed to have been the Ashland warehouse. Further investigation of the site in 1989 confirmed that the building was approximately thirty-nine feet square. From the remains, archaeologists determined that the building had an almost four-foot wide spread footing of handmade brick (Figure 2-18). A spread footing is a type of building foundation with a wider base than top, intended to distribute weight across a wider footprint. In the soft, riverside soil, a spread footing was necessary to support the weight of a large storage building. Resting on top of the wider footing, the foundation walls were brick, ranging from two- to seven-courses wide. As these walls

would have supported the floor joists of the building, the more heavily reinforced foundation walls could support great weight.²²¹ The building had brick floors covered by a layer of mortar, a common feature in the processing structures of a sugar plantation and one also recorded in the purgery, lump room, and packing room at the Ashland sugar house. The warehouse was in place by 1852, as Wade recorded sending ox teams hauling sugar to the warehouse. The wharf, the point of landing for Union troops on July 27, 1862, was probably in very close proximity to the warehouse; Rosella Kenner Brent remembered hearing the whistles of the steamboat on the evening of the troops arrival. After the Civil War, the warehouse was still the primary point of entry for visitors to Ashland. In a letter to Rosella Kenner Brent, Joseph Brent reported on his trip, "the steamer did not leave until near 6 but she landed me here a little after 1. It was a clear, but not very bright, night. The men at the warehouse were roused up by the whistle and received me."²²² This imposing brick structure situated directly on the river would have made a strong impression on passers-by and arriving visitor of the wealth and productivity of the Ashland estate to require such a large, solidly-built warehouse.

Warehouses were limited to the largest, wealthiest sugar plantations; unsurprisingly, the five Preston-Manning sugar plantations in Ascension Parish shared access to at least one riverside storage structure. The 1891 plat shows the Houmas warehouse near the southernmost boundary of the shared property, serving the sugarhouses at Riverton, Donaldson, Clarks, and Conway. There was a warehouse in

²²¹ Christopher R. Goodwin, *Significance Assessment of 16AN26, New River Bend Revetment, Ascension Parish, Louisiana, Final Report*, (New Orleans: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, December 1989), 29-30

²²² Joseph L. Brent to Rosella Kenner Brent, Ashland, December 13, 1870, Brent (Joseph L.) Papers, Box 1, Folder 1, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

place as early as 1839; overseer Brock reported on his space constraints in the sugarhouses, needing to haul draining hogsheads finish purging at the warehouse, since he had not had time to build the purgery at Conway.²²³ The following year, in 1840, Brock wrote to Manning that he wanted to build a proper wharf at the warehouse, if he had sufficient time before the harvest began.²²⁴

Sugar and cotton plantations along the river shared steamboats as the primary means of transportation for supplies and materials. Adrien Persac's rendering of a cotton plantation on Norman's Chart of the Lower Mississippi River reveals a property that probably bore strong resemblance to Riverside (Figure 2-19). Even though the identity of the property is unknown, the height of the bluff and the hills in the background were typical landscape features for properties on the eastern bank of the river near the Mississippi/Louisiana border.²²⁵ In this print, the steamboat Natchez approaches the plantation landing to take on cotton bales for shipment to the market. The landing was simply a path down the bluff to the water's edge, with a short gangplank extending into the water. Alie Austen McMurran's description of the trek up the steep bank from the landing confirms that the landing at Riverside appeared similar to the scene depicted in Persac's print.²²⁶ The print also shows a warehouse for storing finished cotton bales in preparation for shipment. It was a simple, rectangular, wood-framed, clapboard covered building with openings on the gable ends and small windows, under a gable roof.

²²³ J.R. Brock to John L. Manning, Donaldsonville, November 6, 1839, WCM Papers (Legal), Folder 20, SCL, USC

²²⁴ J.R. Brock to John L. Manning, Donaldsonville, September 17, 1840, WCM Papers (Legal), Folder 21, SCL, USC

²²⁵ Vlach, *The Planter's Prospect*, 94-95

²²⁶ Alice Austen McMurran to George Austen, Riverside, November (1856), McMurran-Austen Family Papers, 1856, Correspondence 1:2, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

Riverside probably had a building like this, located near the landing site, to support efficient movement of the finished product from the plantation to the market. Moro Plantation, on the west bank of the river, also had a landing.²²⁷ Even though the flatter levees on the west bank did not require the steep cuts down the bank found on plantations on the east side of the river, the landing at Moro probably had a simple warehouse and a short gangplank to serve as the primary point of contact with the outside world. Since most communication between contributing plantations and the hub in the Melrose network was by steamboat, letters from John T. McMurran, Sr. to his plantation managers alerted them to boat arrivals. Situated on Lake St. John instead of the Mississippi River, Killarney did not have a steamboat landing. When its residents, Farar and Mary Eliza McMurran Conner, traveled to Killarney, they disembarked from the steamboat at a property called Rifle Point, which was part of the Conner family's plantation network. It is likely that cotton from the plantation and supplies arriving on the property also moved through the Conner's landing.

While the planter family typically used steamboats to travel between secondary plantations and the hub, enslaved people used both steamboats and the roads. In 1856, Mary Louisa McMurran reported that Dixon had been expected to arrive in Natchez from Riverside on the Rapides steamboat, but as the boat did not stop on that Sunday, he was detained elsewhere. She gave little information about what Dixon did with his unexpected free time, but the fact of his being unaccounted for suggests that he did not mind the diversion. A craftsman, Dixon was scheduled to return to Riverside the

²²⁷ John T. McMurran to John T. McMurran Jr., Natchez, March 9, 1858, McMurran-Austen Family Papers, 1858 Correspondence 1:4, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

following Saturday to help run the sawmill.²²⁸ Later in the summer, Mary Louisa McMurran mentioned that Dixon arrived in Natchez “by land,” with favorable reports on the development of the crop and the health of the enslaved population at Riverside. From these brief notices, his ability to travel alone, and that he brought reports about the status of things at one of the contributing plantations suggests that Davis was someone with a significant amount of planter-given authority. Mary Louisa McMurran never specified, but Dixon probably enjoyed his travels. He was able to spend time relatively unaccounted for, see a bit of the world, and enjoy the flexibility that travel in the nineteenth century granted when boats did not stop or roads became impassible. Traveling allowed Dixon to act independently, in ways not often tolerated in the plantation landscape.

Sugar and cotton plantations shared a number of building types, including houses for the enslaved workers, houses for the overseers, support buildings like barns, sheds, sawmills, and cornmills, and steamboat landings and warehousing structures, all of which were on any plantation of comparable size in the 1840s and 1850s. Notwithstanding the numerous similarities across plantation landscapes, different crops had different architectural requirements. Sugarcane required intensive processing, performed on a strict timeline. Packaging and shipping the finished product required the contributions of plantation industries. For this reason, sugar plantations developed a range of specialized shops and workrooms to support the stages of processing, packing, and shipping. In contrast, cotton plantations generally required less on-site industry. A number of cotton

²²⁸ Mary Louisa McMurran to John T. McMurran, Jr., Melrose, August 10, 1856, McMurran-Austen Family Papers, 1856, Correspondence 1:2, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

plantations had blacksmith's shops, but fewer had coopers' shops or facilities for brickmaking. This section explores plantation layouts, preparation and maintenance of the landscape, and processing structures on sugar and cotton plantations, noting the agricultural specificity of sugar and cotton.

Agricultural Specificity

Sugar plantations typically followed one of three organizational models, defined by the location, organization, and distribution of houses for the enslaved population and relationships between the houses, the works, the river, and uncultivated areas. Linear, nodal, and bayou block layouts determined the patterns of work and daily life performed, created, and experienced by enslaved people on the plantation.²²⁹ On long, narrow lots along the Mississippi River, the linear model dominated.²³⁰ In this plan, warehouses and steamboat landings stood closest to the riverbank to facilitate shipment of finished hogsheads to the market, usually New Orleans. The residence of the plantation family was usually visible from the river, set apart from the rest of the property by formal gardens, with domestic outbuildings and offices behind it. Father Joseph Paret, a French Roman Catholic priest for a small church in St. Charles Parish during the 1850s, painted watercolors of his plantation neighbors. Around 1859, he depicted the *Habitation Edg. Labranche et Vve Dame Norbert Fortier, St. Charles, Louisiane*, a striking example of a linear sugar plantation (Figure 2-20). As the watercolor reveals, the defining

²²⁹ Bacot and Poesch, *Louisiana Buildings*, 89-95; Rehder, *Delta Sugar*, 61-64

²³⁰ Each type had a geographical range: the linear plantation model predominated along the Mississippi River, while the nodal block prevailed in northern parts of Bayou Lafourche, and the bayou block model appeared in Bayou Teche and Terrebonne Parish. Rehder, *Delta Sugar*, 90-100; Bacot and Poesch, *Louisiana Buildings*, 91-95

characteristic of the linear plantation model was a road, stretching back perpendicularly from the river, skirting the side of the great house and domestic outbuildings, connecting the warehouse and landing to the works complex. The houses of enslaved people stood behind or to the side of the domestic core, organized symmetrically on either side of this street. Behind the enslaved quarters stood the works complex, timber-framed barns for the plow and cart mules and oxen, stables for horses and mules, equipment sheds, corn and feed storage sheds, pigpens, and poultry houses. Shops for enslaved blacksmiths and carpenters to make hogsheads, the preferred container for sugar storage and transportation, would have been close to the works.²³¹ The linear plan neatly located houses for enslaved people between the most potent symbols of planter control over the landscape – the sugarhouse and the great house. In addition, the linear plan placed enslaved people in the middle of the working complex, further from uncultivated woods, swamps, and waterways that promised escape from white surveillance and punishment. The plan promised planters enhanced surveillance of the enslaved work force, under the guise of increased efficiency for sugar harvesting and cultivation.

The 1847 plat for Ashland Plantation, drawn by A.J. Powell, is the best surviving documentation of the plantation landscape at Ashland (Figure I-1). The plat offers independent evidence that the plantation layouts presented in Paret's paintings was typical for the time and place. The main house, orchards, and domestic core were closest to the river, with a hospital and stable for the planter family's use behind. A road extended along the edge of the domestic core, stretching from the river to the sugarhouse,

²³¹ Rehder, *Delta Sugar*, 90

nearly bisecting the plantation. Behind the main house were two rows of houses for enslaved people, with seventeen houses per side. The overseer's house stood between the enslaved houses and the works, surrounded by small, unidentifiable buildings – likely the sheds, coops, and storage buildings previously discussed. Except for a corn house, the sugarhouse was the easternmost building on the plantation. If the footprints of buildings recorded on the plat were close to accurate, it was also the largest building on the property. The plat recorded the location of Kenner's stock barn and his racetrack. Racetracks were unusual plantation features, but Kenner was an avid racer and kept a stable of racehorses during the antebellum period. The 1847 plat revealed how Kenner established the linear plantation model on his property, which took advantage of the regularity of the landscape to create the most efficient plantation layout possible.

In 1885, the U.S. Coast Survey published a detailed series of maps based on surveys of the Mississippi River Commission. These maps documented general footprints of buildings for properties along the Mississippi River, and provide insight into the organization and layout of properties. Even though these records were twenty-years after the Civil War, and rice cultivation challenged sugar cane as the dominant crop, many structures from antebellum plantations remained in situ, repurposed for new uses. The Mississippi River Commission Map shows the footprint of Bowden Plantation following a linear plan, even though the buildings were not in a straight line as at Ashland (Figure 2-21). The layout of Bowden was closer to that of Uncle Sam Plantation, with the great house and fifteen supporting buildings closest to the river, stretching back to meet the road that connected the property to Ashland. The

perpendicular orientation of the twenty houses for enslaved people to the river and the position of the sugarhouse in relation to the rest of the plantation complex make the property an example of a linear plantation.

Maps of the Riverton and Point Houmas reveal properties that followed the linear plan.²³² At Riverton, the Mississippi River Commission Map clearly shows the great house complex closest to the river, with the block of the great house surrounded by domestic support buildings (Figure 2-22). Behind that were two rows of approximately fourteen houses originally built for enslaved people, lined up on either side of a street. The works complex was to the back of the built environment, with an L-shaped sugarhouse and supporting structures. Across the Mississippi at Point Houmas, the great house on the property was almost at the point of the peninsula. What appears to be the works complex was in front of the houses originally constructed for enslaved people, which lined up in a double row of approximately ten houses behind the processing structures. The layout was technically linear, even though having the works complex at the front of the property was unusual. The topography at Point Houmas might have determined the placement of the works, which required land high enough to minimize flooding and dry enough to support the weight of a sugarhouse. Transportation requirements may also have dictated the location, with easy access to the river being a high priority. In either case, the built environment at Point Houmas was more tightly compressed than the landscape at Riverton, which spread over a larger distance.

²³² Louisiana Land Records Historical Documents Official Plats 522.02943_1 1891 Original Plat of T10S R3E SE, <https://wwwslodms.doa.la.gov/WebForms/DocumentViewer.aspx?docId=522.02943&category=H#1>, accessed 10 January 2013; Bacot and Poesch, *Louisiana Buildings*, 90

Profitable sugar production required intensive landscaping and field maintenance to successfully grow the plant. By the early nineteenth-century, planters developed a system for organizing their fields into plots and sections, divided to allow farm machinery into the fields. Lateral and cross ditches defined plots, which were between one and five acres and had eighteen to twenty-five rows of cane. In the mid-nineteenth century, planters introduced sturdier varieties of cane, which required six to eight-foot wide rows. The wider width accommodated two-mule plows and carts and allowed more sunlight and better ventilation to reach the ribbon and purple cane stalks. Rows were raised eighteen to twenty-five inches above deep furrows, known as lateral drains. The lateral drains prevented oversaturation of the cane roots, and carried water to the ditches. Fifteen or twenty plots grouped together was a section or cut, which were defined by wide paths. Many of these paths have transformed over time into plantation roads.²³³

The gridlike pattern of ditches, furrows, drains, and raised rows managed crop hydration and established the rectilinear fields so commonly associated with sugar plantations. The patterns of ditches and rows were so intrinsic to the landscape, that ditches sometimes were property markers and boundaries. In 1836, when Duncan Kenner and his brother legally separated their share of the Linwood tract from Phillip Minor, the deed noted the property boundary as “the fourth ditch below the canal.”²³⁴ Sugar cane was a thirsty plant, requiring approximately sixty inches of rain annually, but did not thrive in overly wet conditions. The most successful cane fields had plants in

²³³ Rehder, *Delta Sugar*, 158-161

²³⁴ Ascension Parish Conveyance Records, December 28, 1836, Book 13, Folio 300, Reel GS 3-25, New Orleans Public Library, New Orleans, LA

raised rows, with deep furrows between, to allow water to run off into a drainage system. Over the course of the nineteenth century, widths between rows changed as different strains of sugar cane came under cultivation and planting and harvesting technologies developed.²³⁵ The minimal gradient changes of successful cane lands turned water management into an important issue for planters and resulted in back-breaking work for the enslaved labor forces to create and maintain the drainage systems. The extensive system of ditches required significant upkeep. In the winter of 1843, M.C. Shaffer reported to John Manning that Mr. Hackett had enslaved laborers working on a ditch.²³⁶ Again, in January 1849, the overseer reported that the enslaved men were working on the property ditches. Ditch repair and upkeep appear to be tasks slated for slower periods in the agricultural calendar, after the early spring planting season, in the summer when hurricanes threatened, and after harvest was complete.²³⁷ Ditching was arduous, taxing work. Some overseers recommended hiring Irish laborers to do the work, preserving the enslaved work force for other tasks, as overseer Bateman did at Riverton in 1849.²³⁸ Other overseers, including W.C. Wade at Ashland, used ditching as a punishment. For the week of February 15, 1852, Wade noted that he had Jerry, Bradock, Madeson, and Willis cutting a ditch to pay for stealing a sheep.²³⁹

²³⁵ Rehder, *Delta Sugar*, 158

²³⁶ M.C. Shaffer to Manning and Preston, Houmas, December 15, 1843, WCM Papers, Folder 118, SCL, USC

²³⁷ Richard Harvin to John L. Manning, Point Houmas, January 15, 1849, WCM Papers, Folder 133, SCL, USC

²³⁸ W.W. Bateman to John L. Manning, Houmas, June 25, 1849, WCM Papers (Legal), Folder 22, SCL, USC; J. Carlyle Sitterson, *Sugar Country: The Cane Sugar Industry in the South, 1753-1950* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1953), 66-67

²³⁹ W.C. Wade, Ashland Plantation Record Book, 1852, Week of February 15, 1852, Mss. 534, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

Climate restricted sugar cultivation to a very small geographical region. Within the region, the landscape and topography was consistently low lying and flat. With these restrictions, sugar planters adopted models for plantation organization that occupied the least productive land, while putting the processing center as close to the cane fields as possible. The layouts created opportunities for planters and overseers to increase surveillance over enslaved people, contributing to the industrialization of agriculture in the 1840s and 1850s. Sugar required significant landscape maintenance by gangs of enslaved laborers. During slack times in the agricultural year, teams of people dug ditches, repaired levees, and performed other jobs to keep cultivation happening. Land maintenance jobs were backbreaking, made clear by the fact that planters used these tasks as punishments for enslaved people. After discussing the landscape, the next section presents the buildings and machinery of the sugarhouse, the industrial hub of the sugar plantation.

At the heart of almost every sugar plantation was the processing center, a collection of buildings that included spaces for milling the cane, boiling the juice, allowing the granulated sugar to cure, and packing it off for its commercial destination. Contrary to twenty-first century perceptions of the plantation great house as the most important building on the property, the works was the center of the sugar estate. On riverfront sugar properties, the works usually were the buildings furthest away from the river, in the middle of the cane fields, with the landscape arranged so that the finished product moved efficiently from the plantation to the market. Close proximity to the cane fields was important; cane needed to start processing in the mill within a few hours of

harvest, to keep the juice from putrefying. Planters also wanted to minimize the distance that cane carts had to travel from the fields to the works and the time and work required by enslaved workers and stock to get it there. The planter's house on one end and the sugar works on the other bracketed the built environment of the sugar plantation in nineteenth-century Louisiana. The two largest structures on the property served as symbols of the planter's control over all the people, stock, accoutrements, fields, and roads of the sugar plantation. The river and the back swamps, the uncultivated spaces behind the settled plantation landscapes were places where planter control could be avoided, obscured, or forgotten. Paret's painting of *Good Hope, Home of E. Oxnard and S. Labranche, St. Charles, Louisiana* was an aerial view over the plantation landscape (Figure 2-23). Paret documented the massive size and dominating effect of the sugar works on the landscape, as well as the clustered barns, sheds, corn houses, and the regularly spaced houses for enslaved people. The watercolor clearly revealed the presence of two potent symbols of planter power, the great house and the works complex. These buildings communicated dominance through their size, materials, and position on the plantation landscape. Paret's images of the landscape also reveal how small and insignificant the swamps and river – the spaces distant from planter control – were in the mind of the white painter. If white inhabitants of Louisiana's sugar country shared Paret's view of the world, it is easy to imagine that a planter considered the cultivated fields and the colossal sugar works as the only recognizable landscape.

At the most basic, works complexes included a mill for grinding the sugar cane, a boiling apparatus for refining the crushed cane juice into granulated sugar syrup, and a

curing or purging area where the molasses drained from the sugar crystals. In nineteenth-century Louisiana, these activities happened within a single building, the sugar factory. Adrien Marie Persac painted *Riverlake Sugarhouse* in Pointe Coupee Parish, Louisiana between 1855 and 1861 (Figure 2-24). In that view, he depicted a large, two-story mill with multiple additions, and an attached cane shed. The scene showed the sugarhouse in late fall, during the harvest and processing season, and Persac included teams of enslaved people cutting cane and ox- and mule-drawn carts transporting the cane to the works. Sugar factories were by far the largest buildings on the plantation landscape, commonly 100 to 160 feet long by sixty or more feet wide, usually an L- or T-shaped, brick structure, with a tall, brick chimney to allow smoke from the kettles and furnaces to escape safely.²⁴⁰ Some properties had a trash house, depending on how bagasse, milled cane stalks that fueled steam engines once dry, was employed. In the painting of *Riverlake*, a pile of bagasse dried in front of the small cabin on the left side of the composition. Distilling houses were rare on Louisiana sugar plantations; while properties produced and sold molasses as a by-product of granulated sugar, Louisiana planters did not produce rum. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth-centuries, some plantations produced tafia, an alcoholic drink called “a bad kind of rum,” but the practice did not continue into the 1830s and 1840s.²⁴¹ Works were expensive to build and, as technology improved, planters could spend small fortunes on updating their boiling and clarifying mechanisms. Frederick Law Olmsted, writing in 1856, noted that the works on a large Louisiana estate could cost 100,000 dollars. The boiling and curing apparatus to make

²⁴⁰ Bacot and Poesch, *Louisiana Buildings*, 168; Rehder, *Delta Sugar*, 129

²⁴¹ Rehder, *Delta Sugar*, 36-37; *Louisiana Gazette*, New Orleans, April 11, 1811, quoted in Sitterson, *Sugar Country*, 28

brown sugar, a distinctly less profitable product, cost 20,000 dollars, and the machinery needed to render more desirable white loaf sugar could cost an extra 20,000 dollars.²⁴²

From the start of commercial sugar cultivation in 1795 through the first quarter of the nineteenth century, Louisiana planters relied on cattle mills; as technology developed, they upgraded to steam power.²⁴³ Introduced in 1822, and only outnumbering cattle mills by 1844, steam-powered mills were better suited to the hardier, frost-resistant cane varieties cultivated in Louisiana.²⁴⁴ The introduction of steam power also changed the clarifying apparatus from open-kettle boilers to vacuum pans and even more advanced, multiple-effect evaporation. Norbert Rillieux, a free man of color from New Orleans, developed a system for clarifying and granulating sugar that used two vacuum pans in conjunction. The steam released from evaporating cane juice in the first pan heated the syrup in the second pan, with vapor collected in a condenser. This method, which Rillieux expanded into a multiple-pan vacuum system, controlled temperature better, occupied less space, used far less fuel, and created higher-quality sugar than traditional open-kettle boiling.²⁴⁵ Rillieux patented his inventions in 1843, which numerous Louisiana planters quickly adopted. Duncan Kenner did not have a Rillieux designed vacuum system in his sugarhouse at Ashland, even though the technology had been

²⁴² Frederick Law Olmsted, *A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States With Remarks on Their Economy* (New York: Dix & Edwards, 1856), 740; Mark Schmitz, *Economic Analysis of Antebellum Sugar Plantations in Louisiana* (New York: Arno Press, 1977), 108

²⁴³ Rehder, *Delta Sugar*, 55

²⁴⁴ Any number of reasons explain the slow adaptation of steam power in Louisiana. Until the early 1840s, sugar was protected by a US government tariff; planters made enough profits making sugar the old way. Investing in new machinery was expensive, which kept people from pursuing it. Steam power meant significantly higher production. The Louisiana sugar industry experienced a massive jump in production between 1841 and 1844, almost doubling. The increased number of steam powered processing centers was the reason. Rehder, *Delta Sugar*, 57, 127

²⁴⁵ Sitterson, *Sugar Country*, 146-150, Rehder, *Delta Sugar*, 137

available since the 1840s. Kenner used steam to power his mill, and adopted a single-pan vacuum system, but P. A. Champomier, the New Orleans commission merchant who published an annual list of the production of every sugar plantation in Louisiana, never identified Ashland as one of the properties that utilized the more advanced technology.²⁴⁶

An undated photograph of the Ashland sugarhouse shows the sugarhouse in the characteristic T-shape (Figure 2-25). In this image, the building is whitewashed brick, with high windows to provide light and ventilation to the working spaces inside, and roofed with slate. The gable ends at the north and south ends have stepped parapets on the gable ends, a common feature on Louisiana sugarhouses. The photograph shows a centralized stepped-gable over a slightly projecting entry on the west elevation with a door flanked by two windows, with two windows above, and an opening at the top of the gable. This section was probably the end of the building from the first addition. Three large, square smokestacks rise from the milling area, and an ancillary timber-frame, gable-roofed shed is visible to the side of the building, which may have held bagasse.²⁴⁷

The scale of the sugarhouse is massive, enhanced by its situation among the flat cane fields. The earliest part of the sugarhouse at Ashland probably dates from the years 1836

²⁴⁶ In his reports after 1851, Champomier listed whether plantations had vacuum pans, Rillieux apparatus, steam power, or horse power. Where Champomier listed vacuum, we assume that the sugarhouse operated a single vacuum pan, whereas a Rillieux apparatus would have been a multiple pan system. P.A. Champomier, *Statement of the Sugar Crop Made in Louisiana in 1850-51* (New Orleans: Cook, Young, & Co., 1851), Combined Harvest Database, available through Documenting Louisiana Sugar, 1845-1917, accessed at <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/louisianasugar/download> on January 16, 2013; Jill-Karen Yakubik, et. al., *Archaeological Data Recovery at Ashland-Belle Helene Plantation (16AN26), Ascension Parish, Louisiana*, Volume III: Investigations at the Sugar House (New Orleans: Earth Search, Inc., 1994), 3-22 – 3-25. For a biographical note on Champomier and his annual report, please see <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/louisianasugar/sources/champomier>, accessed on August 7, 2013

²⁴⁷ Yakubik, et. al., *Archaeological Data Recovery at Ashland-Belle Helene Plantation (16AN26)*, Volume III, 5-10, 5-46

to 1839, the period during which Duncan Kenner established himself as a large-scale sugar planter. The core of the building was 140 feet east/west by forty-five feet north/south (section A). This rectangular building contained spaces for milling, boiling, and purging cane, probably powered by a steam engine, all under one roof (Figure 2-26).²⁴⁸ Around 1846, Kenner enlarged the building to accommodate updated technologies in sugar processing; the first addition was section B, which had steam pipes embedded in the wall, suggesting that it was the site of the vacuum pan. Afterwards, Kenner added to the western end of the building (section D), possibly incorporating a preexisting purgery building into one of the wings, which each measured approximately eighty feet north/south and thirty-nine feet east/west (sections D1 and C).²⁴⁹ After Kenner's expansions, the overall length of the structure was 200 feet.²⁵⁰

After harvest, cane entered the sugarhouse in section A, on a cane carrier, a conveyor belt that moved the stalks to the mill, and rested on a frame about seven feet wide, and stood seven feet tall. A steam engine with multiple boilers powered these massive components. A letter from Duncan Kenner to his cousin and neighbor William J. Minor in 1846 describes his newly ordered mill. The size of his new machinery may have been the cause of the earliest sugarhouse expansion, which lengthened the building by sixty feet. In the letter, Kenner described his latest purchase,

²⁴⁸ Yakubik, et. al., *Archaeological Data Recovery at Ashland-Belle Helene Plantation (16AN26)*, Volume III, 5-32, 7-2

²⁴⁹ Jill-Karen Yakubik and Rosalinda Méndez, *Beyond the Great House: Archaeology at Ashland-Belle Helene Plantation* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation, and Tourism, Department of Archaeology, 1995), 12

²⁵⁰ Yakubik, et. al., *Archaeological Data Recovery at Ashland-Belle Helene Plantation (16AN26)*, Volume III, 6-2 – 6-3

“The engine for which I have contracted is of the following dimensions – 14 inches cylinder – 5 feet strokes – 3 boilers made of ¼ inch iron – 30 feet in length (sic) & 36 inches in diameter – The rollers to weigh 9 or 10,000 lbs & the mill and engine placed on iron bed plates - & that which to weigh about 52 tons – The cost to be \$7500 - \$2500 on delivery of the machinery - \$2500 March 1847 - \$2500 Jan 1848. My mill is to be made after the pattern of Leeds. I do not know for which one of your places you wish an engine – but my opinion is that of all the work I have seen done for the planters – Leeds mills and engines are the best – particularly his mills and housing – they are more substantial – more iron put in & better finished – It is true they are higher priced.”²⁵¹

Archeological investigations at the Ashland sugarhouse uncovered foundations for the steam engine that measured four and a half feet wide by twenty feet long. Based upon the size of the foundation and the information Kenner provided, the engine probably stood twenty-five feet high.²⁵² Boilers located on the southern side of the original sugarhouse structure produced steam for the engine. The closest smokestack visible in the photograph revealed the position of the boilers, which had walls three feet thick immediately above the foundation.²⁵³ Archaeological investigations revealed that the foundations for the boilers were large enough to support the thirty-foot boiler shells described in Kenner’s 1846 letter.²⁵⁴

After the mill crushed the cane, the juice collected in a tank, from which it moved into a series of heated containers, which evaporated excess liquid and concentrated the juice into thick syrup (Figure 2-27). Once thickened, the sugar maker, who was either an enslaved worker or a hired technician, added lime and strained the

²⁵¹ Duncan F. Kenner to William J. Minor, Ashland, January 22, 1846, Duncan F. Kenner Papers Box 1, Folder 1, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

²⁵² Yakubik and Méndez, *Beyond the Great House*, 13

²⁵³ Yakubik, et. al., *Archaeological Data Recovery at Ashland-Belle Helene Plantation (16AN26)*, Volume III, 5-1

²⁵⁴ Yakubik and Méndez, *Beyond the Great House*, 14

mixture, to remove impurities. Finally, the syrup moved into a vacuum pan, where the liquid boiled until crystallization occurred. Kenner used vacuum pan technology at least by 1851, as noted in the annual sugar reports made by Champomier.²⁵⁵ At Ashland, these processes took place in sections A and B of the sugarhouse. Brick foundations reveal the potential locations of the various mechanical elements, which made this process possible. Crystallized sugar then needed to cool and separate from any remaining liquid, or molasses. This process required significant square footage, as enslaved workers removed sugar from the vacuum pans and placed it into long, flat troughs in the lump room (Figure 2-28). The 1852 Ashland Plantation Record Book contained a plan of this space, which helped archaeologists determine the purpose served by section D1. After cooling, enslaved workers broke up the hardened cakes of sugar and packed it into plantation-made hogsheads, large barrels that had perforations on the bottom, to let additional molasses out. The barrels would have been stored on racks on the floor over a cistern in the purgery (section C). Once molasses fully drained from the sugar, enslaved people collected it into hogsheads in section D for shipment to the market in New Orleans.²⁵⁶ The many steps required for marketable sugar transformed sugarhouses in the late antebellum period into sites of assembly-line work, where enslaved men and women

²⁵⁵ P.A. Champomier, *Statement of the Sugar Crop Made in Louisiana in 1850-51* (New Orleans: Cook, Young, & Co., 1851), Combined Harvest Database, available through Documenting Louisiana Sugar, 1845-1917, accessed at <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/louisianasugar/download> on January 16, 2013; Yakubik, et. al., *Archaeological Data Recovery at Ashland-Belle Helene Plantation (16AN26)*, Volume III, 3-2

²⁵⁶ Yakubik and Méndez, *Beyond the Great House*, 15; Yakubik, et. al., *Archaeological Data Recovery at Ashland-Belle Helene Plantation (16AN26)*, Volume III, 5-38; W.C. Wade, Ashland Plantation Record Book, Mss. 534, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

worked in prescribed locations at specific tasks on a shift-based schedule, under constant supervision.²⁵⁷

Harvest season lasted from the middle of October until the end of the year and was the most intense period of work on the sugar plantation. During harvest, the works operated all day and all night, with enslaved people taking shifts to keep the various processes moving. Cutting the cane, transporting it to the mill, and grinding, boiling, and draining processes all had to happen in a timely manner for the production of a successful crop. Frost was a constant threat, and planters felt the need to impose intense work schedules to get as much cane cut and processed before cold weather ruined the crop. In 1852, the harvesting season began on Friday, October 15. The race against frost, the need for quick processing of the cane plants to prevent fermentation, and the reliance on many mechanized processes in the sugar works all carried the potential for crop failure. The willingness of the enslaved population to work extra shifts, at the planter's desired pace, could also determine the success or failure of the annual crop. Some masters provided extra food and drink to enslaved people during harvest season, as an incentive to work. It is unclear whether Kenner did this or not, as the plantation record book did not list the rations distributed during harvest. Kenner may have used alternate forms of enticement, such as social gatherings, to get the work he wanted from his enslaved people, but this kind of leniency was not common. To mark the beginning of the season, overseer Wade noted that he sent three wagons of enslaved people to a barbeque at New

²⁵⁷ Richard Follett, *The Sugar Masters: Planters and Slaves in Louisiana's Cane World, 1820-1860* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2007), 102-109

River plantation, a property several miles upriver from Ashland.²⁵⁸ There were no other mentions of social gatherings or special allowances made in the 1852 plantation journal.²⁵⁹

In 1851, John L. Manning wrote to his wife Sallie, noting that, “A few neighbors Trist, Kenner, Thibaut, and the two Cottmans dined with me once. They came to see some pretty plant cane and to look and the sugarhouse and engine which they pronounce the best in the state.”²⁶⁰ Unfortunately, no photographs of the sugarhouse at Riverton or Point Houmas have survived and no archaeological investigations of the building sites have been undertaken. Information about these buildings comes from correspondence between John Manning in South Carolina and his Louisiana overseers, or directly from Manning in letters back to his wife, Sallie. Plats recorded the position of the Riverton sugarhouse, located approximately six/tenths of a mile behind the residence.²⁶¹ Even though we do not know the exact dimensions of the sugarhouse at Riverton, letters from J.R. Brock back to Manning do specify the footprints of some of the other structures involved in sugar processing. In September 1840, J.R. Brock wrote John Manning about the building program he pursued in 1840. In his letter, he mentioned adding to the sugar works at Riverton, specifically a purgery that measured thirty-six by seventy-four feet, a

²⁵⁸ W.C. Wade, Ashland Plantation Record Book, Mss. 534, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

²⁵⁹ Yakubik, et. al., *Archaeological Data Recovery at Ashland-Belle Helene Plantation (16AN26)*, Volume III, 3-35

²⁶⁰ John L. Manning to Sallie Bland Clarke Manning, Houmas, March 26, 1851, WCM Papers, Folder 138, SCL, USC

²⁶¹ Distance determined using 1:66 ratio of chains to feet, estimating the sugar works at 50 chains distant from the residence. Louisiana Land Records Historical Documents Official Plats 522.02943_1 1891 Original Plat of T10S R3E SE, <https://wwwslodms.doa.la.gov/WebForms/DocumentViewer.aspx?docId=522.02943&category=H#1>, accessed 10 January 2013

skin shed, probably a trash or a bagasse shed, that measured forty by 140 feet, and a lime house that measured fifteen by forty feet.²⁶²

The late 1830s and early 1840s were periods of extensive sugarhouse renovations on the properties inherited by John S. Preston and John L. Manning. In 1839, overseer Brock wrote to Manning about the difficulties he faced in completing sugar processing without adequate space for all the processes. He wrote,

“I will soon be pressed for house room. I am now obliged for several days to haul up to the warehouse, on acct of not being able to build the purgery at Conway - I find a planter here needs much more room for sugar and without it he is very much frustrated as was my case in rebuilding the Clark sugarhouse and was finally drove to the necessity of selling a lot of sugar to make room for the masons.”²⁶³

Brock hoped to make 500 hogsheads of sugar in the 1839 processing season, but found his ambitions stymied by architectural constraints. Letters from the summer of 1839 reveal that Brock was deeply engaged with sugarhouse renovations, including a forty-foot expansion of the Conway sugarhouse and a replacement of the roof on the Clark works. Brock colorfully described his projects to Manning, claiming “I have taken the cap off of Major Clark - and when I dress him again, I will endeavor to put the uniform of a General on him as he stands in the middle of the army.”²⁶⁴ M.C. Schaffer, an overseer at the Preston and Manning properties, continued to have trouble with the Conway sugarhouse into the middle of the 1840s, reporting to Manning in 1844 that he as about “to open or

²⁶² For the sake of comparison, the perjury at Ashland measured approximately thirty-nine by eighty feet and the bagasse shed measured roughly thirty-three by 138 feet in length. J.R. Brock to John L. Manning, Donaldsonville, September 17 1840, WCM Papers (Legal), Folder 21, SCL, USC; Yakubik, et. al., *Archaeological Data Recovery at Ashland-Belle Helene Plantation (16AN26)*, Volume III, 6-4

²⁶³ J.R. Brock to John L. Manning, Donaldsonville, November 6, 1839, WCM Papers (Legal), Folder 20, SCL, USC

²⁶⁴ J.R. Brock to John L. Manning, Houmas, June 4, 1839, WCM Papers (Legal), Folder 20, SCL, USC

enlarge the Conway sugarhouse.”²⁶⁵

Since information on the dimensions and materials for the sugarhouses operated by Manning and Preston is scarce, P.A. Champomier’s annual reports on the outputs of Louisiana sugar plantations offer a way to estimate the general size of the Riverton and Point Houmas sugarhouses and the sugar processing technology they used. Using Champomier reports between 1851 and 1858, the average outputs of the Ashland, Riverton, and Point Houmas sugar works were approximately 937 hogsheads from Ashland, versus 670 from Riverton and 461 from Point Houmas.²⁶⁶ To put these numbers into perspective, the average sugar plantation in Louisiana during the antebellum period produced approximately 150 hogsheads of sugar annually.²⁶⁷ Based on this comparison, the sugarhouse at Riverton may have been a little smaller than the building at Ashland during the 1850s. The lower production at Point Houmas suggests that it had the smallest sugarhouse; not surprising for the smallest of the three properties.

²⁶⁵ M.C. Shaffer to Preston and Manning, Houmas, December 19, 1843, WCM Papers, Folder 118, SCL, USC

²⁶⁶ There were several reasons for setting the boundaries of this study between 1851 and 1858, the first being a break in available Champomier records between 1846 and 1850. During this interlude, Manning, Col. John S. Preston, and Mrs. Hampton split their interests in the property, shown by changes in the way that Champomier listed plantation owners. In reports from the 1840s, the properties that had been part of Wade Hampton I’s estate were under the shared ownership of Manning, Preston, and Mrs. Hampton. After 1850, Manning and Preston appear to have separated their interests, and the properties began were listed with either Manning or Preston as individual owners, probably the result of settling Susan Hampton Manning’s estate after her death in 1845. Missing reports from 1847, 1848, and 1849 would pinpoint more accurately when this shift occurred. The later boundary, 1858, was the final year that Ashland received an independent listing. After Kenner purchased Bowden Plantation in that year, Champomier identified the properties as a single unit. P.A. Champomier, *Statement of the Sugar Crop Made in Louisiana*, Combined Harvest Database, available through Documenting Louisiana Sugar, 1845-1917, accessed at <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/louisianasugar/download> on January 16, 2013

²⁶⁷ John Alfred Heitmann, *The Modernization of the Louisiana Sugar Industry, 1830-1910* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1987), 79 in Goodwin, *Significance Assessment of I6AN26, New River Bend Revetment*, 14

Champomier first identified sugar-making apparatuses in his 1851 report, describing the works as steam power, horse power, vacuum, or Rillieux.²⁶⁸ On the Manning sugar plantations between 1851 and 1858, Champomier listed steam power. An 1846 contract between John Manning and John Preston and the Leeds Company in New Orleans for a steam engine and sugar mill provides insight into the machinery employed in the Riverton sugarhouse. Per the contract, the engine had three, twenty-eight foot long boilers, made of quarter-inch thick iron, a fourteen-inch cylinder with a four and a half foot stroke, and the mill had rollers that were twenty-eight inches in diameter and four and a half feet long. The contract also specified an eighty-foot long cane carrier. Leeds Company was responsible for manufacturing the components and installing them in the sugarhouse, while Preston and Manning supplied the brick and timber for foundations and fastenings. The cost for the machinery was \$7750, payable in three installments.²⁶⁹ The engine and mill commissioned by Manning and Preston is very close in size and cost to the mill and engine Duncan Kenner described in his 1846 letter, another clue that the sugarhouses at Ashland and on the Manning-Preston properties were similar in size and appointment. Whereas Kenner noted that his engine and mill were based on Leeds Company designs, his machinery was produced elsewhere. Manning and Preston went to the source, contracting directly with the New Orleans firm for the best available product.

²⁶⁸ In Champomier's reports, steam power broadly referred to mechanically powered mills, while horse power indicated animal-driven mills. Champomier made notes on plantations that used sophisticated machinery for sugar processing, including the presence of vacuum pans, as at Ashland, and the presence of multiple-effect systems under the designation Rillieux. Richard Follett, "Champomier, Statement of Sugar Made in Louisiana," Documenting Louisiana Sugar, 1845-1917, accessed at <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/louisianasugar/sources/champomier> on January 16, 2013; Yakubik, et. al., *Archaeological Data Recovery at Ashland-Belle Helene Plantation (16AN26)*, Volume III, 3-22 – 3-25

²⁶⁹ Contract between John Leeds and Preston and Manning, New Orleans, January 28, 1850, WCM Papers (Legal), Folder 26, SCL, USC

The sugarhouse was the largest, and, often most expensive building on the plantation, surpassing even the great house. By the 1840s and 1850s, planters understood the architectural requirements of processing sugar and built buildings structurally and physically able to house industrial machinery. Precisely calibrated spaces insured efficient movement of the crop through the various stages of processing, and carefully selected building materials diminished the risk of catastrophic fire. The examples in this study reveal buildings that followed accepted types with consistent construction methods, materials, and footprints across properties of comparable size. Moving from the sugarhouse, the next section explores the buildings of plantation-based industries necessary to the sugarmaking process.

Ashland Plantation, week of April 11, 1852: “Harry starts making hogsheads (Figure 2-29).”²⁷⁰ In four words, Ashland overseer W.C. Wade acknowledged the industrial production needed to support the sugar-making process. Wade never described work and storage buildings in his plantation record book, but he dutifully noted the activities of the cooper’s shop, where enslaved artisans produced hogsheads, and recorded the activities of brickmaking on the property. The cooper’s shop was the site where enslaved artisans constructed hogsheads, the barrel-shaped vessels used for storing sugar and transporting it to the market. Even though very little physical information about the structure remains on the plantation landscape, records of its production from 1852 give some insight into the types of activities that happened in the space. W.C. Wade first mentioned coopers during the week of March 7, when he noted that coopers

²⁷⁰ W.C. Wade, Ashland Plantation Record Book, 1852, Mss. 534, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

were shaving staves. They spent much of the rest of the spring preparing materials, shaving staves and hoops, shaping hoops, and began making hogsheads during the week of April 11, under the supervision of an enslaved artisan named Harry. The building must have been large enough to store supplies of staves and hoops and had a heat source (for shaping the wooden components) and workbenches for the assembly of the hogsheads. Ashland's coopers made an average of twenty-seven hogsheads per week, although as the time for processing sugar cane drew nearer, production significantly increased. During the week of September 19, Ashland's coopers made forty-seven hogsheads. Based on Wade's numbers, the coopers produced 662 hogsheads in 1852, almost half of the materials needed for the 1169 hogsheads of sugar produced at the estate during that year.²⁷¹ Ashland's coopers probably worked alongside artisans in the plantation blacksmith's shop. Duncan Kenner's 1887 probate inventory listed a set of blacksmith's tools at Ashland, valued at fifteen dollars.²⁷² Archaeological excavations on the plantation uncovered a large concentration of bricks, ash, and iron hardware approximately 150 feet north of the sugarhouse, which they determined to be remains of the blacksmith's shop.²⁷³

Riverton also employed enslaved artisans in making hogsheads for the annual crop. In his 1840 letter to Manning that listed the buildings constructed under his

²⁷¹ W.C. Wade, Ashland Plantation Record Book, 1852, Mss. 534, LLMVC, LSU Libraries; P.A. Champomier, *Statement of the Sugar Crop Made in Louisiana*, Combined Harvest Database, available through Documenting Louisiana Sugar, 1845-1917, accessed at <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/louisianasugar/download> on January 16, 2013

²⁷² Inventory of Property in Ascension Parish Belonging to Duncan F. Kenner, July 22, 1887, Duncan Farrar Kenner Papers, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

²⁷³ Yakubik, et. al., *Archaeological Data Recovery at Ashland-Belle Helene Plantation (16AN26)*, Volume I, 9-66

supervision and their dimensions, J.R. Brock listed a wheel right shop, which measured thirty by 140 feet, which would have been the site for the coopers to work. In the same letter, he also mentioned the construction of a new blacksmith shop of brick that measured thirty-three by sixty feet.²⁷⁴ As early as 1840, overseer Brock mentioned Sam the cooper by name in a letter to Manning, and an 1850 letter identified an artisan named Henry.²⁷⁵ A bill of sale for a group of eleven enslaved people that Manning purchased in February 1852, recorded a man named Cuff Cooper, whose surname might indicate his skill.²⁷⁶

Plantations at the size and scale of Ashland and Riverton invested in on-site brick making, an attempt to have ready building supplies for expansion or renovation projects. A grandson of Ashland's second owner remembered brickmaking equipment near the levee at the front of the house, and claimed that this was the same location as the Ashland brick kiln.²⁷⁷ At Ashland, brick making occupied enslaved people for most of the summer. During the week of May 9, Wade recorded that enslaved people prepared the brickyard, and, during the following week, the carpenters prepared the brick machine and the process began. One man, Spencer, made 8500 bricks before 5 o'clock pm, an accomplishment that merited special notice in Wade's plantation record book. In July, Wade noted that tables were devoted to molding brick, as the bricks dried in the sun, and,

²⁷⁴ J.R. Brock to John L. Manning, Donaldsonville, September 17, 1840, WCM Papers (Legal), Folder 21, SCL, USC

²⁷⁵ J.R. Brock to John L. Manning, June 16, 1840, WCM Papers, Folder 99, SCL, USC; Brown Manning to John L. Manning, Upper Houmas, November 26, 1850, WCM Papers, Folder 137, SCL, USC

²⁷⁶ Estlin, Lee & Co. to John L. Manning, New Orleans, February 23, 1852, WCM Papers (Legal), Folder 28, SCL, USC

²⁷⁷ William Heyward to Christopher R. Goodwin, in Goodwin, *Significance Assessment of 16AN26, New River Bend Revetment*, 26.

between August 8 and 21, burned the bricks in a kiln.²⁷⁸ At Riverton, correspondence between Manning and his overseer, Thomas Butterfield, confirmed that a brick kiln was active in the 1840s, with Butterfield reporting that brick making in 1844 had been successful.²⁷⁹ Planters not only invested extensively in the physical structure of the sugarhouse, it behooved them to invest in plantation-based industries and the enslaved artisans who mastered skills of coopering, blacksmithing, and brickmaking. A shortage of hogsheads, the inability to make quick repairs to iron mechanical systems, and a dearth of bricks to address structural inadequacies or failures spelled financial disaster for planters. The following section explores the typical layout, required land maintenance, and processing structures of cotton plantations, to understand approaches required by different crops. The standardization of plantation buildings observed in this chapter becomes even more remarkable, given the vastly different needs of sugar and cotton.

In an 1846 issue of *The Cultivator*, Solon Robinson described Col. Joseph Dunbar's cotton plantation in Mississippi as a model for others to follow, citing the neatness of his buildings and his program of cultivation for special merit. The Jefferson County property had 600 acres under cotton cultivation, and Dunbar owned at least 150 enslaved people, including field workers, carpenters, blacksmiths, wagon and plow makers, and domestic servants. Despite the challenges of the hilly countryside, Dunbar's enslaved laborers cultivated approximately eight bales of cotton per worker. The only criticism in the article, which otherwise offered the property as a model to be followed by other planters, was that Dunbar did not engage fully in a system of side-hill ditching, a

²⁷⁸ W.C. Wade, Ashland Plantation Record Book, 1852, Mss. 534, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

²⁷⁹ Thomas Butterfield to John L. Manning, Houmas, June 29, 1843, WCM Papers, Folder 115, SCL, USC

plowing and land maintenance technique to prevent erosion and preserve the fertility of the soil.²⁸⁰

Robinson celebrated Dunbar's extensive livestock and corn, pea, oat, and potato crops, claiming that he produced enough pork to supply his plantation and had some left over to sell. A progressive planter, Dunbar grew high-quality pasture crops, for the benefit of his livestock and the health of his soil. The plantation had a steam-powered sawmill, which paid for itself in the lumber it could produce. Robinson praised the neat appearance of the enslaved people's houses, and noted that enslaved people ate communally, the food prepared "in a very large and neat kitchen, immediately under the eye of overseers or owner." The plantation hospital was "a large, airy, and excellent building" that served as the location of a Christmas ball and feast for the enslaved population.²⁸¹

Published after the Civil War, the Alfred R. Waud print, *Scenes on a Cotton Plantation* offered views of a typical plantation setting to a nationwide audience, thanks to its publication in Harper's in 1867 (Figure 2-30). Waud's image revealed the agricultural requirements of cotton, and prominently featured African Americans as the primary laborers on the plantation. The presence of African Americans in the print reminded viewers of the necessity of their labor to running a plantation, but very little about the daily schedule, the supervision, or the working methods of the laborers seems to have changed since abolition, despite the fact that these laborers were ostensibly

²⁸⁰ Solon Robinson, "A Mississippi Plantation," in *The Cultivator*, vol III (January, 1846), 31-32.

²⁸¹ Solon Robinson, "A Mississippi Plantation," 31-32

freedmen and women.²⁸² The print places the labor intensive tasks of people ploughing, sowing cotton seed, hoeing, and picking the bolls in the center of the composition, surrounding it with vignettes showing typical plantation buildings like the cotton gin and the press. The print revealed aspects of the plantation landscape, including the burial ground and the church building; the viewer assumes that these spaces serve the African-American community. Other vignettes show the weekly distribution of rations from the planter or overseer, images of the planter and overseer themselves, an African-American man blowing a horn to signal the start of the day, a practice held over from the days of slavery, and a dance in front of a columned house. Even though the actors in the dance vignette were African-Americans, the placement in front of the piazza of the house suggests that this dance was for the entertainment of the planter family or guests.

Sugar plantations only flourished in a small part of Louisiana, but cotton grew across the southern United States. The geographical range of the crop included vast differences in topography and climate and did not allow typical layouts to develop. Even though there was no ideal layout, cotton plantations had an ideal size. The optimal scale for a cotton estate was between 1,000 to 1,500 acres, with between seventy-five to one hundred enslaved field hands. At this size, the crop generated enough profit to invest in agricultural machinery, implements, and livestock, and a planter and an overseer could manage the property for maximum efficiency.²⁸³ Cotton cultivation was labor-intensive;

²⁸² Even though Vlach describes a Waud print of sugar plantations in Louisiana, his analysis about the presence and prominence of African-Americans in these views contain valid points for cotton plantations. John Michael Vlach, *The Planter's Prospect: Privilege and Slavery in Plantation Paintings* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 37, 39

²⁸³ Moore, *The Emergence of the Cotton Kingdom*, 17

work included ploughing the fields, sowing the seeds, hoeing, topping plants to remove weeds, caterpillars, and other pests, and finally harvesting the mature cotton bolls (Figure 2-31).

Even without a specific model, cotton plantations generally organized buildings in relationship to the means of transportation - cart, steamboat, or railroad - to maximize efficient crop movement. Even though newspaper announcements of properties for sale did not describe the full layout of the built environment, they often included inventories of the buildings on the plantation, which reestablish the plantation complex as it existed in the antebellum period. The *New-Orleans Commercial Bulletin* advertised Chaseland, a “valuable cotton plantation” for sale in September 1844. The property had 2200 acres of fertile bottom land and approximately 2000 acres of woodlands in Rapides Parish, Louisiana, with an enslaved population of one hundred people, sixty of whom were field workers. The enslaved people and cattle, mules, oxen, and hogs were included in the sale with the real estate along with all of the existing plantation buildings. The newspaper listed “an excellent Overseer’s House, Kitchen, Hospital, Stabling for 35 Horses, Corn Houses, and Mill, with comfortable new Cabins for the people; a Gin House, with two Gin Stands, and all other necessary out-buildings.” Chaseland was very close in size to the ideal plantation described above; it had 900 acres of land cleared and ready for cultivation, and “under good management,” with the labor of the sixty enslaved field hands, was projected to produce 600 bales of cotton. The terminus of the railroad, the

means by which the crop would have moved to market, was about 800 yards from the property.²⁸⁴

Cotton plantations located along rivers, as Riverside and Moro were, tended to follow lateral plans. A lateral plan organized structures along the waters edge, with agricultural and storage buildings and enslaved quarters located on the side of the great house, parallel to the water, as this schematic site plan of Magnolia Plantation in Natchitoches Parish, Louisiana makes clear (Figure 2-32).²⁸⁵ One of the characteristics of lateral plan plantations was a wide water frontage. Riverside certainly had this. In a letter to her sister shortly after Alie Austen McMurran arrived at the property stated, “Riverside is a noble place--runs along the river for two miles three quarters then back bounded by high hills.”²⁸⁶ In a letter to her father, Alie wrote about her arrival.

“Owing to the river being so low (lower than it has ever been known to be before) we had steep bank to climb. Mr. Wickwire the overseer & a number of the hands were waiting. The boat stops just in front of the cabins nice little white washed house--in a long line about twenty feet apart--and large noble trees in front the effect is very pretty, all having ‘galleries.’”²⁸⁷

Alie’s description of disembarking from the steamboat at the landing and traveling through the enslaved quarters on the way to the main house at Riverside confirms that the plantation buildings followed the bluff of the river. As on a sugar plantation, the great house had a view over the river. At Riverside, Mary Louisa McMurran described the

²⁸⁴ “A Valuable Cotton Plantation in Louisiana for Sale,” *New-Orleans Commercial Bulletin*, Saturday, September 14, 1844, Issue 240, Column A.

²⁸⁵ Bacot and Poesch, *Louisiana Buildings*, 91-92

²⁸⁶ Mrs. John T. McMurran, Jr. to Pattie Gilbert, Riverside, November 11 (1856), McMurran-Austen Family Papers, 1856, Correspondence 1:2, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

²⁸⁷ Alice Austen McMurran to George Austen, Riverside, November (1856), McMurran-Austen Family Papers, 1856, Correspondence 1:2, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

view of passing steamboats along the Mississippi that Alie would have from her house as a comfort against loneliness on the plantation.²⁸⁸

John McMurran, Sr. purchased the lower half of Moro Plantation in Concordia Parish, Louisiana in 1852, probably from a sheriff's sale after the death of the plantation's former owner. The *New Orleans Daily Picayune* published detailed advertisements for the property in late 1851 to generate interest in the sale. The advertisements outlined the plantation's 2580 26/100 acres and included the farming utensils, cattle, horses, mules, cows, hogs, sheep, smith's and carpenter's tools, wagons, carts, corn, and fodder, etc. Interestingly, the enslaved people who already lived on the property were not included in the auction. The advertisement continued, describing a

“fine, brick Dwelling House, brick Kitchen, with good out-houses, garden, cisterns, mill, gin, and frame cabins sufficient for one hundred and fifty negroes, and is one of the most desirable Plantations in this parish, 900 acres of which is under fence and in cultivation, and 460 acres may be put into cultivation in a short time, the timber having been cut off.”²⁸⁹

Clearly defining the essential elements of a Mississippi River cotton plantation as ample land, a solidly constructed main house and domestic core, and cisterns, mill, gin, and enslaved houses, the advertisement made it clear that the purchaser could easily step in and begin growing cotton immediately after the sale. The mill, and the land already cleared of timber, suggested that the plantation sawmill was already active, which potential buyers saw as another means for making profits. McMurran was able to

²⁸⁸ Mary Louisa McMurran to Mrs. John T. McMurran, Jr., Melrose, November 12, 1856, McMurran-Austen Family Papers, 1856, Correspondence 1:2, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

²⁸⁹ *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, December 23, 1851, 3; For an example of scholarship drawn from newspaper advertisements of plantation properties, please see Camille Wells, “The Planter's Prospect: Houses, Outbuildings, and Rural Landscapes in Eighteenth-Century Virginia,” *Winterthur Portfolio*, Volume 28, No. 1 (Spring 1993), 1-31.

establish his plantation network by purchasing preexisting properties. He financed upgrades and improvements, but was not responsible for the initial capital outlays to buy land and build necessary plantation buildings.

Killarney, on the shore of Lake St. John, was another cotton plantation that McMurran folded into his network. The property was not directly on the Mississippi River, and its lakeside position meant that it probably shared a “Mississippi” style layout with its nearby neighbor, Canebrake plantation (Figure 2-11).²⁹⁰ Situated between the river and the lake, the main house at Canebrake was the overseer’s house, since the owner was an absentee who lived in Natchez. The house was closest to the river, flanked by a complex of barns and outbuildings to the north and a blacksmith’s shop and a chicken house on the southern side. Two rows of quarter houses faced each other behind the front line of buildings. Six of the quarter houses remain, and evidence suggests there originally were ten, with five houses in each row.²⁹¹ Even though only the planter’s cottage at Killarney survives, and it was oriented toward the lake, the layout was probably similar.

Unlike the unremitting flatness of the sugar landscape, successful cotton plantation included hills, lowlands, and river access, as John T. McMurran, Jr.’s grandfather advised him in 1855.²⁹² The river provided transportation, the lowlands were fertile and produced cotton abundantly, and the hills had wood that could be harvested

²⁹⁰ Bacot and Poesch, *Louisiana Buildings*, 92

²⁹¹ Bacot and Poesch, *Louisiana Buildings*, 92; Elliott, Miller, and Stewart, eds., *The Natchez District*, 75-76

²⁹² Edward Turner to John T. McMurran, Jr., Franklin Place, May 4, 1855, McMurran-Austen Family Papers 1846-1855 Correspondence 1:1, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

and processed for profit. Once cleared, planters also put hilly land under cotton cultivation. Like sugar, cotton crops were sensitive to changes and challenges from the weather, especially wind and frost. John McMurran wrote his son about cultivation issues on Riverside; his letter revealed some of the challenges of cultivating cotton. He wrote,

“The prospect of the cotton crop at Riverside is anything but favorable. I was much disappointed in the old field and Kohlen’s crop generally. The bolls for a moderate crop is [sic] not on any part of it, and it seemed to be pretty much done growing. Henrys cotton, what he has left, has more on it, and is [ill.]. From the appearance of his, if he had plenty of land out of water, with all the rains, he would have made, with a favourable fall, something of a crop. But you know, he has not third land for his force, out of water, in cotton. And the swamp has been so bad, and weather, that he has cut but little wood. We have no steamboat wood whatever, to help run a short crop.”²⁹³

By the end of August 1857, John McMurran, Sr. worried about the state of the crop on his son’s plantation. Where there was plenty of land, the cotton did not develop. Where the cotton was better, there was not enough land to grow enough to turn a profit. In addition, the weather prevented enslaved people from harvesting wood, which cut off an additional source of revenue. At Moro, McMurran had to worry about the height of the river, as the property was prone to flooding. When the river ran high, the back part of Moro flooded.²⁹⁴ On that property, water damage could come from a break in the levee, but also through the more gradual rising of the river during the spring, as snowmelt from the north drained into the Mississippi. The promise of high prices and large harvests

²⁹³ John T. McMurran to John T. McMurran, Jr., August 30, 1857, McMurran-Austen Family Papers 1857 Correspondence 1:3, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

²⁹⁴ John T. McMurran to John T. McMurran, Jr., April 30, 1866, McMurran-Austen Family Papers 1865-1868 Correspondence 2:2, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

drew many to grow cotton, but it required managing many variables for success. The numerous possibilities for failure explained why planters with means purchased and developed multiple properties; it was a way for planters to avert a total crop failure if something went wrong. McMurran alludes to this in a letter to his son, writing that Vardeman at Moro only expected to make half of his anticipated crop. Better than nothing, but McMurran noted that some of the neighboring plantations around Moro expected to produce fully if the weather held.²⁹⁵ Not only was cotton production a balancing act with the weather, it was competition against your neighbors.

While cotton required some rain while it was growing, after the bolls set, rain or early frosts during harvest spelled disaster for the crop, as could windstorms sweeping across the fields that snapped the plant as it grew.²⁹⁶ Clear, warm, dry days were ideal for cotton. Early March was when planters considered laying out seeds in southwestern Mississippi, and the harvest took place in the fall, October into November. When Alie arrived at Riverside in early November 1856, 200 bales of cotton remained in the fields. By early December rain, wind, and frost destroyed the cotton bolls that remained unpicked.²⁹⁷ Clearly, the weather sometimes provided impossible obstacles to a successful cotton crop.

²⁹⁵ John T. McMurran to John T. McMurran, Jr., August 30, 1857, McMurran-Austen Family Papers 1857 Correspondence 1:3, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

²⁹⁶ Mary Louisa McMurran to John T. McMurran, Jr., Melrose, August 26, 1856, McMurran-Austen Family Papers, 1856, Correspondence 1:2, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

²⁹⁷ Mary Louisa McMurran to John T. McMurran, Jr., Melrose, March 4, 1857, McMurran-Austen Family Papers 1857 Correspondence 1:3, LLMVC, LSU Libraries; Alice Austen McMurran to George Austen, Riverside, November (1856) McMurran-Austen Family Papers, 1856, Correspondence 1:2, LLMVC, LSU Libraries; John T. McMurran to John Quitman, Natchez, December 3, 1856, Quitman papers, Z66, Box 5, folder 12, Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson, MS

The topographical variations common on cotton plantations made soil maintenance difficult. Fields supported between ten and twenty years of undiversified cotton or corn production before wearing out. Once they could not grow cash crops, old fields became pastures or bush. Erosion and the loss of productivity from over-cultivated soil nagged planters in the 1830s and 1840s; by the 1850s, many planters implemented crop rotation and changed methods of ploughing to preserve the fertility of their properties.²⁹⁸ Instead of constantly clearing new land to replace worn fields, planters began plowing horizontally on the hillsides instead of straight up and down and using surveying equipment like levels and plumb bobs to lay out their furrows at gentler inclines, to diminish the amount of topsoil carried off by heavy rains. Some planters incorporated drainage ditches at the end of the plowed rows, to prevent the furrows from overflowing.²⁹⁹ Some planted cowpeas in the cornfields during the late summer, to fix nitrogen in the soil. Even though humans consumed some of the peas, most of the crop remained in the field where horses, cows, mules, and pigs consumed the remainder of the plants. The animals' manure surely enriched the soil as well, and the presence of vines throughout the fields slowed erosion. In the 1840s and 1850s, agricultural journals like the *Southwestern Farmer* and reform-minded planter Thomas Affleck widely recommended introducing cowpea crops to cornfields to preserve and augment the soil's fertility.³⁰⁰ Interestingly enough, even though a contributor to the *American*

²⁹⁸ Moore, *The Emergence of the Cotton Kingdom*, 86-87

²⁹⁹ Moore, *The Emergence of the Cotton Kingdom*, 31-33

³⁰⁰ Thomas Affleck, *Patent Office Report, 1849: Agriculture*, 158-159; *Southwestern Farmer*, I (July 1, 1842), 132, quoted in Moore, *The Emergence of the Cotton Kingdom*, 35

Agriculturalist suggested planting grass and grain crops to prevent washouts in the cotton fields, planters rarely took this advice.³⁰¹

Planters valued fertile land and went to great lengths to get it. Alie Austen McMurren wrote to her family of the work to drain a lake and transform it into cotton land on Riverside, in Wilkinson County, Mississippi. In a letter to her sister, Alie described “the saw mill & draining machine--a building John had put up this spring--he has commenced draining the lake--if sucessful 'twil give him five hundred additional acres and rich as rich can be.”³⁰² Alie’s comments revealed the expenses her husband was willing to incur for 500 fertile acres. He invested in the draining machine, the building to house it, and the hire of the Irish ditchers to dig the necessary drains. As on Louisiana sugar plantations, ditch digging was demanding labor. The McMurrens preferred to hire this work out, preserving their own enslaved labor force for other tasks. Alie continued, “The Irish ditchers are at work--and certainly tis done beautifully tis almost a canal the main ditch five feet deep nineteen broad at the top--But certainly I did not commence this with the intent of giving a description of ditchers & ditching.”³⁰³

Despite John McMurren, Jr.’s attempts to secure profitable land for cotton cultivation, the low-lying topography of the area and dramatic storms combined to foil his plans. In 1857, John McMurren, Sr. wrote to his son about the flooded condition of his reclaimed fields, reporting,

³⁰¹ Martin W. Phillips in the *Southern Cultivator*, IV (1846), 134; quoted in Moore, *The Emergence of the Cotton Kingdom*, 35-36

³⁰² Mrs. John T. McMurren, Jr. to Pattie Gilbert, Riverside, November 11, 1856, McMurren-Austen Family Papers, 1856, Correspondence 1:2, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

³⁰³ Mrs. John T. McMurren, Jr. to Pattie Gilbert, Riverside, November 11, 1856, McMurren-Austen Family Papers, 1856, Correspondence 1:2, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

“When I say that the Lake is still full of water, that the piece of cotton ground you thought so much of in 1855, is still under water and that all the cypress stump are covered with water up to their heads or upperwards you can know fully well the state of the lower place as to water. Kohlen will have to ford the creek with what little cotton he has to hand. When you return, we can determine whether to put up another bridge or not.”³⁰⁴

Even though the pumping system that kept the drained land dry and arable could not stand up to the torrential summer rains of Wilkinson County, Mississippi, John McMurran, Sr. was unwilling to give up on the possibility of 500 productive acres of cotton. In the same letter, he encouraged his son to investigate a “Gwymil's Centrifugal pump, which I wrote you about--not that I contemplate we will be likely use it, but the information I wish to have.”³⁰⁵ Centrifugal pumps are associated with pumping mechanisms, suggesting that McMurran blamed the flooding of his son's field on faulty or underpowered machinery. In his comments, it is clear that McMurran was willing to undertake significant infrastructural investment and spend a great deal of money to procure new land. Persac recorded the lake at Riverside in the Norman's Chart of the Lower Mississippi, drawn in 1857, suggesting that, despite their best efforts, the lake remained a permanent feature in the plantation landscape (Figure 2-33).

The vast range of cotton land stretched across the southern United States prevented a typical, universal model for a cotton plantation from developing. Differences in climate and topography changed how planters organized properties. In Mississippi and northern Louisiana, reports on model properties in agricultural journals like *The*

³⁰⁴ John T. McMurran to John T. McMurran, Jr., August 30, 1857, McMurran-Austen Family Papers 1857 Correspondence 1:3, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

³⁰⁵ John T. McMurran to John T. McMurran, Jr., August 30, 1857, McMurran-Austen Family Papers 1857 Correspondence 1:3, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

Cultivator provided references for planters, but did not promote a specific formula.

Topography caused other problems, particularly with widely accepted farming methods in the 1840s. Planters used land greedily, causing significant erosion of fertile topsoils. Compounding the problem, cotton took many nutrients out of the soil. For many planters, updated ploughing techniques and crop rotation helped keep land productive, but many would go to great lengths for fresh, uncultivated land.

Sugar had a strict timeline. After enslaved people cut it, there were about twenty-four hours to process the cane before the juice began to putrefy, which prioritized the placement of the works near the center of the property, in close range of the fields. Cotton did not require quick processing, which meant that planters could build the gin and press close to the transportation infrastructure. The gin and press were as essential to cotton planters as the sugar works were to sugar cultivators. Without these machines, the cotton was worthless and immobilized on the plantation. Once harvested, enslaved people brought the cotton fibers to the gin (Figure 2-34). The cotton gin was the location of almost all processing activities on a cotton plantation. The gin itself removed seeds from the cotton fibers. Nearby, often in open space, the press packed the fibers into bales for shipment. Gins or gin stands, as they were described in the plantation advertisement, were cylinders with forty- to eighty-saws attached at one-inch intervals; sixty-saw gins predominated on cotton plantations of the late antebellum period in Mississippi. The saws combed through the cotton bolls, separating the fibers from seeds, and could produce anywhere from one and one half to twelve bales of cleaned cotton per day,

depending on the size of the gin and the speed at which it operated (Figure 2-35).³⁰⁶ Gins wore out quickly, only lasting two or three seasons, which resulted in a healthy market for replacement gins and parts. The other necessary equipment for a cotton plantation was a cotton press, which pressed the cleaned fibers into bound bales for shipping (Figure 2-36). Once cleaned, enslaved workers transported the cotton fibers into a box in a separate building. A screw-mechanism drove a piston into the box, compressing the cotton into a manageable bale, which was then wrapped, bound, and eventually loaded onto a cart, steamboat or freight train for shipment to the market (Figure 2-37). Man- or horse-power drove the screw and piston. This system had significant drawbacks: the press had to be separated from the gin because of the risks of fire, significant labor and material was wasted by transporting cotton fibers from the gin to the press, using man- and horse-power limited the bales to a capacity of 400 pounds, and the press could not be used when it rained.³⁰⁷ A shift to steam power and improvements on the screw and piston mechanism in the 1850s significantly improved the performance of presses, resulting in 600-pound cotton bales that required much less labor to produce.³⁰⁸ The costs of machinery and infrastructure, including large buildings to house the gin, the press, and potentially, grain or saw mills and tall chimney stacks reminiscent of the ones found on sugar estates, restricted the adoption of steam-powered gins and presses to the largest properties and the wealthiest planters.³⁰⁹ The gin building on Magnolia Plantation in Natchitoches Parish, one of few survivals, is a late-nineteenth century example that

³⁰⁶ Moore, *The Emergence of the Cotton Kingdom*, 57; Vlach, *Back of the Big House*, 124-125

³⁰⁷ Moore, *The Emergence of the Cotton Kingdom*, 64

³⁰⁸ Moore, *The Emergence of the Cotton Kingdom*, 64

³⁰⁹ Moore, *The Emergence of the Cotton Kingdom*, 69-71

gives a sense of the scale, materials, and presence on the landscape of these buildings (Figure 2-38).³¹⁰ The structure is timber-frame, covered by clapboards, and supported by brick piers. The footprint of the building is thirty-seven feet by eighty-five feet, or 3,145 square feet. The gin building on Magnolia has a high gable roof, originally covered by shingles. The roof continues to a ten-foot overhang, supported by wooden posts, possibly to provide a sheltered area to store harvested cotton before going through the gin.³¹¹ The size of a gin house depended upon the size of the plantation and the source of power used to run the gins and press. Animal powered gins could be much smaller, especially since many planters who used steam engines made those machines also power sawmills, corn mills, and other plantation necessities. When steam engines performed double or triple duties, the housing structures became much larger.³¹²

Cotton gin structures on Riverside, Moro, and Killarney are long demolished, but evidence of the buildings' size, materials, and appointments still exists. On Riverside, already a productive cotton plantation before John and Alie McMurran made it their residence in 1856, the gin was already in place. In a letter from November 1856, Alie mentioned that nearly 200 bales of cotton still needed harvesting and that she would be able to observe the process of ginning cotton.³¹³ John and Alie McMurran did not rebuild or replace the gin at Riverside, but repaired it frequently. While traveling, John

³¹⁰ Historic American Engineering Record, "Magnolia Plantation, Cotton Gins and Presses," HAER No. LA-11, 5, available at <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/pnp/habshaer/la/la0400/la0404/data/la0404data.pdf>, accessed February 6, 2013

³¹¹ Bacot and Poesch, *Louisiana Buildings*, 170

³¹² Historic American Engineering Record, "Magnolia Plantation, Cotton Gins and Presses," HAER No. LA-11, 5, available at <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/pnp/habshaer/la/la0400/la0404/data/la0404data.pdf>, accessed February 6, 2013

³¹³ Alice Austen McMurran to George Austen, Riverside, November (1856), McMurran-Austen Family Papers, 1856, Correspondence 1:2, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

McMurren Jr. received a letter from his father, who described plantation maintenance planned “after Mr. Henry attends to bracing the gin building which is indispensable.”³¹⁴ John T. McMurren, Sr. clearly prioritized the work on his son’s property, addressing structural issues in the gin building before allowing work to proceed on the main house at Riverside. Necessary repairs to gin buildings seem to have been a common feature of cotton plantation life. In August 1869, a receipt noted a ten-dollar payment to Joseph Costello, an artisan, for work on the gin.³¹⁵ Riverside also had a sawmill and an apparatus to drain water from a lake on the property, both powered by steam engines. With these other mechanical requirements in place, Riverside probably had a steam engine to power the gin.

At Moro, serving the McMurren’s half of the total 2580-acre plantation, the gin was forty-two feet by seventy-five feet, 3,150 square feet on a single story, almost the same size as the example from Magnolia Plantation. At Moro, instead of the overhanging gable roof, there were two sheds, each seventy-five feet long by twelve feet wide, to protect raw materials and farming equipment from the elements. The sheds also probably protected finished bales of cotton from the weather and were the storage site until the crop shipped to the market. The gin at Moro was as tall as the one at Magnolia, and had three gin stands that used horses rather than steam power.³¹⁶ At Killarney, an 1858 map of the property shows the location of the gin, close to the shores of Lake St. John and a

³¹⁴ John T. McMurren to John T. McMurren, Jr., August 30, 1857, McMurren-Austen Family Papers 1857 Correspondence 1:3, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

³¹⁵ McMurren and Permenter, Riverside and Langside Plantations in account with Mary Louisa McMurren, Executrix, 1869, McMurren, John T. Papers, S:121, Box 1, Volume 1, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

³¹⁶ Specifications of the Gin at Moro Plantation, McMurren Collection, SC 81-11, Box 1, August – November 1868, SCL, ULM

few hundred yards from the house (Figure 2-39). In acreage, Riverside and Moro were almost the same size, and probably had similarly appointed cotton gins. Killarney was smaller, approximately 1300 acres, and probably had a slightly smaller gin.

Landscapes of cotton plantations varied widely, but gins and presses on plantations standardized in the 1840s and 1850s. Planters learned how to match the size of the gin to the size of the property, and the construction methods and materials for these buildings became almost universal across the cotton growing south. With presses, technology developed engines to drive presses with more power, creating tighter and denser bales. Based on existing evidence, though, it does not appear that many planters in the 1840s and 1850s invested in steam-powered press engines, continuing to use animal power to drive the screws. Maybe the market for cotton was strong enough in the 1840s and 1850s that planters did not need the extra weight. It is possible that, having invested in livestock to drive the press, and enslaved people to drive the stock, they wanted to keep these labor-intensive tasks.

Landscapes of Slavery

Scholars have identified numerous ways that enslaved people experienced the plantation landscape differently from planters.³¹⁷ As plantation landscapes standardized,

³¹⁷ For further scholarship, please consult the following resources: Rebecca Ginsburg, “Escaping through a Black Landscape,” in Ellis and Ginsburg, eds., *Cabin, Quarter, Plantation: Architecture and Landscapes of North American Slavery* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2010), 51-66; Rhys Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia, 1740 - 1790* (Chapel Hill: Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture; University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 52-57; Dell Upton, “Black and White Landscapes in Eighteenth-Century Virginia,” reprinted in Ellis and Ginsburg, eds., *Cabin, Quarter, Plantation: Architecture and Landscapes of Nineteenth-Century Slavery* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2010) 121-140; Clifton Ellis, “The Mansion House at Berry Hill Plantation: Architecture and the

many enslaved people looked for opportunities to thwart planter efforts to increase supervision and control over their lives. In one example, M.C. Shaffer, an overseer for John Manning, reported that he wanted to develop a list of enslaved people on the plantation by name. What Shaffer did not realize, and what ultimately thwarted his efforts, was that enslaved people used different names within the community, names that the planter and overseer did not recognize.³¹⁸ Another powerful tool for enslaved people was their ability to utilize edges of the plantation landscape as a place for socializing, gathering, and escape. Although very little evidence for the ways that enslaved people used the landscape has survived in the written records for the Ashland and Millford networks, passing comments and asides in the writings of plantation owners and overseers hint at life outside of the plantation boundaries.

Even within quarters, fences, ditches, pig pens, and chicken houses served to differentiate one household from another as evidence of independent ownership. A row of postholes directly east of one of the excavated cabin sites at Ashland may have been a chicken house, representing a domestic activity of enslaved people. Many planters encouraged enslaved people to keep gardens and raise poultry and hogs to supplement the weekly rations distributed from plantation supplies. In the Ashland plantation journal, overseer Wade religiously noted every Sunday that he “gave out allowance of pork.” Irregularly throughout the year, enslaved people received molasses in addition to the

Changing Nature of Slavery in Antebellum Virginia,” *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture*, Vol. 13, No. 1 (2006), pp. 22-48; Anthony Kaye, *Joining Places: Slave Neighborhoods in the Old South*, especially Chapter 3: Divisions of Labor (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 83-118.

³¹⁸ M.C. Shaffer to Preston and Manning, Houmas, December 19, 1843, WCM Papers, Folder 118, SCL, USC; M.C. Shaffer to Preston and Manning, Houmas, December 26, 1843, WCM Papers, Folder 118, SCL, USC; M.C. Shaffer to Preston and Manning, Houmas, January 3, 1844, WCM Papers, Folder 119, SCL, USC

meat.³¹⁹ The author of the fragmentary, 1854 plantation journal described an account book for enslaved people's corn and wood allotments.³²⁰ People must have augmented their diets by growing vegetables, raising animals, and hunting, possibly in small gardens near their houses.³²¹ On Ashland, enslaved people cultivated corn, peas, and sweet potatoes. Of these crops, enslaved people had access to the corn and took their portion after most of the crop had been gathered. On a Sunday (usually a day of rest) in 1852, Wade recorded that the enslaved people "gathered their corn, made a large crop."³²²

Alexander Kenner was the son of an enslaved woman and Kenner's brother George. In testimony to the Freedmen's Bureau, Alexander Kenner reported that Duncan Kenner "obliged" the enslaved community to sell poultry to him. Kenner's purchased poultry at twenty cents per pair of birds; he subsequently resold the animals to "hucksters," the very people he disallowed members of the enslaved population from selling to individually, for thirty cents per pair, making a ten cent profit on every exchange. Duncan Kenner wanted to know how much money his enslaved people had and to prevent them from having "too much." Alexander Kenner described the gardens cultivated at night by enslaved people as a means to make money for fancy clothing, tea, and other domestic comforts. Alexander Kenner's testimony included evidence that

³¹⁹ W.C. Wade, Ashland Plantation Record Book, Mss. 534, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

³²⁰ *The Daily Record of Passing Events*, 1854, Ashland Plantation, fragmentary record found in the back of W.C. Wade, Ashland Plantation Record Book, Mss. 534, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

³²¹ Resources on the gardens of enslaved people in the United States include the following: Barbara Heath, "Space and Place within Plantation Quarters in Virginia, 1700-1825" in *Cabin, Quarter, Plantation*, 156-176; Barbara J. Heath and Amber Bennett, "'The Little Spots Allow'd Them: The Archaeological Study of African-American Yards,'" *Historical Archaeology* 34, no.2 (2001), 38-55; Ywone D. Edwards, "'Trash' Revisited: A Comparative Approach to Historical Descriptions and Archaeological Analyses of Slave Houses and Yards," in *Keep Your Head to the Sky: Interpreting African-American Home Ground*, ed. Grey Gundaker (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1998), 245-271

³²² W.C. Wade, Ashland Plantation Record Book, Mss. 534, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

enslaved people with special skills moved around the countryside, employing their talents among various enslaved communities. Alexander Kenner could count; he traveled to visit a man on a neighboring plantation with over 500 silver dollars. The man knew his inventory by sight, but wanted Alexander Kenner to give him a definite number.³²³ This vignette suggests connections between enslaved people that existed outside of the planters' realm of supervision, forged across the landscape as people traveled from plantation to plantation.

No plantation journals from the Melrose network have survived, and specifics about the weekly rations for enslaved people are not known. After the Civil War, account books show regular orders for corn, pork, and molasses used at Moro.³²⁴ Even though McMurren grew corn at Moro before the war, there probably was a precedent to purchase supplies if the crop failed. Corn, pork, and molasses were the usual foods distributed to enslaved people, with additional nutrition supplied from plantation gardens, secondary crops, or cultivated by enslaved individuals for personal use. Many planters encouraged enslaved people to grow vegetables and raise poultry and pigs, often purchasing extra food from the enslaved community. As much as planters valued the land as the source of their moneymaking crops, enslaved people also valued the land as a source to amass money and goods. Many enslaved people sold surplus fruits, vegetables,

³²³ Alexander Kenner in John W. Blassingame, ed., *Slave Testimony: Two Centuries of Letters, Speeches, Interviews, and Autobiographies* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1977), 393

³²⁴ McMurren and Permenter (Moro Plantation) in account with John T. McMurren, 1864, McMurren, John T. Papers, S:121, Box 1, Volume 1, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

poultry, or pork to plantation owners or residents of Mississippi cities and towns, and were able to save considerable money through this practice.³²⁵

At Riverside, the houses were close together (only twenty feet in between), leaving not much room for enslaved people to cultivate gardens in their house yards. One solution was a dedicated garden to grow food for the enslaved community as a whole. Mary Louisa McMurran wrote to her son, “I was glad, too, to learn Herring had planted a garden, of which the negroes would have the benefit. In my estimation, it is all important to vary their food with vegetables; it is conducive to health as well as cheerfulness, and this latter is as essential in getting work from them as the former.”³²⁶ That Herring, the overseer, started the garden, and it was for the enslaved people, suggests it was large and that the enslaved people shared the crops. Perhaps Riverside had a cookhouse and the enslaved community ate their meals together. Enslaved people did cultivate some crops for themselves. When Alie first arrived at Riverside, the enslaved community welcomed her with gifts of pecans that they grew and harvested.³²⁷ At Melrose, the McMurrans benefitted from fruit crops grown on the contributing plantations. In July 1857, Mary Louisa McMurran reported her enslaved domestic workers’ activities canning peaches from Moro and Killarney and getting nectarines from Moro.³²⁸ Crops from the contributing plantations

³²⁵ Moore, *The Emergence of the Cotton Kingdom*, 99

³²⁶ Mary Louisa McMurran to John T. McMurran, Jr., Melrose, March 4, 1857, McMurran-Austen Family Papers 1857 Correspondence 1:3, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

³²⁷ Alice Austen McMurran to George Austen, Riverside, November (1856), McMurran-Austen Family Papers, 1856, Correspondence 1:2, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

³²⁸ Mary Louisa McMurran to John T. McMurran, Jr., Melrose, July 17, 1857, McMurran-Austen Family Papers 1857 Correspondence 1:3, LLMVC, LSU Libraries; Mary Louisa McMurran to Mrs. John T. McMurran, Jr., Melrose, July 20, 1857, McMurran-Austen Family Papers 1857 Correspondence 1:3, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

were perks enjoyed by the residents of the hub, who probably did not pay enslaved people market value for the food they produced.

The landscape outside the cane fields was a site of work, but also a place for escape.³²⁹ At Ashland, cutting and hauling wood from the surrounding forests and swamps was a nearly year-round activity, and often required large numbers of enslaved workers to do the work. Sometimes groups of twenty-eight, thirty men went to cut and haul, and at times, the entire male workforce went into the woods. The experience of working in the forested areas familiarized enslaved people with their landscape, and assisted them in efforts to run away. There are few discussions of runaway enslaved people in overseers' report books. At Ashland in 1852, there was only one, when George Bricks ran off on Monday, May 24. Wade did not record any other information or when (or if) Bricks returned.³³⁰ Bricks undoubtedly escaped into the forest, the swamps, or traveled by river to get away from the plantation. Another man, named Madison Runaway, appeared on the 1858 inventory of enslaved people at Ashland. His name was listed in the same section that noted enslaved people with occupations (i.e. driver, cooper, blacksmith, gardener, stable); possibly his designation revealed a habit of leaving the plantation.³³¹

³²⁹ In this chapter, I have chosen to discuss enslaved housing as elements of the planter's landscape, rather than the enslaved. Doubtless, houses became important parts of the enslaved landscape through use and habitation, but the layout and construction of these spaces began as elements of planter control. Ginsburg, "Escaping through a Black Landscape" in *Cabin, Quarter, Plantation*, 54-58; Dell Upton, "White and Black Landscapes in Eighteenth Century Virginia" in *Cabin, Quarter, Plantation*, 127

³³⁰ Week of May 23, 1852, W.C. Wade, Ashland Plantation Record Book, Mss. 534, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

³³¹ Ashland Plantation Journal, 1854-1859, MSS 410, Williams Research Center, Historic New Orleans Collection, New Orleans (hereafter cited as HNOC)

Overseer Brock at Riverton confirmed the likelihood that enslaved people utilized the wildness of the uncultivated landscape and waterways as a means for escape. In 1839, Brock wrote Manning “I have two boys in the woods Nat and Jim Miller.” In the same letter, Brock described his troubles with Harrison, whom he had tracked down and arrested. After threatening another enslaved person with a knife, Harrison made it to another plantation, where he was apprehended (but only after reaching to draw his knife on the overseer.) Brock punished Harrison terribly by “ironing him, which I think is the severest punishment I can inflict.”³³² In January 1853, Manning placed an advertisement in the *New Orleans Daily Picayune* for Middleton, a twenty-eight year old, runaway enslaved man thought to be working in New Orleans on the levee. The newspaper noted that he left Manning’s plantation in Ascension Parish in August 1851, sixteen months before.³³³ Both the length of his absence from the plantation and his ability to find work were unusual. Existing records offer little information about enslaved people escaping plantations. In fleeing the plantation, often utilizing the woods as shelter, enslaved people recognized and celebrated the boundary landscapes of uncultivated plantation areas as locations of freedom, even if temporary.

For residents of cotton properties, as on sugar plantations, the wider landscape was not only a source of potential revenue, but also a possible avenue of escape, even if temporary. Enslaved people who escaped from their plantations took advantage of the more varied topography of the cotton landscape; the hills and valleys offered good hiding places, and the heavily settled plantation landscape offered many potential friends or

³³² J.R. Brock to John L. Manning, Houmas, June 4, 1839, WCM Papers (Legal), Folder 20, SCL, USC

³³³ *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, January 17, 1853

family members to assist with food or supplies. Enslaved people used uncultivated edges of fields, waterways, and swamps as fluid boundaries between planter-driven work and the possibilities of even temporary freedom. Frustratingly few reports about enslaved people leaving cotton plantations survive. In late 1852, McMurran paid McAlester for “expenses after runaways.”³³⁴ While unspecified, the expenses may have been payment to track someone down, or bail to get someone out of jail, or room and board for someone who had been captured and held. In this case, the account book did not record the escaped person’s name. In 1853, McMurran paid Jos. Bradley for apprehending an enslaved man named William and putting him in jail. William made it to Homochitto, a river that emptied into the Mississippi between Natchez and Woodville. McMurran also had to pay J. Seymour for searching for runaways, which suggests that there may have been more than one, and for bringing William back to Moro.³³⁵ These accounts reveal both the lengths and the expenses owners would go to find and retrieve enslaved people who left the plantation without authorization. They also reveal an enslaved person’s knowledge of the geography, ability to successfully move through it, ability to evade capture long enough to require someone hired to find them, and willingness to taste freedom, even if only for a brief period. There are no other discussions of plantation escapes or desertions in the existing records, at least not of this magnitude, but William’s experiences doubtless became popular tales in Moro’s enslaved community.

³³⁴ Administrator’s Record of Accounts, Moro Plantation, 1852-1853, McMurran John T. Papers Box 1, Volume 1, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

³³⁵ Administrator’s Record of Accounts, Moro Plantation, 1852-1853, McMurran John T. Papers Box 1, Volume 1, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

Not only was the wild landscape outside of the cane fields a place for physical escape, it also offered possibilities for spiritual expression and community rituals. John Antrobus, an itinerant painter originally from England, arrived in America in 1850, ambitious to paint a series of twelve works, exploring “southern life and nature.”³³⁶ The only surviving work is *Plantation Burial*, a scene of enslaved people gathering for a funeral in a deeply secluded, heavily wooded place (Figure 2-40). The inspiration for the work was a gathering on a cotton plantation in northern Louisiana. Antrobus’ decision to keep the enslaved people front and center as the subjects of the work made the painting a picturesque, but representative view of ways enslaved people used boundary areas and made them special, or even sacred. The planter and his wife and the painter and his horse are included in the vignette, but they are shoved into the extreme sides of the composition, reinforcing the idea that they were not important, or even part, of the action happening at the center.³³⁷ Enslaved people used the landscape to conduct rituals out of the planter or overseer’s purview; Antrobus was successful in showing “southern life and nature.” Throughout the records for the Melrose, Ashland, and Millford networks, there was only one mention of the burial practices of enslaved people. A domestic enslaved woman named Laura died at Melrose in 1844; her burial was in a cemetery provided by the McMurrans on the property.³³⁸ For everyone else, no discussion of burial practices or

³³⁶ “A Fine Picture,” *New Orleans Daily Crescent*, January 26, 1859, quoted in Roberta Sokolitz, “Picturing the Plantation,” *Landscape of Slavery: The Plantation in American Art*, Angela Mack and Stephen Hoffius, eds. (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2008), 51

³³⁷ Roberta Sokolitz, “Picturing the Plantation,” 52

³³⁸ Eliza Quitman to John Quitman, Monmouth, May 12, 1844, Quitman Papers, Subseries 1.1, Folder 36, SHC, UNC

rituals has survived, which suggests that many of these events occurred without the overseers or planters taking much notice.

Many enslaved people turned to the woods surrounding plantations for gatherings, meetings, and parties forbidden by planters. For religious services and rituals, enslaved people built brush arbors, temporary shelters of logs and branches (Figure 2-41).

Enslaved people usually organized, lead, and attended meetings that took place under brush arbors, out of range of the planters' control.³³⁹ Naturally, planters tried to put a stop to enslaved people meeting and worshiping independently. John L. Manning hired W.E. Phillips as a planter-approved preacher on his plantations in Louisiana. Phillips also worked for Manning's brother-in-law, John S. Preston. Phillips bragged to Manning that the enslaved people at Point Houmas attended his services regularly, and were orderly, well dressed, and receptive to his teachings, resulting from specific instructions given to the enslaved community by Mr. Drake, the overseer. Phillips faced a greater challenge

“With Col. Preston’s people I shall have much to contend against that I have not found among yours, the fruits of their “negro preaching” and ill-advised courses. However, I do not despair of being able to do them some good, or at least to disabuse them of some of their absurd notions of religion.”³⁴⁰

Enslaved people on Preston's plantations independently sought religious fulfillment, probably in meetings under brush arbors in the back woods and swamps. This activity threatened planters' sense of social control over their enslaved communities. Planters

³³⁹ Charles L. Perdue, Jr., Thomas E. Barden, Robert K. Phillips, eds., *Weevils in the Wheat: Interviews with Virginia Ex-Slaves* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1992), 124-125

³⁴⁰ W.E. Phillips to JLM, Donaldsonville, July 31, 1856, WCM Papers Folder 156, SCL, USC

like Manning responded by engaging someone to minister specifically to enslaved people, preaching a version of Christianity that emphasized servitude and submission to authority.

Conclusion

After extensive discussion of emerging homogeneity of buildings on sugar and cotton plantation complexes in Mississippi and Louisiana during the late antebellum period, it seems clear that buildings like sugarhouses, cotton gins and presses, barns, corncribs, sawmills, and even houses for enslaved people adhered to accepted conventions shared by most plantation owners and managers. The surviving photograph of the sugarhouse at Ashland resembled Persac's painting of Riverlake sugarhouse; the two buildings appear similar in size, material, and organization (Figures 2-24 and 2-25). Whether viewed in person, or in two-dimensional format, this was a familiar building form to most contemporary observers. Furthermore, the size, the number of smokestacks, and the architectural details like the parapet walls communicated that these buildings served large plantations. The annual reports of sugar production by Champomier were a powerful force to shape people's perceptions of sugarhouses. By listing the plantation, the sugar making apparatus, and the annual output of the property, anyone could see how wealth and size related to property and apparatus. Champomier's annual reports clearly showed how improvements in technology allowed some planters to dominate the market and contributed towards a homogenization of the sugar works. Groups of houses for enslaved people matched representations of houses in prints and paintings; almost every plantation had a line of regularly spaced houses of equal size, usually timber framed and

lifted from the ground by brick piers, situated for surveillance and access to fields and processing infrastructure. Advertisements of plantations for sale revealed many similarities between properties, for example the newspaper notices of sales of Chaseland in 1844 and Moro in 1852. Whether these plantations actually had similar buildings is one question; the descriptions of the properties, buildings, and accoutrements met all the points of a calibrated sales pitch to woo potential buyers.

Of course, all plantations had variations. At Ashland, Kenner did not invest in the most advanced sugar processing technology, relying on a single vacuum pan, when others, including his neighbor Trist at Bowden, invested in Rillieux systems. At Ashland, the double cabins averaged twenty by forty feet, which gave each family 400 square feet of living space. The double cabins at Evergreen, a contemporary plantation of similar size to Ashland in St. John the Baptist Parish, were fifteen by thirty-two feet, resulting in a significantly smaller 240 square foot housing unit. The larger point is that by the late antebellum period, “typical” or “expected” types and sizes of buildings had developed. The differences in plantations resulted from individuals’ decisions about how to allocate resources in terms of building programs, technology investments, or infrastructure improvements. Circumstances like family situations, availability of credit, the status of the crop, successful sales, and the weather deeply influenced individual planters. Even though variations existed, they were slight – a more square feet here, a more support buildings there, persistence of older technology or adaption of new ways of working. Large plantation complexes were not only highly industrialized by the 1840s and 1850s, they were largely homogenized, at least in the areas studied in this project. The benefit of

homogenization for modern scholars is that equally sized plantations probably had sets of similar buildings, which allows for carefully researched interpretations of long vanished plantation landscapes.

The emergence of uniform buildings and landscapes across plantation complexes allowed properties within a single network to share resources. At the simplest level, properties within plantation networks shared enslaved people. John Manning relied upon his family's plantation network to shift enslaved people from a property that belonged to his mother in Alabama to his sugar plantations in Louisiana. In January 1839, he arranged for twenty-two enslaved people to move from Alabama to Louisiana. This was an expensive and time-consuming endeavor, as it cost three to four dollars per person to move people from the plantation to Mobile, and additional fares for New Orleans and to the plantation. The people also required a permit from the Custom's House for legal passage to Louisiana.³⁴¹ Frustratingly little else is known; was this the entire enslaved population in Alabama, or did friends and family members had to separate? The people from Alabama joined a preexisting community on the sugar plantations; no one recorded whether the assimilation was smooth or contentious. In March 1858, John T. McMurren wrote his son about a group of ten enslaved people that he wanted shipped from Riverside to Moro for the year. The group included three couples, Cyrus and Phebe, Lige and Maria, and Frank and Sallie, as well as Lawrence, Maria, Mary Slaughter, and Ginny. No children were on the list, which meant they did not accompany their parents or these people did not have children. McMurren arranged for the *Princess* to transport the people

³⁴¹ John Tarlton to John L. Manning, Mobile, January 4, 1839, WCM Papers, Folder 83, SCL, USC

from Riverside. He made a telling command/request, “I suppose you will inform them that it is for the year for want of land at home.”³⁴² Evidently, enslaved people did not want to leave their families and friends, even for another plantation within the same network. A year earlier, in March 1857, Mary Louisa McMurran wrote her son, acknowledging “I know you must have been greatly annoyed in making those changes amongst the negroes – it is one of their strong traits – love of the old locale – or dislike to leave a place they have long lived in, even if it is for their own benefit.”³⁴³ Clearly, the people asked to uproot their lives did not see the benefit of even a temporary move away from their homes. The practice of sharing enslaved people between plantations was beneficial to planters, as it allowed them to maximize the productivity of their enslaved community, but it caused disturbances among the workers.

McMurran had another request that revealed how properties within a network shared access to enslaved people with specialized skills. In 1858, McMurran asked his son to send Dixon, an enslaved carpenter, up to Melrose with his tool chest and some clothes, indicating that it might be an extended trip. For Dixon, McMurran asked his son to prepare a pass, which allowed the enslaved man to travel unmolested.³⁴⁴ Clearly, Dixon had skills that McMurran wanted to use at Melrose and other plantations in his network and, as a resident of the plantation network, could expect to be called for projects elsewhere.

³⁴² John T. McMurran to John T. McMurran Jr., Natchez, March 9, 1858, McMurran-Austen Papers 1858 Correspondence 1:4, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

³⁴³ Mary Louisa McMurran to John T. McMurran, Jr., Melrose, March 4, 1857, McMurran-Austen Papers 1857 Correspondence 1:3, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

³⁴⁴ John T. McMurran to John T. McMurran Jr., Natchez, March 9, 1858, McMurran-Austen Papers 1858 Correspondence 1:4, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

Plantations shared buildings as well as people. When Duncan Kenner purchased neighboring Bowden Plantation in 1858, he shifted all or most of his sugar processing to the Bowden sugarhouse. Bowden had more advanced processing machinery than Ashland. As early as 1851, Champomier listed Bowden as a plantation with a Rillieux apparatus, meaning a multiple pan evaporation system. Bowden was a smaller property than Ashland, but with its sophisticated sugarhouse, consistently produced about two-thirds the annual output of the larger property.³⁴⁵ With his purchase, Kenner took advantage of the more advanced technology to process sugar from across his plantation network. In 1839, James Brock, Manning's overseer on at Riverton reported having to spread out some of the granulation processes into buildings on the neighboring plantations. He wrote,

“I will soon be pressed for house room. I am now obliged for several days to haul up to the warehouse, on acct of not being able to build the pergery at Conway - I find a planter here needs much more room for sugar and without it he is very much frustrated as was my case in rebuilding the Clark sugar house and was finally drove to the necessity of selling a lot of sugar to make room for the masons.”³⁴⁶

In this letter, written during his first sugar harvesting and processing season, Brock seemed unprepared for the crop's requirements. Fortunately, the adjoining plantations, Donaldson Place, Clark Place, and Conway Place, were part of Wade Hampton I's Houmas property, run by Manning's brother in law, John S. Preston.

³⁴⁵ P.A. Champomier, *Statement of the Sugar Crop Made in Louisiana*, Combined Harvest Database, available through Documenting Louisiana Sugar, 1845-1917, accessed at <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/louisianasugar/download> on January 16, 2013

³⁴⁶ J.R. Brock to John L. Manning, November 6, 1839, WCM Papers (Legal), Folder 20, SCL, USC

Manning and Preston's arrangement reveals yet another level of sharing resources within a plantation network. It seems that until a certain point in the late 1840s, Manning and Preston shared management of the properties in Wade Hampton's Louisiana land holdings. The 1840 US Census in Ascension Parish listed Preston as a resident of the parish with a total of 666 enslaved people. By 1850, the Slave Schedule for Ascension Parish listed Manning as the owner of three entities of enslaved people, in groups of 162, 168, and twenty-two, a total population of 352 enslaved people on his Louisiana properties.³⁴⁷ With growth of the enslaved population expected by adding new workers and natural increase, it seems that Manning's 352 people in 1850 were probably about half of the 666 people listed under Preston in 1840. During the 1840s, Champomier listed Point Houmas, Riverton, and the three properties that Preston eventually managed either under Preston's name, in the 1845 report, or as Preston & Manning & Mrs. Hampton, in the 1846 list.³⁴⁸ Records from 1847, 1848, and 1849 have not survived, but by 1850, Champomier listed Manning as the proprietor of two properties, and Preston as the owner of the remaining three. Furthermore, overseer M.C. Shaffer, in his reports from the mid-1840s, wrote to both Preston and Manning, addressing his letters to "Gentlemen," rather than to individuals.³⁴⁹ Preston and Manning clearly determined a

³⁴⁷ United States Census 1840, Population Schedule, Ascension Parish, Louisiana; United States Census 1850, Slave Schedule, Ascension Parish, Louisiana

³⁴⁸ P.A. Champomier, *Statement of the Sugar Crop Made in Louisiana*, Combined Harvest Database, available through Documenting Louisiana Sugar, 1845-1917, accessed at <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/louisianasugar/download> on January 16, 2013

³⁴⁹ M.C. Shaffer to Preston and Manning, Houmas, December 15, 1843, WCM Papers, Folder 118, SCL, USC; M.C. Shaffer to Preston and Manning, Houmas, December 19, 1843, WCM Papers, Folder 118, SCL, USC; M.C. Shaffer to Preston and Manning, Houmas, December 26, 1843, WCM Papers, Folder 118, SCL, USC; M.C. Shaffer to Preston and Manning, Houmas, January 24, 1844, WCM Papers (Legal), Folder 24, SCL, USC; M.C. Shaffer to Preston and Manning, Houmas, January 31, 1844, WCM Papers (Legal), Folder 24, SCL, USC

way to subdivide the enormous property, with their interests and ownership legally bound together. Preston and Manning must have formally divided the properties, which came to both of them as inheritance through marriage to Caroline and Susan Hampton, respectively, daughters of Wade Hampton 1. When Susan Hampton Manning died in 1845, John Manning must have formally separated his interests from his brother-in-law.³⁵⁰

If plantations in networks were mutually dependent upon shared resources, the persistent notion of plantation self-sufficiency has yet another challenge. Even though Eugene Genovese documented large expenditures for plantation supplies and artisanal skills as early as 1962, arguing that plantations required goods and services from elsewhere to succeed, the self-sufficiency myth has had remarkable staying power in the public consciousness.³⁵¹ Plantation networks that shared enslaved people from one property to another, shared sugarhouses, and even shared management reveal just how impossible it would have been to have a self-sufficient plantation property in Mississippi

³⁵⁰ When Susan Hampton Manning died in 1845, John Manning must have formally separated his interests from his brother-in-law. In November 1847, Manning was the only bidder at a sheriff's sale for Point Houmas plantation; he paid \$4500 for the property and its enslaved residents. The ridiculously low price, that he was the only bidder, suggests that this was a formality, allowing John Manning to claim ownership of the property without any possibility of legal questions. Even though documentation has not survived, Manning may have pursued a similar path for Riverton. John H. Ilsley to John L. Manning, Donaldsonville, December 6, 1847, WCM Papers, Folder 129, SCL, USC

³⁵¹ For the strength of the myth of plantation sustainability and self-sufficiency, see the Wikipedia entry for "Plantation Complexes in the Southeastern United States," which cites a 1950 publication on slavery in Alabama as the source of the following statement, "Southern plantations were generally self-sufficient settlements that relied on the forced labor of slaves, similar to the way that a medieval manorial estate relied upon the forced labor of serfs." Similar language appears in an online lesson plan about Southern Plantations for an early American History class. Please see http://www.watertown.k12.ma.us/cunniff/americanhistorycentral/06lifeinbcolonies/A_Southern_Pla.html, accessed February 4, 2013. While not scholarly, these examples prove how pervasive the idea has come to be. For an alternate view, please see Eugene D. Genovese, "The Significance of the Slave Plantation for Southern Economic Development," *The Journal of Southern History*, Vol. 28, No. 4 (Nov., 1962), 427

and Louisiana during the decades before the Civil War. Most planters were pragmatic, profit-driven agriculturalists; for people like this, sharing available resources was the only logical course of action for successful plantation management. The existence of plantation networks influenced all elements of life on a plantation, including construction programs, crop production, and the purchase and sale of enslaved people. The presence of a plantation network altered how planters managed and developed their contributing properties; in so doing, networks were active forces in shaping the plantation landscape.

Building Houses and Landscapes

Soon after his marriage to Susan Hampton in 1838, flush with profits from the extensive sugar plantations she inherited in Louisiana, Manning began construction of a mansion house in South Carolina on land inherited from his father and near the plantations of his Richardson relatives. The earliest mention of Manning's plans for a new house came from his friend W. M. Gregg of Charleston, who personally recommended Nathaniel Potter to build Manning's house.³⁵² Gregg gave Potter and his workmen a ringing endorsement, writing

“I have had some dealings with them and have had occasion to examine and see much of their work, which brings me to the conclusion that a Gentleman wishing to build a handsome house could not get into better hands, they stand eminently high here as skillful builders and are proverbial for integrity in filling contracts, if I am not more mistaken than I have ever been in men, you will find these gentlemen everything that you could desire.”³⁵³

John Manning must have agreed with Gregg's assessment of Potter; on May 6, 1839, a contract between Manning and Potter for the construction of a fifty by sixty foot house and a fifty by twenty foot kitchen outlined a schedule for construction and payment and the materials Manning would supply for the building project.³⁵⁴ Shortly thereafter, Potter

³⁵² The 1836/1837 Providence, Rhode Island City Directory listed Nathaniel F. Potter as a mason. Potter was a craftsman and housewright in the traditional sense. He is a good example of a master mason who transitioned into the new field of architect, by contributing designs to his clients, even though he was not formally trained. *Providence City Directory*, 1836-1837, 94, accessed through Early Rhode Island Toolmakers and Tradesmen, <http://www.netris.org/RIToolmakers/1836-37ProvDir/1836-37ProvDirMain.html>, on October 18, 2013. For more on this issue, and its changes over the course of the nineteenth century, please see Dell Upton, “Patternbooks and Professionalism: Aspects of the Transformation of Domestic Architecture in America, 1800-1860,” *Winterthur Portfolio* 19 (Summer/Autumn, 1984), 107-150

³⁵³ Charleston, W.M. Gregg to John L. Manning, May 2, 1839, WCM Papers, Folder 5, SCL, USC

³⁵⁴ Articles of Agreement entered into this 6th day of May 1839 by and between John L. Manning and Nathaniel F. Potter of Providence RI, WCM Papers (Legal), Folder 19, SCL, USC

sent further specifications about the design of the house, inviting Manning's collaboration and urging him to simplify relationships between rooms, columns, and windows as much as possible.³⁵⁵ Clearly, Potter recognized that he was working with an involved and opinionated client.

On August 2, 1839, Nathaniel Potter sent Manning a letter from New York, announcing that he had completed the drawings for the house and was ready to send them. Throughout August, Potter continued to write Manning, checking on the pace of the brickmakers and confirming decorative details.³⁵⁶ Manning finally responded on September 22, 1839, acknowledging that he received and approved of the latest plans for the house. Manning answered Potter's questions about the pace of work, and firmly asserted his preferences about decorative finishes in the house.³⁵⁷ Correspondence, records of payments, accounts of materials and shipping continued between Potter and Manning into 1841, providing a rich record of the design and construction process of Millford (Figure I-2). Potter's letters contained detailed instructions about the architectural specifications and details of the plans, providing excellent evidence of a patron taking an active and collaborative role in the design and construction of a great house.³⁵⁸ The Potter and Manning correspondence lays out the architectural development

³⁵⁵ Nathaniel F. Potter to John L. Manning, Charleston, May 12, 1839, WCM Papers (Legal), Folder 19, SCL, USC; Nathaniel F. Potter, Sketch of Millford, May 1839, WCM Papers (Legal), Folder 19, SCL, USC

³⁵⁶ Nathaniel F. Potter to John L. Manning, New York August 8, 1839, WCM Papers, Folder 88, SCL, USC; Nathaniel F. Potter to John L. Manning, New York August 31, 1839, WCM Papers, Folder 88, SCL, USC

³⁵⁷ John L. Manning to Nathaniel F. Potter, Columbia, September 22, 1839, WCM Papers, Folder 89, SCL, USC

³⁵⁸ Potter provided drawings and supervised construction, provided all materials except for bricks, yellow pine timber, laths, marble mantels and fireplaces, all the leaming, and a house for Potter's men to live in while at work on the buildings. Articles of Agreement Entered into this 6th day of May, 1839, by and

and construction history of Millford, revealing a house with a range of national and local design influences.

While most histories of architecture attend only to the design of elite houses like Millford, this chapter will consider three design problems faced by major antebellum planters and their buildings. The first section considers the design of the mansion house. Planters and their builders knew that mansion houses occupied the social spotlight. While the mansions were the most highly visible statements of planter success, these houses were part of designed landscapes. The landscape immediately surrounding great houses contained the domestic core, the location of support buildings to serve the needs of the mansion house. In close proximity to, and visible from, the mansion house, domestic cores often shared complimentary, but simplified, architectural features with the showplace. In contrast to mansion houses are great houses on contributing plantations.³⁵⁹ Instead of existing in a social spotlight, great houses were centers for plantation management and oversight. At the great house, functionality ruled.

Where did planters and their builders look for inspiration on the kinds of buildings that they wanted to build? The three mansion houses are examples of Grecian Revival architecture of the 1840s, and the supporting buildings of the domestic core often featured diluted references to Grecian forms. In the mansion house, design sources and the context of the columns at each house revealed that Millford, Melrose, and Ashland

between John L. Manning and Nathaniel F. Potter of Providence RI, WCM Papers (Legal), Folder 19, SCL, USC; Nathaniel F. Potter to John L. Manning, New York, August 2, 1839, WCM Papers, Folder 87, SCL, USC

³⁵⁹ In this dissertation, mansion house is the term for the “big 3” – Millford, Melrose, and Ashland. I have elected to call houses on contributing plantations great houses.

had elements of high-style Grecian Revival architecture. They also reveal local details and building traditions that make each house a product not only of its patron and designer, but of its place. In contrast, houses at Riverside, Moro, and Killarney were modest I-houses and Creole cottages, buildings that expressed regional cultural references. Scholars have traced the movement of these house types across the continental United States, following settlement patterns as people moved from the coasts, and have discussed the emergence of regional specificities that transformed generic house types into buildings that addressed the needs of specific locations, climates, and cultures.³⁶⁰ On many contributing plantations, planters built or retained houses that spoke a local dialect. Comparing the use of a national architectural style at the hub with the regional vocabulary of houses on contributing plantations reveals how the plantation network both allowed and demanded planters to rely on different sources for the various buildings in the network.

The concept of a “national style” of architecture in the 1840s and 1850s is inherently problematic. A single architectural type did not dominate American building, and even though Grecian-derived classicism was popular, it had complicated meanings and associations for people of the period. In this dissertation, I use the term national style and associate Grecian forms with it to signify an architectural approach utilized all over the country for a range of buildings – civic, religious, and residential. Most federal building programs, for customs houses and government structures, used Grecian forms

³⁶⁰ Fred B. Kniffen, “Folk Housing: Key to Diffusion,” *Common Places: Readings in American Vernacular Architecture*, ed. Dell Upton and John Michael Vlach (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1986), 3-26; Henry Glassie, *Folk Housing in Middle Virginia: A Structural Analysis of Historic Artifacts* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1975)

during this period for the sense of stability and permanence the form conveyed. Grecian buildings, with their simplified massiveness, were also relatively economical to build, a plus for government commissions.³⁶¹ By no means were Grecian buildings specifically American. Barksdale Maynard convincingly argues that in building Grecian architecture, Americans followed stylistic developments from Europe. For private buildings, associations of Grecian architecture with institutions of wealth, power, and culture appealed to social elites throughout the United States, not just in the South.

Designing a Mansion House

Millford, a three-story house, designed to look like a two-story building, is largely a house from a book, with most of its architectural features and embellishments coming straight out of Minard Lafever's 1835 *The Beauties of Modern Architecture*.³⁶² Potter's letters to Manning contain almost constant references to plates in Lafever. Potter and Manning must have agreed to use *The Beauties of Modern Architecture* as a common source, which gave Manning the ability to envision how elements of his house would appear once completed. Lafever's plans for *Sliding Doors* inspired the design of the front door and the folding doors in the double parlor (Figures 3-1, 3-2, and 3-3). Manning followed Lafever's decorating suggestions, and ordered mirrors to cover the folding door, increasing the effects of light in the space, with frames in the "richest gilt."³⁶³ Also in the double parlor, Potter used Lafever's *Entablature* as the source for the cornice, as well as

³⁶¹ Lois Craig, ed., *The Federal Presence: Architecture, Politics and Symbols in United States Government Buildings*, Federal Architecture Project (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1978), 48-67; W. Barksdale Maynard, *Architecture in the United States* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002), 255

³⁶² Minard Lafever, *The Beauties of Modern Architecture* (New York: D. Appleton, 1849 edition)

³⁶³ John L. Manning to Nathaniel F. Potter, Columbia, September 22, 1839, WCM Papers, Folder 89, SCL, USC

the *Design for a Centre Flower* for the ceiling rosettes (Figures 3-4, 3-5, 3-6, and 3-7). Door jambs and window frames throughout the first story used Lafever's model for a *Parlour Door* as inspiration, while door jambs and window frames on the second story featured a simplified version of the example (Figure 3-8 and 3-9).³⁶⁴ The use of Minard Lafever's patternbook as the source of Millford's architectural detailing throughout the house is an example of national forms translated onto an upcountry South Carolina context. While hosting her mother and a visitor, Sallie Clarke Manning reported that Millford looked so beautiful that Mrs. Tolcott, the visitor, "admired and sighed all the time, that it reminded her so much of places around New York."³⁶⁵ The Mannings valued associations that people made between their South Carolina house and the Grecian Revival style so closely linked to New York.

Unlike John Manning, who consulted a New England builder and a New York patternbook for design sources, John T. McMurran hired a local, Natchez-based builder/architect to construct Melrose. In 1841, John T. McMurran bought Moore's Field, a 133-acre tract on the outskirts of Natchez from Henry Turner, his wife's uncle, for \$5000 (Figure 3-10).³⁶⁶ Letters and receipts from Andrew Brown's sawmill in Natchez indicated that construction on the property began in 1842 and that the

³⁶⁴ Nathaniel F. Potter, Specifications for a House to be built in Sumpter [sic] District South Carolina for John L. Manning, May 1839, WCM Papers (Legal), Folder 20, SCL, USC; Articles of Agreement entered into this 6th day of May 1839 by and between John L. Manning and Nathaniel F. Potter of Providence RI, WCM Papers (Legal), Folder 19, SCL, USC; John L. Manning to Nathaniel F. Potter, Columbia, September 22, 1839, WCM Papers, Folder 89, SCL, USC; Thomas Gordon Smith, "Living with Antiques: Millford Plantation in South Carolina," *The Magazine Antiques*, Volume 151, No. 5 (May 1997), 737; Lafever, *Beauties of Modern Architecture*, Plate 13, 7, 12, 21, and 19

³⁶⁵ Sallie Bland Clarke Manning to John L. Manning, Millford, May 23 1855, WCM Papers, Folder 149, SCL, USC

³⁶⁶ Adams County, Mississippi, Office of the Chancery Clerk, Deed Book DD: 155.

outbuildings were the first structures built, probably to house workmen, enslaved people, and the family when they came out to visit. The first reference of the house's name, inspired by Sir Walter Scott, was in a letter between Eliza Quitman to her husband. "Mr. McMurren's horses ran off with his Barouche yesterday morning and injured the carriage very much. Charles was on his way out to Melrose to take his mistress to church, when the horses took fright and ran away."³⁶⁷ Mary Louisa McMurren spent time at Melrose before the house was finished, even though receipts and letters document the McMurrens moving to Melrose permanently in December 1848 or January 1849.

The exact chronology of construction at Melrose is not clear. The building program probably began with the outbuildings, to house workers and store materials on the site, suggesting that the 1843 fire destroyed a domestic support structure instead of the main house.³⁶⁸ The lack of circular saw marks in buildings of the domestic complex further suggest that they predate the arrival of the circular saw. Andrew Brown, the source for most of the timber at Melrose, installed a circular saw in his mill in 1848. Since these pieces were not milled using a circular saw, they must be earlier than the late 1840s. An 1840s date is further substantiated by the predominance of cut nails in the construction, another technological dating indicator.³⁶⁹

Jacob Byers oversaw the design and construction of Melrose (Figure I-4). Aside from his obituary, receipts from Andrew Brown's sawmill, which noted Byers as the

³⁶⁷ Eliza Quitman to John Quitman; Monmouth November 20, 1843, Quitman papers, Subseries 1.1, Folder 34, SHC, UNC

³⁶⁸ Ann Beha Associates, Melrose Estate, Natchez National Historical Park, Historic Structures Report, Volume I (1997), 31; John Quitman to Eliza Quitman; Jackson, January 14, 1843, Quitman papers, Subseries 1.1, Folder 30, SHC, UNC

³⁶⁹ Beha, Melrose Historic Structures Report, Volume I, 32

agent who ordered timber for McMurren in February 1847, connected Byers to Melrose.³⁷⁰ Jacob Byers was a carpenter who probably came to Natchez in the late 1820s or early 1830s. Even though no other buildings by Byers have been identified, records show that he collaborated extensively with Natchez contractors Joseph Neibert and Peter Gemmell.³⁷¹ As represented through the text of his obituary, Byers' self-presentation dovetailed into narratives of the growing professionalism of the architect and the distancing between design and construction that Dell Upton outlined in his 1984 essay on the nineteenth-century separation of architects from master carpenters.³⁷²

At Melrose, Byers used different sources than Nathaniel Potter. The balusters on the rooftop monitor were urn-shaped, inspired by *Keystones and Balusters* in Asher Benjamin's *The Architect, or Practical House Carpenter*, a patternbook first published in 1830 (Figures 3-11 and 3-12).³⁷³ The architraves in the dining room at Melrose resemble an architrave printed in the *Practical House Carpenter* (Figures 3-13 and 3-14).³⁷⁴ Byers placed oval, sunburst medallions in the transoms of the three sets of Ionic-framed pocket doors on the first story of Melrose (Figure 3-15). Natchez architectural historian Mimi Miller identifies these features as a regionally specific decorative feature associated with

³⁷⁰ *Mississippi Free Trader*, Natchez, MS, June 16, 1852; Andrew Brown Papers, Day Book 1843–1848, February 16, 1847, photocopy, Historic Natchez Foundation.

³⁷¹ Beha, *Melrose Historic Structures Report*, Volume 1, 28; Mary W. Miller, "Melrose and American Architecture," unpublished draft supplied to the author in August, 2009, 55; Adams County, Office of the Chancery Clerk, Probate Box 70.

³⁷² Upton, "Patternbooks and Professionalism"

³⁷³ Asher Benjamin, *The Architect: or Practical House Carpenter* (Boston: B.B. Mussey, 1841), Plate 25. The balusters seen at Melrose also appear in Asher Benjamin, *The American Builder's Companion; or, A System of Architecture Particularly Adapted to the Present Style of Building* (Boston, R.P. & C. Williams, 3rd edition, 1816), Plate 31

³⁷⁴ Asher Benjamin, *The Architect: or Practical House Carpenter* (Boston: B.B. Mussey, 1841), Plate 47

Federal architecture in Natchez of the first decades of the nineteenth-century.³⁷⁵ Byers also designed battered door jambs around the openings from the central hallway into the dining room and drawing room, a decorative element usually associated with Greek Revival architecture (Figure 3-16). Battered door jambs appeared in Minard Lafever's *Beauties of Modern Architecture*, even though Byers used a different decorative scheme than what Lafever published (Figure 3-8). Many authors cite Melrose as a pure example of Grecian Revival architecture, but the building is more complicated than that. Its builder and patron were comfortable introducing fashionable, up to the moment architectural styles to Natchez, but tempered the newness by including traditional, accepted forms in the composition. The balusters on the roof monitor were a very specific gesture, meant to align Melrose with celebrated Natchez houses like Auburn and Rosalie (Figure 3-12). Before the building boom of the 1850s, many elite Natchez families lived in renovated or remodeled older houses, including the Duncan family at Auburn and the Levin Marshall family at Richmond. The juxtaposition of older and newer architectural details at Melrose might have been intentional, an attempt to place Melrose into a local context, or may have reflected the McMurrans' tastes, conditioned to appreciate certain forms.

By 1836, Duncan Kenner and his brother George each owned a quarter of their father's original Linwood tract and came to an agreement about how to subdivide the land with their relative Philip Minor. Minor received the upriver half of the plantation lands, with buildings and improvements (Linwood), while the Kenner boys took the

³⁷⁵Miller, "Melrose and American Architecture," 56; Beha, Melrose Historic Structures Report, Volume 1, 29

downriver portion.³⁷⁶ The downriver portion, which became Ashland, had no buildings or improvements on it. When Duncan Kenner determined to devote himself to sugar planting, he had a blank slate of a plantation landscape to develop as he wanted. The original residence on Ashland was a small house in the front pasture, near the levee. Rosella Kenner Brent remembered a big, live oak tree near the house, but said nothing more about the structure, of which no images survive.³⁷⁷

Duncan Kenner commissioned the mansion house at Ashland after the completion of the original core of the sugarhouse between 1836 and 1839 (Figure I-6). The chronology is important; a sugar plantation could not function successfully without a sugarhouse, but a planter could live almost anywhere, especially when the neighboring plantations belong to his relatives. Once Kenner married Nanine Bringier in 1839, he turned to the task of building a suitable residence for his new family. The main house at Ashland occupied the highest point of the property, about seven meters above sea level. The relative height of the main house and its proximity to the river had practical benefits for the planter, situated to catch any breezes coming from the river. The location offered a clear view over the low, antebellum levees to the river, enabling the planter and his family to keep an eye out for relatives, shipments of goods, or the arrival of the steamboat to take finished hogsheads of sugar and molasses to the market. The position of the mansion house had a supervisory element as well, appropriate for a house in close proximity to working sugar landscapes. People arrived and departed from the plantation

³⁷⁶ The disposition of William Kenner's property among his heirs and between the Kenners and Philip Minor is discussed in detail in the Networks Chapter.

³⁷⁷ Rosella Kenner Brent, *Recollections of the Federal Raid Upon Ashland Plantation*, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

along the river, either by water or on the river road, visible to residents of the mansion house.

Little information on the construction process of the mansion house survives; even the architect responsible for the design remains a question. Many give credit for the design of Ashland to James Gallier, the New York-trained architect active in New Orleans in the 1830s, although no plans, correspondence, or receipts to prove the claim have been uncovered.³⁷⁸ Others claim that James Dakin or Charles Dakin must have been responsible for the design of the house. Whereas Gallier's involvement has been argued in terms of stylistic similarities to known works, an attribution to the Dakins rests on circumstantial evidence, including Charles Dakin's death in Ascension Parish in June 1839. Kenner's father-in-law, Michel Doradou Bringier, commissioned Dakin and Dakin for several projects, but, again, no smoking gun connecting the architects to Ashland exists.³⁷⁹

Historian Craig Bauer identifies problems with the Dakin attribution. Duncan Kenner held strong antipathies towards James Dakin during the planning stages of the Louisiana state capitol building, almost a decade after the construction of Ashland. In 1847, the committee in charge of planning for a new capitol building recommended hiring James Dakin to design and construct the building. Duncan Kenner was absolutely against Dakin, citing cost, outrageous designs, and the ludicrous idea of paying an

³⁷⁸ Craig A. Bauer, *A Leader Among Peers: The Life and Times of Duncan Farrar Kenner* (Lafayette: The University of Southwestern Louisiana, 1993), 35-36. James Gallier made no mention of work on Ashland Plantation in his autobiography. James Gallier, *Autobiography of James Gallier, Architect* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1973).

³⁷⁹ Bauer, *A Leader Among Peers*, 36-37

architect a salary commensurate with a legal professional. Kenner got personal in his attacks on Dakin's experience and abilities, calling him a "cabinet man."³⁸⁰ It seems strange that Kenner would have had such strong aversions to Dakin, if Dakin had been the architect responsible for Ashland. Criticism of Dakin would have reflected badly on Kenner's property, taste, and judgment, and there is no evidence suggesting that Kenner was anything but pleased with his house. We do not know why Kenner had such strong negative opinions of James Dakin, but it does not seem to stem from dissatisfaction with an earlier commission.

Setting aside the question of designer, the resulting building was a house with broad galleries on all sides of the house, supported by twenty-eight square, double-height piers under a heavy entablature.³⁸¹ The strictly symmetrical five-bay southwest elevation was the front, facing the river. The central doorway, framed by sidelights and a transom window in a Doric door surround, was the primary focus of the composition, framed on each side by nine-over-nine windows that extended to the floor. Behind the railing of the gallery, the central door on the second story had the same door surround as the first story, except that the cornice obscured the top of the door surround's entablature from view. The door surround appears similar to a drawing of an anta and entablature from Minard Lafever's patternbook, *The Beauties of Modern Architecture* (Figures 3-17 and 3-18).³⁸²

³⁸⁰ Bauer, *A Leader Among Peers*, 37-38

³⁸¹ According to Virginia and Lee McAlester, squared Doric piers are a vernacular adaptation and never appeared in Classical architecture. Virginia and Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984), 185. Claire L. Gueymard, "Square, Columned House Built in 1841 for Duncan F. Kenner is Classical Louisiana Architecture," *The Morning Advocate*, February 7, 1937, Plantations, Belle Helene, Ephemera Collections, Louisiana Research Collection, Howard-Tilton Memorial Library, Tulane University (hereafter referred to as the LRC, H-T ML, TU)

³⁸² Lafever, *The Beauties of Modern Architecture*, Plate 22, Figure 1

On the interior, the designer of Ashland continued to refer to Lafever, or another Grecian source, but in a diluted way. Throughout the house, door and window frames remain remarkably consistent. Each aperture featured a shouldered, battered frame, a simplified version of the *Parlour Door* from the *Beauties of Modern Architecture* (Figure 3-8 and 3-19).³⁸³ This frame surrounded every window in the house, the six-paneled doors on the first story, the two-paneled doors on the second story (also inspired by Lafever), and the sidelights and one-paneled doors on both floors centered on the southwestern and northeastern elevations. The use of Lafever as a design inspiration at Ashland introduced elements of New York Grecian Revival to the Louisiana house

The design sources for Millford, Melrose, and Ashland reveal a range of influences from architectural patternbooks to local building traditions. A specific look at the sources of columns on the mansion houses offers a case study into the range of architectural references present in these buildings. The façade of Millford is famous for its six double-height columns with granite bases and carved wood Corinthian capitals (Figure 3-20). The columns lift the heavy cornice, topped by a parapet wall with acroteria. The capitals, unlike so much Grecian Revival architecture in the United States, have a classical precedent - the Choragic Monument of Lysicrates in Athens, a building drawn and published in the *Antiquities of Athens* by James Stuart and Nicholas Revett. A more direct influence was Minard Lafever, who published an example of the Corinthian order based on Stuart and Revett's work in *The Beauties of Modern Architecture* (Figure

³⁸³ Lafever, *The Beauties of Modern Architecture*, Plate 19

3-21).³⁸⁴ Potter specified the “monument of Lysicrates” as his source, as well as the granite for the bases, the brick for the column shafts, wood for the column capitals, and the iron summer beams to support the cornice. He designed the cornice to continue around the whole building, prescribed straw-colored stucco to cover the brick of the exterior walls and white stucco to hide brick architectural features like the columns and cornice.³⁸⁵ The columns at Millford, the only example in this study based on an archaeologically correct precedent, were entirely American. They mimicked the Classical source in size, and appearance, but used regularly available, easily worked materials to realize the design.

Even though the portico at Melrose does not have an identified, ancient precedent, it has not stopped authors from enthusiastically describing it as “an undisguised Greek temple” (Figure 3-22).³⁸⁶ The grand-order, tetrastyle, Doric portico dominates the façade of the house, a clear example of Grecian Revival architecture in America in the 1840s. Even so, the massive white columns did not always appear as they do today. Historic photographs and paint sample analysis revealed that the columns, pilasters, and the wall under the portico were stuccoed and scored to look like ashlar masonry. Decorative painting tinted each block to resemble a different shade of sandstone, and the walls and columns had painted patterns to represent veining. The decorative painting scheme lasted until the very early twentieth century, when changing fashions and a lack of skilled

³⁸⁴ James Stuart and Nicholas Revett, *The Antiquities of Athens* (London: Printed by John Haberkorn, 1762); Lavever, *The Beauties of Modern Architecture*, Plate 43; Smith, “Living with Antiques,” 737

³⁸⁵ Nathaniel F. Potter, Specifications for a House to be built in Sumpter [sic] District South Carolina for John L. Manning, May 1839, WCM Papers (Legal), Folder 20, SCL, USC

³⁸⁶ Howard, *Natchez*, 131

ornamental painters resulted in a white portico.³⁸⁷ Stuccoed and painted porticos were popular in Natchez. Gloucester had a decoratively painted portico, even though it did not have stucco. Rosalie had a stuccoed portico, and neighboring Monmouth had decoratively painted stucco on the walls protected by porticos and galleries,³⁸⁸

On the rear elevation, a double-height colonnade of rectangular, stuccoed piers “probably represents an attempt to relate the rear gallery of the main house to the front gallery of the rear service buildings without the expense or difficulty of installing round columns on all three galleries.”³⁸⁹ When interpreted as a complimentary, but cheaper, design alternative to the expensive circular columns on the façade, the back gallery’s role as a working and support space to the main house comes fully into focus. Many other houses in Natchez used a grand-order portico at the front of the house, and a double-height gallery across the rear. In seven other examples, the columns on both elevations were rounded. Only one other house in Natchez, Belmont, used rounded columns in the front and rectangular piers at the rear.³⁹⁰

Instead of a temple-front or a Classical portico, Ashland has twenty-eight massive, square, brick, double-height piers that reach up to a heavy cornice (Figure 3-23). The cornice extends above the roofline into a low parapet wall that largely obscures views of the house’s hipped roof. Between the screen of piers and the cornice, the overall appearance of the house becomes a massive cube. The peripteral gallery, as seen at Ashland, was a less-common interpretation of Classical form than the temple-front or

³⁸⁷ Miller, “Melrose and American Architecture,” 59, Beha, Melrose Historic Structures Report, Volume 1, 47, 49

³⁸⁸ Miller, “Melrose and American Architecture,” 60-61

³⁸⁹ Miller, “Melrose and American Architecture,” 62

³⁹⁰ Miller, “Melrose and American Architecture,” 62

temple-portico. Except for a group of plantation houses and a couple of courthouses in Louisiana, the most famous peripteral building in the United States is Thomas U. Walter's Girard College in Philadelphia, largely inspired by the Parthenon in Athens (Figure 3-24).

Even though peripteral galleries were not very common, a small concentration of houses featuring this Classical approach developed in the sugar parishes of Louisiana. The Classical interpretation, with double-height squared piers, emerged from a French Colonial plan that surrounded a house with a wide gallery, supported by thin, turned columns. The mansion house at Destrehan, originally built in 1790, boasted a double-height gallery with narrow Doric columns on the first story, and turned columnettes on the second story. By 1840, double-height, Doric columns fully encased the older forms (Figures 3-25 and 3-26).³⁹¹ Later buildings, including the mansion houses on Uncle Sam and Oak Alley plantations featured twenty-eight peripteral, double-height piers (Figures 3-27 and 3-28). Even though each house had the same number of piers, at Uncle Sam and Oak Alley, the piers were rounded, not squared. In these houses, patrons and house designers adapted a Classical form to continue a useful, local building tradition.

Designing the Domestic Core

In this dissertation, domestic cores describe the cohort of support buildings, including kitchens, laundries, smokehouses, privies, cisterns, dairies, and other, regionally specific structures. Relationships between the domestic cores and the mansion

³⁹¹ Bacot and Poesch, ed., *Louisiana Buildings*, 106

house at Millford, Melrose, and Ashland reveal both the homogenization of the working landscape surrounding the mansion house, as well as how planters approached the planning and construction of working spaces.

Nathaniel Potter provided a sketch and specifications for a three-part gate, with a wide central passageway under a squared lintel with smaller openings flanking it (Figure 3-29). Squared piers supported round ball finials on the outer posts, while the central lintel supported three acorns, all spaced by scrolls. Potter considered the drawing as a means to convey the proportions to Manning, not as specifications for the actual structure, stating that Manning's taste would surely suggest something more to his own liking.³⁹² The extent to which Manning followed Potter's drawings is unclear. The piers and fence currently on the property are of another design and different materials, although the three-part composition matches Potter's drawing (Figure 3-30). Near the gate, positioned on top of a low hill so that the inhabitant could supervise entrances and exits and open the gates for visitors, was the Porter's Lodge. A single-room building, the Porter's Lodge has an impressive façade, with two Ionic columns in antis, framing the front door (Figure 3-31). Above the columns was a heavy cornice, which wrapped around the entire building. A shallow pediment and parapet wall topped the cornice, to hide the roofline from the view of approaching visitors.

Southwest of the mansion house, the "fish pond" and spring house that Sallie Manning described to her mother was a combination of useful water source on the property and architectural and landscape folly. The spring house is a Gothic fantasy, with

³⁹² Nathaniel Potter to John L. Manning, n.d., WCM Papers (Legal), Folder 19, SCL, USC

a crenellated central tower with four crenellated finials at the corners, flanked by shorter towers with pyramidal tops, pointed arch windows, and buttresses (Figure 3-32). The architectural features of the spring house bear a striking resemblance to Trinity Episcopal Cathedral in Columbia, South Carolina, which Manning attended and where he is buried. If so, the spring house must have been a later addition to the property, as the Gothic form of Trinity, based loosely on York Minster in England, was an 1847 replacement of an earlier structure.³⁹³ It does not look like any other building at Millford, and Nathaniel Potter's invoice of structures does not include a spring house, further evidence that it was a later addition.³⁹⁴ Even so, the building was present by May 1848, when Sally Manning arrived at Millford.

For the outbuildings closest to the mansion house, Manning drew sketches that gave two options for the buildings flanking the core of the main house (Figure 3-33). The first sketch showed the rectangular structures oriented behind the house with their narrow elevations facing front, and the other placed the buildings' wide elevations facing front, pulled up in line with the back of the house. In correspondence over the designs for the outbuildings with Potter, Manning did not think his proposed changes demanded serious revision of the plans, and that either position required the same brick and carpentry work.³⁹⁵ His changes preserved the view of the rear of the house and allowed

³⁹³ Walter Edgar, *Chapters in Trinity's History*, Chapter VII: A Flourishing Antebellum Church, available at http://www.trinitysc.org/edgar_history_of_trinity, accessed April 7, 2013

³⁹⁴ John L. Manning to Nathaniel F. Potter, Contracted Price and Pay Schedule for Millford, WCM Papers, Folder 91, SCL, USC

³⁹⁵ John L. Manning to Nathaniel F. Potter, Columbia, September 22, 1839, WCM Papers, Folder 89, SCL, USC

“a free passage of air.”³⁹⁶ Of all the case studies in this project, this is the only evidence of a patron actively communicating architectural design ideas to his builder.

The result of Manning’s collaboration with Potter was the two flanking outbuildings behind the main house, connected by the one-story gallery that spanned the rear elevation (Figure 3-34). Both structures were two stories, measured twenty by fifty feet, and combined working and living spaces for enslaved domestic people. In his plans for Millford, Potter drew a suggested layout for the kitchen building (Figure 3-35). The structure had two chambers on the first floor, a twenty-four by eighteen foot kitchen with a large fireplace, stove, and two ovens, and a twenty by eighteen foot washroom, with a large fireplace to heat wash water. Each room had a door to the exterior, and an interior door, allowing internal passage in the building. An enclosed stair ran from the kitchen to the upstairs hallway, the only point of access to the second story.³⁹⁷ Two of the three rooms upstairs were fifteen by fifteen feet; the largest room on the southeast end of the structure was eighteen by fifteen. The “Contracted Price and Pay Schedule for Millford” called these spaces “Servants apartments,” indicating these rooms were living quarters for Millford’s enslaved people.³⁹⁸ The other flanking building did not have plans supplied by Potter. The original footprint probably mirrored the plan of the kitchen building, although the staircase was in a different location in this building. Either the entire building housed enslaved domestic workers, or guest quarters were on the first story, and

³⁹⁶ John L. Manning to Nathaniel F. Potter, Columbia, September 22, 1839, WCM Papers, Folder 89, SCL, USC

³⁹⁷ Nathaniel F. Potter to John L. Manning, Specifications for the Kitchen for John L. Manning’s House, May 1839, WCM Papers (Legal), Folder 19, SCL, USC

³⁹⁸ John L. Manning to Nathaniel F. Potter, Contracted Price and Pay Schedule for Millford, WCM Papers, Folder 91, SCL, USC

enslaved people lived upstairs.

Behind the flanker off the northeastern corner of the house was an additional building, called the “Accessory Building” or Ben’s house in the Historic American Buildings Survey drawings of Millford (Figure 3-36). Ben Pleasant was Manning’s butler at Millford. In a letter to Sallie, Manning asked her to “Direct Ben, my beloved wife, to watch the hydraulic saw and to keep the waste way from the pond clean of trash.”³⁹⁹ In a later letter, Sally reported to her husband that Ben Pleasant’s sister Matilda was for sale. Sally described her hesitation on purchasing her, and shared the information so that John Manning could determine her motivation. Reading between the lines, Pleasant actively worked to keep members of his family together, using his owners’ regard for him as a means of campaigning for Matilda. Despite her concerns, and her realization that Pleasant was in negotiations with her, she wrote that she “would like to see Ben gratified.”⁴⁰⁰ The Contracted Price and Pay Schedule for Millford referred to a gardener’s house, probably the house occupied by Pleasant and his family.⁴⁰¹ The house had two doors facing into the courtyard behind the main house. The door closest to the house opened into an approximately eighteen by twelve foot room, with a central interior fireplace. The other door opened into a slightly smaller room without a fireplace. The two rooms had an interior door to allow access between the spaces. Like the other buildings in the courtyard and the main house, Pleasant’s house was brick, covered with

³⁹⁹ John L. Manning to Sallie Bland Clarke Manning, Montgomery, December 30, 1851, WCM Papers, Folder 139, SCL, USC

⁴⁰⁰ Sallie Bland Clarke Manning to John L. Manning, Old Castle, November 6, 1856, WCM Papers, Folder 158, SCL, USC

⁴⁰¹ John L. Manning to Nathaniel F. Potter, Contracted Price and Pay Schedule for Millford, WCM Papers, Folder 91, SCL, USC

straw-colored stucco, with green shutters on the windows.

Nathaniel Potter supplied Manning with detailed specifications for a barn, which housed horses, carriages, and a tack room. A timber frame building on brick piers, the structure was 105 feet long and fifty-one feet wide, with a clearance of fourteen feet inside, covered by grooved and lapped weatherboarding, and topped by a gable roof (Figure 3-37). Three of the four corners of the building had three Doric columns, resulting in shallow porches under the overhang of the roof. Potter specified ten six-over-six sash windows and semi-circular windows in the pediments. The interior included individual stalls for horses, as well as a space for property mules. The tack room, carriage house, and granary, to store feed and other supplies, had plaster ceilings to keep objects stored in these spaces clean and dry.⁴⁰²

Even though it only occupied approximately 300 acres, tended by a force of twenty-seven enslaved people, the Millford landscape required constant maintenance.⁴⁰³ Letters between Sally Manning and her husband detail efforts by enslaved laborers to open roads, build bridges, repair walls, plant trees, and tend the grass. Tim was an enslaved person in charge of weeding the grass; he also ran errands to relatives' houses in nearby Camden.⁴⁰⁴ The winding roads through the property, in contrast with the overwhelming rectilinearity of the mansion house and the symmetry of the outbuildings, offered numerous vantage points from which visitors could admire the beauty of

⁴⁰² Nathaniel F. Potter, Specifications for a Barn for John L. Manning to be erected on his plantation in Clarendon, South Carolina, May 1839, WCM Papers (Legal), Folder 20, SCL, USC

⁴⁰³ Clarendon County, South Carolina, Deed Book B, Folio 410-412, Deed Book K, Folio 179-180; Sumter County Deed Book UU, Folio 458-460, SCDAH; United States Census 1850, Sumter District, South Carolina, Slave Schedule, Folio 580

⁴⁰⁴ Sallie Bland Clarke Manning to John L. Manning, Millford, May 11 1855, WCM Papers, Folder 149, SCL, USC; E.S. Cantey to John L. Manning, Camden, May 11, 1840, WCM Papers, Folder 97, SCL, USC

Millford's landscape. Landscape projects included planting trees along the road to the stable, to provide shade to passers-by from the intense South Carolina sun, maintaining the spring house, and road and fence construction and refurbishment.

Nathaniel Potter designed the gate, the flanking outbuildings behind the mansion house, either the porter's lodge or Ben Pleasant's house, and the stable and carriage house. Drawings, plans, and specifications for the rest of the buildings do not exist in the documentary record. For the residential building not included in the Contracted Price and Pay Schedule for Millford, Manning probably commissioned it independently, having workmen build structures that suited his needs that followed the aesthetic principles shared by the Potter-designed buildings. To preserve a consistent appearance, Manning had all building surfaces painted the straw-color of the mansion house, with green shutters, and Classical embellishments. The Ionic columns, pediment, and plain cornice of the porter's lodge were not archaeologically correct interpretations of Classical compositions, but they provided a preview to the architectural wonders of the mansion house. Millford must have had privies, a smokehouse, and other support buildings. Even though remains of these structures no longer exist on the property, they probably had the same color scheme as the other domestic core structures, to help them blend into a cohesive built environment.

The spring house was a later addition to the domestic core. Built by 1848, it allowed Manning to explore an architectural style that was very different from the monumental Grecian Revival forms of the house and domestic core. Located at a short distance from the house, the path of the drive, topography of the property, and

landscaping insured that the Gothic forms of the spring house would not distract visitors from the Grecian grandeur of the domestic core. In fact, Manning's use of Gothic on this picturesquely located structure reinforced it as an architectural fantasy or folly, and displayed his familiarity with changing architectural fashions by the late 1840s. With the exception of the spring house folly, the aesthetic and architectural cohesion of Millford's domestic core was the result of Potter's plans and designs and Manning's goal of creating a visually unified landscape. The appearance of the domestic core was both typical and unusual for houses of the late 1840s. Typical because many support structures featured the same building materials and a simplified decorative scheme as the mansion house. Unusual because few planters invested in largely architect-designed domestic cores that carried out the dominant aesthetic so completely.

At Melrose, the structures that contributed directly to support the elite residents of the mansion house followed a strict pattern of organization. The kitchen and dairy buildings faced one another across a courtyard at the back of the house. The footprints of each building perfectly aligned with the sides of the main house, and these structures had double-height galleries of squared piers to match the back gallery of the house. Consistency of building treatment, along with symmetrical organization, created a highly articulated domestic working space that complimented the main house. The kitchen building is a two-story, twenty by forty-foot, six-course American bond brick structure with a two-story gallery on its south elevation supported by four squared piers (Figure 3-38). The downstairs had two rooms, with multiple points of access from the gallery. An enclosed spiral staircase, only accessible from the exterior, was the means of communicating between

stories. Three original rooms upstairs may have been living quarters for enslaved cooks and waiters, although, in the original plans, the westernmost rooms on the first and second floors did not have fireplaces.

Directly facing the kitchen, with the same footprint, brickwork, double-height gallery, and entablature was the dairy building (Figure 3-39). Unlike the kitchen building, the first story of the dairy had only two rooms. The easternmost had two cement troughs, typical for dairies or laundry rooms in the Natchez area.⁴⁰⁵ Filled with cold water, the troughs kept dairy products cool, or could have been basins for washing textiles, using water heated in the fireplace. We do not know the function of the westernmost room on the first story; it became an automobile garage by 1908.⁴⁰⁶ Like the kitchen, the two, non-communicating rooms on the second story probably housed enslaved domestic families who lived and worked at Melrose.

The domestic core had four cisterns (Figure 3-40). Two in the domestic courtyard were mirror images of one another; one between the kitchen and smokehouse in the northern row of the complex, the other between the laundry/dairy and the privy in the southern row. Pipes from the kitchen and dairy gutters ran to underground cistern tanks, surrounded by an octagonal, open-lattice structure on a brick foundation, under a low-pitched roof.⁴⁰⁷ At the end of the north row of the domestic core was the smokehouse, a nearly square, six-course American bond brick building with a hipped roof (Figure 3-41). Capping the roof was an obelisk-shaped finial. A single, wooden door centered on the south elevation provided

⁴⁰⁵ Beha, Melrose Historic Structures Report, Volume I, 53

⁴⁰⁶ Beha, Melrose Historic Structures Report, Volume I, 105

⁴⁰⁷ Beha, Melrose Historic Structures Report, Volume I, 129

access into the space, which also had a louvered vent centered on the north elevation; both openings have brick jack arches. Except for the limited openings, little evidence of this building's original function as a smokehouse survives.⁴⁰⁸

Across the courtyard, mirroring the smokehouse, a nearly square building with the same brick bond, roof profile, and obelisk finial was the largest privy on the property (Figure 3-42). On the east elevation, the smaller, southernmost door opened into a chamber with two holes for adults and two lower, smaller holes for children. In this space, the floors were wood, and the walls were plaster. On the south wall, a narrow (two-and-a-half foot) door opened into another privy space, with three holes for adults and two for children, also with wood floors and plaster walls. The separate spaces were for men and women to use.⁴⁰⁹ Interestingly, doors into the privy spaces on the east and south elevations made entrance into the privy invisible from the mansion house, suggesting that privacy was a concern to the residents of Melrose.

Located to the northeast of the mansion house and domestic core towards the rear of the property, the McMurrans planned and built north and south houses for enslaved families as complimentary structures (Figure 3-43). Positioned about thirty feet apart, the two double houses originally had the same footprint, eighteen by forty feet; each room was approximately eighteen by twenty feet, or 360 square feet. The north structure was a timber-framed, clapboard covered double house raised on brick piers, which remained unpainted into the twentieth century (Figure 3-44). As a double house, the chimney

⁴⁰⁸ Beha, Melrose Historic Structures Report, Volume I, 126

⁴⁰⁹ Beha, Melrose Historic Structures Report, Volume I, 83, 124

revealed the partition wall that divided one family's living space from the other. The interiors featured plaster walls and ceilings, except for the wood-plank partition wall between living spaces, wood floors, and unmolded, wood mantels at the fireplaces.⁴¹⁰

The southern house originally had two chambers to house enslaved families in an eighteen by forty-foot building (Figure 3-45). Soon after construction, the McMurrans added a third, eighteen by eighteen-foot living quarter to the southern end of the building to accommodate more people, perhaps another family. As in the north house, this building was timber-framed, covered with unpainted clapboards, raised on brick piers. On the interior, the two eighteen by twenty-foot chambers in the original footprint shared the central chimneystack and had wood floors, unmolded mantelpieces, and plaster walls and ceilings like the north house. The finishes in the addition are similar, except that the fireplace is on the southern wall, creating an exterior end chimney.⁴¹¹ An interior doorway connects the southern addition space to a chamber in the original building; it is unclear if this was an original opening or added by later inhabitants for more personal space.

East of the southern house was a privy that served the residents of these two buildings (Figure 3-46). Probably constructed after 1850, this building has cut nails and the timber frame reveals circular saw marks.⁴¹² Unpainted clapboards covered the eight-foot square building, which had a single doorway on the north and south elevations. An interior partition wall separated the space into two chambers, each with two holes for adults, and one smaller, lower hole, presumably for a child.

⁴¹⁰ Beha, Melrose Historic Structures Report, Volume I, 115-116

⁴¹¹ Beha, Melrose Historic Structures Report, Volume I, 120 -121

⁴¹² Beha, Melrose Historic Structures Report, Volume I, 83

The north elevation of the two-story carriage house had three bays, the center being the widest (Figure 3-47). Doric pilasters separated the bays, reaching up to shallow, elliptical arches. Within the bays, the siding butted together with squared edges, creating a smooth surface different from the overlapping clapboard found on the other elevations. Only the westernmost bay contained an opening. In the pediment, a three-part louvered window provided ventilation for the open loft that was the second story. Carriages and wagons accessed the building from the southern elevation, through three, equally sized, rectangular openings. The shed addition on the east elevation is a twentieth-century alteration. The barn at Melrose is a simple building, tucked behind the carriage house, designed as a support structure (Figure 3-48). A one-and-a-half story, rectangular building, covered in wood clapboards, with a gable roof, the primary entrance is on the west elevation, which had two vertical plank doors. The four-foot wide doors on the west and east elevations were the original points of access to the building, and stalls and storage spaces lined the interior walls.

Melrose has the most complete collection of domestic outbuildings of any Natchez suburban villa or surrounding plantation houses. Comparing structures at Melrose with similar buildings on other properties suggests that Melrose followed local precedents in the construction and placement of many work structures. Symmetrical organization of the domestic core, with flanking outbuildings behind the mansion house, was not typical, but neither was it unique. Oakland, constructed in 1841, and D'Evereux, built in 1836, had flanking outbuildings.⁴¹³ The site plan at D'Evereux revealed an architecturally cohesive

⁴¹³ Miller, "Melrose and American Architecture," 72

work courtyard at the rear of the main house, clearly visible even though only one building survives (Figure 3-49). A two-story, columned gallery on the eastern elevation of the outbuilding established the architectural connection to the Doric columns of the back gallery on the mansion house – a similar approach to that used at Melrose (Figure 3-50).

The buildings in the domestic courtyard behind Melrose were typical of working structures found in and around Natchez in the 1840s and 1850s. Detached kitchens with spaces for enslaved people to live supported most Natchez-area houses. The dairy building had a similar layout and features to other dairies in the region, although the Melrose example had a sophisticated double-tiered system for simultaneously cooling and processing dairy products received from the contributing plantations. The cisterns, with their ornamental and serviceable lattice walls, are consistent with regional examples, even though few others survive. The brick privy and the smokehouse were typical for the time and place of construction.⁴¹⁴

The buildings outside the domestic courtyard are harder to define as typical or unusual, largely because of a lack of similar structures on other properties. No other suburban villas around Natchez have separate, purpose-built houses for enslaved people to compare to the houses at Melrose. Furthermore, the privy that served the houses for enslaved people is the only building of its kind known in Mississippi.⁴¹⁵ The singular nature of these structures and the lack of comparable examples suggest that they represented departures from the norm for domestic core structures or are very fortuitous survivals.

⁴¹⁴ Miller, "Melrose and American Architecture," 72-74

⁴¹⁵ Miller, "Melrose and American Architecture," 74

Either way, their presence on the Melrose landscape opens additional perspectives into the communities and living conditions of domestic enslaved people in the suburban villa context.

The carriage house at Melrose is a fine surviving example of the form, and its architectural detailing makes it unlike most other known Natchez carriage houses. The barn is another unusual relic from the 1840s. The lack of comparable examples of period barns makes it impossible to gauge if the Melrose barn was typical or unusual for Natchez.⁴¹⁶ The domestic landscape of Melrose is valuable for the richness and diversity of the surviving structures. The buildings share characteristics with regional construction, organization, and use practices, while the amazing survival rate suggests the presence of understudied elements of enslaved landscapes on Natchez suburban villas.

The layout, orientation, and organization of the mansion house and domestic core at Ashland were typical for sugar plantations along the Mississippi River in the 1840s and 1850s.⁴¹⁷ A 1938 article about the Ashland-Belle Helene property, described the remains of the domestic core, “of the numerous outhouses, only the cook-shack, half brick, half frame, delapidated and moss-grown, and a crenellated two-story brick pigeonier, also in ruins, are extant.”⁴¹⁸ Another writer, also in the 1930s, noted “there are two interesting old brick outhouses, one of which has iron gratings and is believed to have been used at

⁴¹⁶ Miller, “Melrose and American Architecture,” 75

⁴¹⁷ The linear plantation layout was discussed in the Complexes chapter; the plantation paintings of Father Paret and Adrien Persac reveal the typicality of the form. Bacot and Poesch, *Louisiana Buildings*, 90-92; John Rehder, *Delta Sugar: Louisiana's Vanishing Plantation Landscape* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 90-95

⁴¹⁸ Albert Proctor, “Belle Helene: Three Word Elegy on Tomb is Tribute to Famed Leader,” *The Progress*, November 11, 1938, Plantations, Belle Helene, Ephemera Collections, LRC, H-T ML, TU

times as a slave prison, the other of which is a kitchen.”⁴¹⁹ The brick outbuilding with iron gratings probably was the brick pigeonier.

Water for use at the mansion house and for the consumption of the planter family was typically rainwater, collected in large cisterns by gutters from the roof. At Ashland, gutters broke through the parapet wall at the northeastern and northwestern corners, directing collected rainwater through pipes into cisterns at the corner of the house. Ashland had the most popular, most efficient, and cheapest kind of cistern (Figure 3-51). Raised on a brick foundation, the structure was a huge barrel made of cypress staves bounded by iron rings.⁴²⁰ The force of enslaved coopers and carpenters at Ashland, accustomed to making hogsheads for sugar and molasses, could produce these objects easily. The cap of the cistern has disappeared in the photograph; the structure should have a metal top, often with a finial, to prevent mosquitos from breeding in the still water.

Directly behind (to the east) of the main house were two flanking outbuildings. Rectangular structures, the long side of the flankers faced towards the river, creating the appearance of long, low wings with the box-like square of the mansion house at the center (Figure 3-52). The south flanker disappeared from the landscape in the early twentieth century; surviving photographs have not emerged, and contemporary construction has rendered it archaeologically inaccessible (its remains lie under the concrete slab of a parking lot). The north flanker survived until the middle of the

⁴¹⁹ Claire L. Gueymard, “Square, Columned House Built in 1841 for Duncan F. Kenner is Classical Louisiana Architecture,” *The Morning Advocate*, February 7, 1937, Plantations, Belle Helene, Ephemera Collections, LRC, H-T ML, TU

⁴²⁰ Bacot and Poesch, *Louisiana Buildings*, 149-152

twentieth century, was photographed, and has been explored archaeologically. Assuming the two flankers were of equal size and similar construction, the north flanker is the source of information about these outbuildings.

Photographs of the building from the 1930s show a long, relatively narrow, two-story building. The foundations and first story were brick; the foundations had two spreader courses to distribute the weight of the building more efficiently in the soggy soil, a necessity for buildings as modestly sized as this one. The second story was wood frame, covered by unpainted clapboards. Each story had four openings on the long side of the building and a single opening on the narrow, gable end. Horizontal board doors and shutters sealed the spaces, and the photograph revealed six-over-six sash windows on the second story. A gable roof covered the structure, which had a central chimney. Archaeologists explored the building site in 1989; excavations revealed a building with a footprint of approximately twenty-nine and a half feet by thirteen feet. The first story had two rooms, one slightly larger than the other, with fireplaces opening into each room. Each story had about 383.5 square feet of working or living space.⁴²¹

The north flanker was a very simple building, modestly constructed, without architectural flourishes (Figure 3-53). Workers or residents accessed the building from the east elevation, which had an attached shed-roofed awning at the first story to offer protection from the elements. The west elevation, which faced the river, only had windows, presenting a neat, plain, regular face to passing observers. Archaeologists confirmed that the building experienced continuous use from its initial construction

⁴²¹ Babson and Orser, *Pillars on the Levee*, Figure 12, 63

around 1840 to the turn of the twentieth century. The dates determined by studying the thickness of window glass fragments recovered from the site support this interpretation of the building's chronology, as did the mixture of machine-made cut nails (produced between 1830 and 1890) and wire nails (post-1890).⁴²² Some enslaved people probably lived in the flanker buildings. Knowing that the buildings were approximately twenty-nine feet by thirteen feet, had two rooms on the first story of the north building, and that they housed the kitchen, laundry, and garconniere, there might have been three or four chambers between the two buildings, measuring approximately fourteen by thirteen feet. If enslaved families lived in these spaces, they were significantly smaller than quarters found elsewhere on the plantation.

Pigeonniers were an outbuilding typology specific to Louisiana, a holdover from the state's French past. According to Barbara Bacot, domestic pigeons had value as ornamental birds, culinary delicacies, and as sources of fertilizer. Two-story pigeoniers were common; birds roosted in the upper story protected from predators, and the lower story had a doorway to allow an enslaved person to capture birds intended for the table or to collect dung for fertilizer.⁴²³ Albert Proctor, writing about Ashland in the 1930s, mentioned "a crenellated two-story brick pigeonier, also in ruins," on the property (Figure 3-54).⁴²⁴ An early twentieth-century photograph of the Ashland pigeonier revealed a nearly square, two-story building, probably brick covered in stucco, with two

⁴²² Babson and Orser, *Pillars on the Levee*, 79

⁴²³ Bacot and Poesch, *Louisiana Buildings*, 142-147

⁴²⁴ If this photograph depicts the pigeonier at Ashland, I am not sure how Proctor described the building as "crenellated." The structure in the photograph matches the other buildings on Ashland (the brick covered by stucco and the straightforward architecture looks similar to the flanker building.) Albert Proctor, "Belle Helene: Three Word Elegy on Tomb is Tribute to Famed Leader," *The Progress*, November 11, 1938, Plantations, Belle Helene, Ephemera Collections, LRC, H-T ML, TU

window openings in the second story. Above the openings was a perch with a series of round-arched openings perforating the structure underneath the roofline. The roof was a shingled, pyramidal hipped roof, crowned by a finial. The pigeonniers appeared on the 1847 Powell map, located behind the outbuildings, flanking them.

At the back of the yard was a paddock, and in the center of the paddock was a one-story house or cottage, the residence of G.W. Graves. Behind the house, a stable housed yearling horses. Comparing Rosella Kenner Brent's memories with the 1847 map supports many of her descriptions, although the precise location of Graves' house is not clear (Figure I-1). The map shows a stable behind the main house, with a smaller, unlabeled building in close proximity to the south. This may have been Graves' cottage. Rosella was clear that the stable was behind Graves' one-story cottage. She recalled how she and her siblings would listen for Graves to stir in the mornings; the house closer to the mansion house would allow the children to watch out for him. Graves ate breakfast and supper with the family in the mansion house, indicating that he lived close enough to be part of everyday rituals.⁴²⁵ There was a social component as well. Graves, though not a landowner, was a trusted associate of Duncan Kenner. The location of his residence near the mansion house confirmed and communicated his status on the plantation.

There were multiple stables at Ashland. Stables for workhorses and mules were part of the working complex on the plantation. Kenner had a stable for his yearling colts, and probably had additional stables for his family's personal horses, carriage horses, and for his valuable racehorses. One or all of these buildings may have resembled the stable

⁴²⁵ Rosella Kenner Brent, *George W. Graves*, Rosella Kenner Brent Papers, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

at Uncle Sam Plantation, downriver from Ashland in St. James Parish (Figure 3-55). The Uncle Sam stable, captured by the Historic American Buildings Survey, was a brick building with a gable roof, the gable ends treated with a parapet wall. A two-story structure, the lower story had stalls for individual animals, and spaces for storage. The upper story, a loft-like space, was additional storage space for supplies or feed. Doors and windows had horizontal slats, to promote ventilation in the stable. The 1847 Powell map identified a stable approximately 150 meters southeast of the main house; the nearby structures probably were additional stables and the carriage house (Figure I-1). Located in closely cropped pasture about 500 meters from the river, the stables were easily visible from passing steamboats. Also included on the 1847 map, approximately 600 meters to the southeast of the mansion house was Kenner's racetrack, which measured one mile and eleven feet in circumference, for training his prized racehorses. According to family legend, one evening an enslaved coachman drove some guests at Ashland onto the track instead of the road.⁴²⁶ No one recorded if the coachman was unfamiliar with the plantation landscape and made a mistake in the dark, or if he was pulling a joke, to see how long he could fool his passengers before they realized his mistake. Duncan Kenner liked to stand on the second-story gallery of Ashland and watch the horses running on the track; at a distance of about 600 meters, activity on the track would have been easily visible over cleared cane fields.⁴²⁷ Union soldiers who landed at Ashland in July 1862

⁴²⁶ "Duncan Kenner, Grey Fanny, and Ashland Plantation," *The Thoroughbred Record*, August 8, 1925, 66-67

⁴²⁷ Babson and Orser, *Pillars on the Levee*, 16

requisitioned all but two of Kenner's horses, taking an estimated sixty animals.⁴²⁸

Subtracting carriage horses, personal mounts, and workhorses, Kenner's racing stable may have had approximately twenty horses. Kenner used enslaved grooms, trainers, and jockeys to ride and manage his stock, including Abe Hawkins, an enslaved trainer and jockey who worked at Ashland, and later at Saratoga.⁴²⁹

Even though they do not remain on the landscape, Ashland had a range of domestic outbuildings typical for large sugar plantations along the Mississippi River. Regionally specific structures like pigeoniers and garconniers stood within the Ashland domestic core, along with universally necessary structures like kitchens, wash houses, carriage houses, and stables. Duncan Kenner's keen interest and investment in horseracing added elements to the domestic core of Ashland, including George Washington Graves' house, the stable for yearlings, training paddock, and the racetrack.

With its location on the heavily traveled Mississippi River, Ashland and its domestic core were the most visible of the three case studies in this project. Ashland followed regional precedents, with the mansion house centered between flanking outbuildings. Evergreen plantation and Uncle Sam plantation featured similar organization, with the domestic core laid out symmetrically, in subordinate positions to the mansion house (Figure 3-56). Complicating matters at Ashland are the disappearance of the outbuildings from the domestic core landscape. Without the structures and archaeological explorations, recreations of the domestic core become largely conjectural.

⁴²⁸ Rosella Kenner Brent, *Recollections of the Federal Raid Upon Ashland Plantation*, Rosella Kenner Brent Papers, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

⁴²⁹ Harry Worcester Smith, "Duncan F. Kenner, Grey Fanny, and Ashland Plantation," 66-67

Historic photographs of the buildings at Ashland, many taken in the 1930s, do not offer much help. By that time, the buildings suffered years of neglect and were highly deteriorated. The photographs reveal surprisingly shabby, low-style architecture without embellishments. The appearance of the Ashland outbuildings is particularly striking when compared with the south garconniere at Uncle Sam (Figure 3-57). Even facing imminent demolition, the Uncle Sam garconniere has a level of architectural finish, particularly the Classical portico, that Ashland's outbuildings lacked. The layout of the kitchen, wash house, pigeonniers, and garconniere suggest that Ashland followed regional patterns that privileged symmetrical organization of the domestic core, and photographs show the outbuildings were brick with a colored wash, the same material as the mansion house. Just enough evidence remains to recognize regional typicality for the organization of the domestic core, even though the outbuildings do not appear to have contributed to an architecturally cohesive built environment.

The domestic cores of Millford, Melrose, and Ashland included typical buildings to support the lifestyles of the elite white families living in the mansion house. By the 1840s, the types of buildings in the domestic cores had standardized into kitchens, wash houses, smokehouses, privies, and space for enslaved domestic people to live. Some houses, like Melrose, had a dairy; in Louisiana, it was common to have pigeonnières and a garconniere, like Ashland. Landscapes of domestic work regularized into planned, symmetrical zones on the property, and the structures often shared building materials and simplified architectural features with the mansion house. Architectural consistency with the mansion house

communicated a strong message that the working spaces were an indivisible, if secondary, part of the domestic complex.

Architecture of the Great House

“Farar is again at Killarney, and seems much interested in his new occupation. He says it is pretty hard times there, playing bachelor and is looking forward to Mary's presence to civilize housekeeping--but I doubt whether she can go up for some time yet.”⁴³⁰

When Farar Conner married Mary Elizabeth McMurren, the young couple expected to begin their lives together at Killarney, a contributing plantation in Concordia Parish, Louisiana, only a short distance from Natchez (Figure 2-1). In their newly built house, Farar and Mary Elizabeth practiced the duties and responsibilities of plantation management, housekeeping, and owning enslaved people, conducted on a manageable scale for young, inexperienced planters. Everything about life on Killarney was at a different scale from Mary Elizabeth's life at Melrose – the house, the presence of enslaved people, and the kinds of socializing that happened. As an alternative to the landscape of the plantation network hub, Killarney and the other great houses discussed in this section revealed a different plantation narrative than Melrose, Millford, and Ashland. Situated in and indivisible from working plantation landscapes, great houses on contributing plantations reinforce how plantation networks shaped the appearance and operation of the mansion houses.

⁴³⁰ Mary Louisa McMurren to Mrs. John T. McMurren, Jr., Melrose, February 28, 1857 McMurren-Austen Family Papers 1857 Correspondence 1:3, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

The only surviving main house on one of Melrose's contributing plantations, the house at Killarney is a modest, yet comfortable, Creole cottage. This was a common house type in Louisiana also known as four-room and raised cottages, found in both urban and rural situations. Creole cottages in Louisiana had a four-room plan, slightly raised off the ground, two rooms deep with no interior hallways, and single story height under a steep roof.⁴³¹ In Louisiana, many builders altered the back of the house, placing an open gallery between small rooms in the back corners of the house called cabinets. Late antebellum examples like Killarney, probably constructed in the mid-1850s, adapted the form with still-fashionable Grecian Revival elements, like the central passage way and symmetrical organization of the façade.⁴³² The central passage was an important feature. It was familiar to Anglo-American residents of Louisiana. The long, open space between rooms funneled breezes through the house, creating significantly more comfortable interior spaces on hot Louisiana days. The central hall transitioned smoothly into the back gallery in terms of circulation and access within the house. It was, literally and figuratively, a link between traditional Louisiana architecture, with roots in the Italian Renaissance, and influences from the rest of the United States.

Even though the house at Killarney, constructed for John McMurran's daughter and son-in-law, shared many characteristics with the house at adjoining Canebrake Plantation, there are several important differences. Both Killarney and Canebrake were five-bay, central hall houses, with a full front porch and a back gallery with cabinet

⁴³¹ Bacot and Poesch, *Louisiana Buildings*, 47-50

⁴³² The 1858 map of Killarney identifies the "new house," evidence that McMurran was responsible for the construction of the existing building. Lemuel Parker Conner and Family Papers OS:C Folder 3 of 4, LLMVC, LSU Libraries; Bacot and Poesch, *Louisiana Buildings*, 102

rooms. Canebrake, built for the plantation overseer of an absentee owner, only had two main rooms, with the smaller cabinet rooms creating the expected four-room plan.⁴³³

Killarney, intended for McMurren's daughter, was larger, with four main rooms, in front of the back gallery and flanking rooms. The size of the house and the level of finish on the interiors indicate that the main house at Killarney was a higher-quality structure than the usual overseer's residence.

"I am glad your roses are blooming so finely, they must be all the more sweet as John's morning offering--and I am quite sure, dear One, you would prefer the "log cabin", brightened with such love gifts, to a palace without them."⁴³⁴

To Alie Austen McMurren, Melrose was the epitome of an elegant, luxurious home. Conversely, Alie routinely referred to Riverside as a "log cabin" or "log hut," a descriptor she clearly picked up from Mary Louisa McMurren. The main house at Riverside, the residence of Valentine O'Bryan and his family (the overseers) before John took possession of the property in 1855, was doubtless a modest building. Soon after her first arrival, Alie wrote to her sister, "I found myself in my own house--sounds grand don't it Pattie, it might be made a fine house, the rooms are large, ceilings good height and a fine hall--but I think John is wise in determining to build--I don't think he has any of the Austen talent of "fixing up."⁴³⁵ To her father, Alie reported on the state of the house, claiming that an Austen would

⁴³³ Elliott, Miller, and Stewart, eds., *The Natchez District: Architecture and Cultural Landscape*, 75

⁴³⁴ Mary Louisa McMurren to Mrs. John T. McMurren, Jr., Melrose, April 8, 1859, McMurren-Austen Family Papers 1859 Correspondence 1:5, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

⁴³⁵ Mrs. John T. McMurren, Jr. to Pattie Gilbert, Riverside, November 11 [1856], McMurren-Austen Family Papers 1856 Correspondence 1:2, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

be able to easily turn it into a large, two-story house, but with a ready supply of mature timber and an enslaved labor force, it was easier to tear down and rebuild in Mississippi.⁴³⁶

Riverside was an I-house. Usually associated with farms and plantations in Virginia, North Carolina, Kentucky, and Tennessee, the I-house form came to Mississippi in the early nineteenth-century with settlers from the upper South.⁴³⁷ A more polished house form than the log-cabin or dog-trot, I-houses often had log cores; later additions frequently covered the log construction with siding to present a more permanent face on the landscape. The Hilliard House, a log I-house built around 1840 in south-central Mississippi by a family from North Carolina is a good example of the form, and probably resembles the house at Riverside (Figure 3-58).⁴³⁸ The bricked-over façade of the Hilliard House hides a two-story, finely crafted, log building; the logs bear roman numerals, a trick used by carpenters to insure correct placement in the structure and the corners were half-dovetailed, a more labor-intensive and stronger bond that created structural stability. Still, the building was log; later owners even removed the weatherboarding and added brick to the façade to make a statement about financial prosperity and permanence in the region.

Log buildings like Riverside required frequent and extensive maintenance, performed by enslaved workers in the Melrose network. In August 1857, John McMurran Sr. initiated renovations at the house at Riverside, which included replacing the roof and

⁴³⁶ Alice Austen McMurran to George Austen, Riverside, November [1856] McMurran-Austen Family Papers 1856 Correspondence 1:2, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

⁴³⁷ Kniffen, "Folk Housing," 7-9, 13-16

⁴³⁸ Hilliard House, Lawrence County, Mississippi, Historic Sites Survey, no. 19, Mississippi Department of Archives and History, accessed online at <http://www.apps.mdah.ms.gov/nom/prop/18015.pdf> on April 12, 2013

exterior weatherboards and replastering the interior.⁴³⁹ A week later, Mary Louisa

McMurren reported the results to her son, saying

“Father had the house examined for plastering, concluded the lower rooms could not be done without putting in an entire frame inside to plaster to, the logs are so uneven, and the cutting and hammering might endanger the stability of the whole, so he will have the upper rooms plastered and leave the lower until John comes home, and he can then determine as he thinks best about it. The house will be reroofed, the first thing.”⁴⁴⁰

A few days later, John McMurren, Sr. elaborated on the plans for the house at Riverside, informing his son,

“I returned from the plantation Thursday. Dixon and Robert will get to covering the dwelling this week after Mr. Henry attends to bracing the gin building which is indispensable. I was afraid to miss the lathing & plastering of the lower rooms, and will leave that for your action after your return, as Alice and Baby can remain home till it is done, if you determine on it. I will have the two upper rooms and passage prepared for lathing and plastered as soon as possible after the Boys have covered the house. I hope this will be done by your return; being weatherboarding, there is no difficulty.”⁴⁴¹

These reports on the pace and scope of work at Riverside reveal the building’s disrepair.

The roof leaked, and threatened to blow off in a windstorm. The logs on the first story were unstable, their condition doubtless worsened by the failure of the siding. Riverside was a great house, built cheaply, without any of the architectural flourishes found at the plantation hub.

Riverside had domestic buildings to serve as a kitchen, laundry, smokehouse, well, privy, stable, and barns, but little information about the layout or construction of the support

⁴³⁹ Mary Louisa McMurren to John T. McMurren, Jr., Melrose, August 23, 1857 McMurren-Austen Family Papers 1857 Correspondence 1:3 LLMVC, LSU Libraries

⁴⁴⁰ Mary Louisa McMurren to Mrs. John T. McMurren, Jr., Melrose, August 28, 1857 McMurren-Austen Family Papers 1857 Correspondence 1:3 LLMVC, LSU Libraries

⁴⁴¹ John T. McMurren to John T. McMurren, Jr., August 30, 1857 McMurren-Austen Family Papers 1857 Correspondence 1:3 LLMVC, LSU Libraries

buildings remains. Using Hilliard House as a guide, the smokehouse, was hewn log, joined by half-notches, a less refined cut than the half-dovetails at the main house (Figure 3-59).⁴⁴² Log construction was common for smokehouses, which needed to be strong, secure, and easily replaceable if destroyed by fire.⁴⁴³ Other support buildings at Riverside were likely log, although the kitchen and laundry may have been covered by clapboards. Riverside had an extensive vegetable garden to support John and Alie McMurran. Bill Taylor was in charge of the garden, for which Mary Louisa McMurran often provided the seeds from Melrose. Riverside probably had a poultry house; letters from Melrose often commented on the state of the turkeys, which were food sources for John and Alie McMurran.⁴⁴⁴ No records show if enslaved people raised poultry individually, or if enslaved people received poultry on a regular basis.

Information about the buildings located on Moro, the McMurran's other plantation in Concordia Parish, Louisiana, came from an advertisement for the sale of the property, published in a New Orleans newspaper in December 1851. McMurran purchased the lower half of the property in partnership with A.M. Vardeman, who, with his family, took residence on the plantation, inhabiting the dwelling house and using the domestic outbuildings described in the ad. That McMurran and Vardeman were able to "take possession and go to work immediately," as recorded in a letter of January 1852,

⁴⁴² Hilliard House, Lawrence County, Mississippi, Historic Sites Survey, no. 19, Mississippi Department of Archives and History, accessed online at <http://www.apps.mdah.ms.gov/nom/prop/18015.pdf> on April 12, 2013

⁴⁴³ John Michael Vlach, *Back of the Big House: The Architecture of Plantation Slavery*, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 63-76

⁴⁴⁴ John T. McMurran to John T. McMurran, Jr., Melrose, August 8, 1857 McMurran-Austen Family Papers 1857 Correspondence 1:3, LLMVC, LSU Libraries; Mary Louisa McMurran to Mrs. John T. McMurran, Jr., Melrose, August 28, 1857 McMurran-Austen Family Papers 1857 Correspondence 1:3 LLMVC, LSU Libraries

suggests that the house and domestic outbuildings were on the lower half of the property, the portion purchased by the partners.⁴⁴⁵

Tantalizingly, the advertisement described the plantation as having a “fine, brick Dwelling House, brick Kitchen, with good out-houses, garden, cisterns,” in addition to agricultural structures, houses for enslaved workers, and improved land cleared of timber.⁴⁴⁶ No other descriptions of the house, kitchen, outhouses, garden, or cisterns survive, and the buildings no longer exist. The structure may have looked like the Hilliard House, the log I-house used as a proxy for Riverside, after that building received its veneer of brick. It also may have been a story and a half planters’ cottage, like Killarney, although that kind of house was almost exclusively timber frame. The garden mentioned in the advertisement did not disappoint; letters from Melrose record receiving peaches and nectarines from Moro during the summer, to the delight of the McMurran family.⁴⁴⁷ Located on the Mississippi River, Moro, like Riverside, had a steamboat landing, which was the primary point of transport for people, goods, and information to and from the plantation.⁴⁴⁸

Even though Bowden became a contributing plantation in the Ashland network with Kenner’s purchase of it in 1858, owner Hore Browse Trist constructed the plantation

⁴⁴⁵ Mary Louisa McMurran to Frances Conner, n.d., probably late January 1852, Edward Turner Papers, Series S-120, Folder 1:16, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

⁴⁴⁶ *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, December 23, 1851, 3

⁴⁴⁷ Mary Louisa McMurran to Mrs. John T. McMurran, Melrose, July 20, 1857, McMurran-Austen Family Papers 1857 Correspondence 1:3, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

⁴⁴⁸ John T. McMurran to John T. McMurran Jr., Natchez, March 9, 1858, McMurran-Austen Family Papers 1858 Correspondence 1:4, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

buildings as if they were the primary structures on a primary plantation.⁴⁴⁹ There is no evidence that Trist had a plantation network, so his greatest investments went into the structures on Bowden. The great house on Bowden had many of the architectural features found at neighboring Ashland, including a gallery across the front and glass doors that opened onto the gallery from the interior rooms.⁴⁵⁰ A letter from Hore Browse Trist to his daughter Wilhelmina in New Orleans gave some room dimensions, including a room that measured sixteen and a half feet by fifteen feet and a bedroom that measured thirteen feet by sixteen feet.⁴⁵¹ At Ashland, the rooms were slightly larger, measuring approximately twenty feet by twenty-one feet, with the smallest room at the back measuring twenty feet by twelve and a half feet. If, as at Ashland, the rooms upstairs retained the dimensions of the downstairs rooms, the information from Bowden revealed a spacious house, even if it was slightly smaller than Ashland. The house probably featured a central hallway, with rooms opening from the hall on both sides. In a letter to her sister in 1853, Virginia Jefferson Randolph Trist described the “old house” at Bowden, which referred to the age of the house (probably older than neighboring

⁴⁴⁹ The Trists were cousins of the Kenners, and it seems likely that when Kenner purchased Bowden in 1858, he allowed his orphaned cousins to retain residency in the great house. There is no evidence that Kenner or an overseer ever lived in the building. The closeness of the families, Rosella Kenner Brent’s recollections of living alongside their Trist cousins in New Orleans, and Virginia Jefferson Randolph Trist’s discussions of the fluidity with which family members spent time between Ashland and Bowden suggest that the great house at Bowden remained a place for the Trist children to go when they were not living in New Orleans. By adhering to a different use, the great house at Bowden neither fits the pattern of a hub nor a contributing plantation. If the Trist children remained the primary inhabitants of the house, as suggested by the lack of information about the great house at Bowden in Duncan Kenner’s 1887 probate inventory, the great house divorced itself from the working plantation landscape administered by Duncan Kenner.

⁴⁵⁰ Virginia Jefferson Randolph Trist to Nicholas P. Trist, Bowden, November 25, 1852, Folder 159 in the Nicholas Philip Trist Papers #2104, SHC, UNC

⁴⁵¹ Hore Browse Trist to Willie (Wilhelmina) Trist, Bowden, October 30, 1856, Trist Family Collection Folder 21, HNOC, NO

Ashland) or the lack of recent renovations or updates.⁴⁵² Remaining plantation records from Bowden do not include evidence of a construction project on the great house during the Trist's period of ownership, 1841-1858, supporting Virginia Jefferson Randolph Trist's claim that the house was old.

The domestic core at Bowden was probably very similar to other Mississippi River sugar plantations. The organization of buildings was symmetrical, constructed to reinforce a hierarchy of structures culminating in the great house, and contained in a fenced yard that physically separated the domestic core from the working plantation. Not only was the effect visual, but symmetrical domestic cores created efficient spaces that were easily supervised. In this way, the domestic core at Bowden was similar to domestic cores at all residences, where the primary goal was to attend to the needs and wishes of the white inhabitants of the great house.

The history of the residential structure on Riverton mirrors John Manning's changing relationships with the properties in his plantation network. During the 1840s, while John Manning co-managed his wife's inheritance with his brother-in-law, he probably stayed at Houmas House during his visits to Louisiana.⁴⁵³ Houmas House, now a famous tourist destination, was John S. Preston's home, which he and Caroline Hampton Preston renovated extensively circa 1840 (Figure 3-60).⁴⁵⁴ Writing to his

⁴⁵² Virginia Jefferson Randolph Trist to Mary Randolph, Bowdon, February 13, 1853, Folder 160, Nicholas Philip Trist Papers #2104, SHC, UNC

⁴⁵³ John Manning's ownership of the property began with his marriage to Susan Hampton in 1838, and, until the late 1840s, he managed the property in collaboration with his brother-in-law, John S. Preston. The two absentee owners shared overseers and resources like sugarhouses (there were five individual sugarhouses on the combined property), managed through overseers. Preston took the Conway, Donaldson, and Clarke sugarhouses, combined under the name "Houmas," while Manning took the Riverton and Point Houmas sugarhouses.

⁴⁵⁴ Mary Ann Sternberg, *Along the River Road: Past and Present on Louisiana's Historical Byway* (Baton

mother in 1842, John Manning addressed the letter from Houmas.⁴⁵⁵ A letter to Sallie Clarke in 1847 offers further evidence that Manning stayed at Houmas House while he was in Louisiana. He wrote,

“There could be no place better adapted than this is at present for indulgence in the pleasures of memory or fancy. Save myself, there is no white inhabitant of this large mansion; and when the active labours of the day are over, I have no resource beyond those which exist in my own mind, but they are so numerous that I need no others.”⁴⁵⁶

Houmas House certainly fit the description of a “large mansion.”

Unfortunately, very little evidence for the house on Riverton plantation exists. Demolished in the early 1960s, it was not a subject for the Historic American Buildings Survey, and no plans and very few photographs are available for study. Located on a highly visible site close to the river, main house at Riverton probably shared characteristics with neighboring plantation houses like Houmas House, L’Hermitage, and Ashland. It was probably two stories, brick, organized symmetrically with a central front door, and had galleries on the façade.

Manning separated his interests from Preston in the late 1840s. By the early 1850s, missing Sallie and his young children, Manning mentioned plans for constructing a house to accommodate his family during visits to Louisiana. In April 1851, he wrote,

“I have much to do in ordering the necessary repairs upon the engine and mill and in putting up for ourselves a modest but comfortable little cottage

Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1996), 159

⁴⁵⁵ John L. Manning to Elizabeth Peyre Richardson Manning, New Orleans, January 4, 1839, WCM Papers R962b, SCL, USC

⁴⁵⁶ John L. Manning to Sallie Bland Clarke, Houmas, November 13 1847, WCM Papers, Folder 129, SCL, USC

for us to live in, for I cannot consent to come out here again without you and to live in another house I am sure is not agreeable to either of us.”⁴⁵⁷

In January 1852, in a letter to Sallie from New Orleans, Manning wrote, “I will endeavor to make such arrangements, as will make you comfortable at your own house hereafter.”⁴⁵⁸ In December 1855, D.H. Gordon mentioned visiting Manning’s new home on the Mississippi, proving that Manning fulfilled his promise to his wife for a new house.⁴⁵⁹ Unfortunately, the trail of evidence for construction or renovation of a great house at Riverton ends there. No payments or correspondence survives to illustrate how Manning pursued construction of a house at Riverton.

The Mississippi River Commission Map helps to reconstruct the domestic core of Riverton (Figure 2-8). A fence surrounded the domestic core, which had two small buildings off the back corner of the main house, and a slightly larger building at the corner of the yard. The only located photograph of Riverton reveals a sliver of a building, a two-story, stuccoed structure with two twelve-over-twelve windows and a vertical plank door (Figure 3-61). The scale of the building and the relationship between windows and door suggest this was an outbuilding, but no other information about the structure or its use can be determined. In scale and materials, the building appears very similar to the outbuilding at Ashland. The house and the fenced yard are in very close proximity to the two rows of houses, constructed for formerly enslaved cane workers. In antebellum Louisiana, the great house on a sugar plantation was typically a considerable

⁴⁵⁷ John L. Manning to Sallie Bland Clarke Manning, Houmas, April 21 1851 WCM Papers Folder 138 SCL USC

⁴⁵⁸ John L. Manning to Sallie Bland Clarke Manning, New Orleans, January 2, 1852, WCM Papers, Folder 140, SCL, USC

⁴⁵⁹ D. H. Gordon to John L. Manning, December 4, 1855, WCM Papers, Folder 151, SCL, USC

distance away from the enslaved community. Planters put houses for overseers and managers much closer to enslaved people, for reasons of surveillance. Comparing the site plans of Riverton/Upper Houmas and Houmas, the great house and domestic core at Houmas was at a distance from the houses for enslaved people, while the footprint of the Riverton domestic core was at the riverside front of the enslaved settlement. The smaller footprint of the house, less developed domestic core, and location all suggest that the house at Riverton operated more like an overseer's residence than a great house.

Conclusion

Millford, Melrose, and Ashland all have architectural characteristics that exhibit a range of sources and references that spans from national to local influences. Whereas the majority of Millford's inspiration is easy to identify as national, with the heavy reliance on Minard Lafever's *Beauties of Modern Architecture*, small details reveal that Millford also spoke a local dialect. In a brief study of ceiling heights in contemporary, Grecian Revival houses from around the country, houses in the south consistently had higher ceilings. Of the sample, Millford had the highest ceilings of all, looming almost three feet higher than the ceilings at Andalusia, Nicholas Biddle's house outside of Philadelphia. Melrose and Ashland had varied sources. Both houses relied heavily on national trends, usually expressed through patternbooks, but kept strong associations to local architectural traditions. Melrose has a plan that is unusual for contemporary Natchez buildings, but features like the jib window and the punkah in the dining room were commonplace in houses of the region. Ashland's screen-like, peripteral columns

referred to building traditions from Louisiana's French period and accommodated the sub-tropical climate.

The exterior architecture of Millford, Melrose, and Ashland show confident handling of the simplified massiveness characteristic of Grecian Revival architecture, and the interiors resulted from Grecian Revival planning principles. Millford, Melrose, and Ashland all have central hallways (even if the hall at Melrose is an adaptation), offset staircases, double-parlors separated by pocket doors, and rooms that centered fireplaces between windows. Each of these features communicated the Grecian Revival aesthetic of flow, simplicity, symmetry, and balance.⁴⁶⁰ At the same time, even as Grecian influences spread across the United States, a breakdown of the sources, plans, and columns at Millford, Melrose, and Ashland revealed how powerful regional architectural traditions remained. At each of these houses, national and local architectural adaptations touch, complicating and diversifying an easy understanding of the architecture of southern mansions.

The popularity of Grecian Revival architectural forms in plantation network hubs resulted from popular patternbook sources from the north, including Asher Benjamin and Minard Lafever. Furthermore, Grecian architecture held associations with political and social power. It was the preferred style for contemporary government and civic buildings throughout the United States, including Girard College, Philadelphia (completed in 1847), customs houses in Boston, New York, Charleston, and New Orleans, the St. Charles Hotel

⁴⁶⁰ For fuller descriptions of the Grecian Revival in America, please see Roger G. Kennedy, *Greek Revival America* (New York: Stewart, Tabori, & Chang, 1989); Talbot Hamlin, *Greek Revival Architecture in America* (New York: Dover, 1964, reprint of 1944 edition); and Maynard, *Architecture in the United States*

in New Orleans by James Gallier and James Dakin, and Gallier's New Orleans City Hall (Figures 3-24 and 3-62). Manning, McMurran, and Kenner probably saw some or all of these buildings during their travels and incorporated these forms into their mansion houses. Sallie Manning knew that John Manning would be thrilled by Mrs. Tolcott, who, imagined New York upon visiting Millford.⁴⁶¹ Millford was the most academic of the three hubs, relying heavily on an identifiable source. At Melrose, where Byers' used Asher Benjamin, and at Ashland, with simplified forms that resembled Lafever's plates, everyone from locals to visitors from the north and abroad recognized the Classical elements deployed on the mansion houses at the hubs as statements of social standing, wealth, and power.

John Manning, John McMurran, and Duncan Kenner approached the organization and construction of the domestic cores at Millford, Melrose, and Ashland in many of the same ways that they approached the planning and construction of the mansion house. At Millford, John Manning strove to establish a comprehensive appearance on the property. He engaged Nathaniel Potter to design the flanking outbuildings, the gate, and the carriage house, and constructed the other buildings aesthetically conversant with the mansion house. For the domestic core at Melrose, John McMurran utilized local building traditions popular in houses of the Natchez elite. The layout and design of the Melrose outbuildings followed the tendency in Natchez to build a complimentary work zone to support the suburban villa. Most of the outbuildings at Melrose looked very similar to outbuildings found on contemporary suburban villas and plantation houses. At Ashland, Duncan Kenner engaged

⁴⁶¹ Sallie Bland Clarke Manning to John L. Manning, Millford, May 23 1855, WCM Papers, Folder 149, SCL, USC

in local building types and planning practices, including pigeonnières and a garçonnier in his domestic core. Ashland deviated from regional norms because of Kenner's involvement in horseracing. His hobby shaped a significant portion of the domestic core's built environment, creating a landscape with coexisting typical and unusual characteristics. At Millford, Melrose, and Ashland, the domestic core featured architecture that was complimentary to, but never competed with, the mansion house.

Mansion houses like Millford, Melrose, and Ashland, featured a range of influences that drew from national and local building traditions and fashions. On the contributing plantations, local traditions predominated. Never built to showcase wealth and social standing, great houses on contributing plantations were functional, working structures. Local building traditions that accommodated the climate, facilitated supervision of the enslaved people and plantation activities, and utilized efficient building materials and techniques dominated the design and construction of houses on contributing properties. Riverside was an I-house, with a log first story and a timber frame second story. The core of the house may have been a dog-trot, with two chambers flanking a passageway. Before John and Alie McMurren moved to the property, someone added the second story and enclosed the structure with boards. The form was efficient to heat and cool, and though functional, was far from stylish. Killarney was purpose-built for Mary Elizabeth McMurren Conner and her new husband. On the Louisiana property, a different form predominated – the Creole house, Anglicized with the insertion of the central hallway in the plan. Constructed for the McMurren's beloved daughter, Killarney had elements of recognizably stylish architecture, including the

symmetrical façade and diluted references to patternbook sources in the door frame and mantelpieces. Killarney grafted national influences onto a local form, creating a hybridized house that was probably common on contemporary plantations. A number of plantation houses in Concordia Parish share characteristics with Killarney. Canebrake, Lisburn, Lucerna, Roseland, and Fairview all featured a five-bay, symmetrical façade under an overhanging, gable roof, the portico supported by six thin columns, with a Grecian-inspired door frame at the center of the composition.⁴⁶² Other details differ, but the basic form remained largely the same.

Great houses and domestic cores on contributing plantations used regional plans, architectural details, and design sources, instead of the national influences identified at the hub of the plantation network. As James Bonner argued in the 1940s, the houses on contributing plantations were typical plantation houses - small, quickly constructed residences based on the predominant local building type.⁴⁶³ Even though examples are frustratingly rare, the I-house on Riverside and the Creole cottage on Killarney were not exceptional buildings. They were not houses built for rest and recreation, they did not employ architectural features to hide work or the presence of enslaved people, and they did not feature spaces for formal socializing. Designs and specifications for buildings of the domestic core on contributing plantations do not exist. Great houses had the full range of kitchens, wash houses, smokehouses, and privies, but, like the houses, these buildings followed local patterns.

⁴⁶² Fred Daspit, *Louisiana Architecture, 1840-1860* (Lafayette: Center for Louisiana Studies, University of Louisiana at Lafayette, 2006), 119, 379-383

⁴⁶³ James C. Bonner, "Plantation Architecture of the Lower South on the Eve of the Civil War," *The Journal of Southern History*, 1945, Vol. 11 (3), 370-388

In this chapter, the different architectural approaches to mansion houses and great houses are very clear. While mansion houses borrow liberally from architectural trends developed on a national scale, great houses stay grounded in local building traditions. The distinction does not exist for domestic cores, which closely follow local precedents for organization and building types across the plantation network. The domestic cores supporting mansion houses are on a larger scale and use more refined building materials than domestic cores at great houses, but both follow established local rules. The primary residence of the planter and his family and the houses on contributing properties played very different roles in the plantation network. The mansion house was a symbol of wealth, status, and a sophisticated appreciation of architecture. The great house was a functional building, the information center of the contributing plantation. On both kinds of houses, residents valued efficient, highly organized, easily surveilled kitchens, smokehouses, laundries, and other support buildings. Beyond differences in scale and architectural finish, domestic cores throughout the network suggest a similar standardization observed in the working landscapes of the plantation complex.

Objects and Fashion

“Manning is married to Susan Hampton...An independently wealthy young man, with a wife fond of show...”⁴⁶⁴ The wealthy man and his fond of show wife were avid consumers who left a rich and detailed material culture legacy. Manning’s well-documented purchases revealed a man (and wife) with strong aesthetic opinions, awareness of fashion, and the resources to procure the goods they wanted. Incorporating evidence from the hubs and contributing plantations of each network, the chapter asks questions about the process of consumption, from the development of desire to the organization of the house. The first section focuses on purchasing patterns used by Manning, McMurren, and Kenner to furnish the great house and working houses, followed by the consumption habits of enslaved people, revealing activities of well-informed participants in the pursuit of desirable objects. The next section discusses how people learned about fashionable goods and developed perceptions of desirability. Considered together, material culture from the three networks revealed planters’ and enslaved people’s complicated relationships with goods in the late antebellum period. Objects and furnishings are vital to a study of plantation networks and the presence of significant, surviving material culture was a requirement for the case studies in this dissertation.

Millford had the best documentation of objects and furnishings in the mansion house, with correspondence, bills of lading, inventories, and receipts between John Manning and the vendors he patronized. The present owner has purchased a number of

⁴⁶⁴ J.W. Miles to E.G.R. Henry, Esq., Moss Grove, May 13, 1838, Bryce Family Papers, 9165, South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina

the original pieces of furniture and returned them to the house, giving Millford the most complete set of original furnishings of the properties in this study. John Manning was interested in appearances and aesthetics. His purchasing patterns, the makers he patronized, and the ways he deployed furnishings and objects throughout the house revealed a man keenly aware of the ways that fashionable goods supported his self-presentation. A National Park Service site, Melrose benefitted from intensive study of the McMurran's correspondence, reported in the property's Historic Furnishings Report, which compiled family correspondence, inventories, and receipts to plan a historically accurate interpretation of the house.⁴⁶⁵ A few surviving pieces of McMurran furniture remain in Melrose. Information from these objects, including source and date of manufacture, present John McMurran as a quite different consumer from Manning. McMurran used furniture from his older house in Melrose, along with new objects to highlight the most socially important spaces in the house. His approach to self-presentation using fashionable goods seems more relaxed than the approach of Manning. Of the three primary plantations in this study, the least information survives about the furnishings at Ashland and the purchasing habits of Duncan Kenner and his family. Kenner's probate inventory, taken at his death in 1887, provided insight into the kinds of objects that remained at Ashland, but records of purchases, bills of lading, communication with vendors, and receipts from retailers and manufacturers no longer exist. Even more, the house is not open to the public, has not benefitted from a generous patron, or been the subject of intensive research like Millford or Melrose. The few well-

⁴⁶⁵ Carol Petravage, *Melrose Historic Furnishings Report*, Natchez National Historical Park (Harpers Ferry Center, National Park Service: Media Development Group, 2004)

known objects, particularly the series of Edward Troye portraits of Kenner's racehorses, have to represent Kenner's sensitivities to perceptions of fashion.

The study of material culture has expanded from traditional object connoisseurship to a wider study of consumer patterns, meanings behind purchases, and how relationships between people and goods contribute to larger questions about staking claims in a society. This chapter relies upon the groundbreaking research and interpretations of material culture scholars like Ann Smart Martin and Maurie McInnis, economic and social historians like Carole Shammas and Richard Bushman, and archaeologists, including Charles Orser, Jr., Barbara Heath, and Jean Howson.⁴⁶⁶ Each of these scholars contends with identifying objects, but pushes further, placing objects, buyers, and users into a larger context.

The purpose of this chapter is to use furniture, paintings, clothing, foodstuffs, and other objects to grasp the ways that plantation networks allowed John Manning, John McMurran, and Duncan Kenner to consume on a national scale. Networks allowed planters to act as wealthy consumers participating in national, not regional, trends in the

⁴⁶⁶ Ann Smart Martin, "Makers, Buyers, and Users: Consumerism as a Material Culture Framework," *Winterthur Portfolio*, Vol. 28, No. 2/3 (Summer - Autumn, 1993), pp. 141-157; Carole Shammas, "Explaining Past Changes in Consumption and Consumer Behavior," *Historical Methods*, 22:2 (1989:Spring), 61-67; Richard L. Bushman, *The Refinement of America: Persons, Houses, Cities* (New York: Vintage Books, 1992); Charles E. Orser, Jr., "Beneath the Material Surface of Things: Commodities, Artifacts, and Slave Plantations," *Historical Archaeology*, Vol. 26, 95-104; Barbara J. Heath, "Engendering Choice: Slavery and Consumerism in Central Virginia," in Jillian Galle and Amy E. Young, eds., *Engendering African American Archaeology: A Southern Prospective* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2004), 19-38; and Jean E. Howson, "Social Relations and Material Culture: A Critique of the Archaeology of Plantation Slavery," *Historical Archaeology*, Vol. 24, 78-91. Other important resources that shaped my approach include Drew Gilpin Faust, Edward D. C. Campbell, and Kym S. Rice, eds., *Before Freedom Came: African-American Life in the Antebellum South*, (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1991) and Angela D. Mack, Stephen G. Hoffius, eds., *Landscape of Slavery: the Plantation in American Art*, (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 2008).

same way that networks allowed planters to patronize and champion national, not regional, trends in the architecture and organization of the mansion house complex. As with architecture, planters participated in the pursuit of fashionable goods on a national scale, purchasing the same objects from the same makers as their social peers in the north. For enslaved people, the distancing effect of the plantation network, which physically removed the vast majority of enslaved people from plantation owners, resulted in opportunities to travel, earn money, and address personal or family needs and wants through purchases of desirable goods that augmented planter supplied objects like clothing and tools. Using hard-earned resources and exercising choice in purchasing goods was an important statement of individuality in a system hell-bent on ignoring the humanity of enslaved people.

Purchasing Patterns

“Millford far surpassed my expectations in every respect. The house is like an old Baronial hall, beautifully finished and furnished in every respect ... The furniture is all elegant but not fine, no carved roses about it but plain and substantial. The parlors are beautiful - The hall ... is enormously large with sofas and chairs of leather on either side and tables with marble tops on which are placed old busts which were dug from the earth in Italy.”⁴⁶⁷

For his newly constructed house, Millford, John Manning went to a single source to furnish his grand rooms, the well-established New York furniture maker, Duncan Phyfe. From his earliest large commissions in the first decade of the nineteenth century, Duncan Phyfe was a highly sought after cabinetmaker who remained in vogue throughout

⁴⁶⁷ Sallie Bland Clarke Manning to Mary Clarke, Millford, May 11, 1848, WCM Papers Folder 131, SCL, USC

the first half of the nineteenth-century. An immigrant from Scotland, by 1815 Phyfe gained recognition as a master craftsman, whose Grecian and classical furniture forms were valued nationwide. Although his popularity and market share declined in the 1830s, and he was particularly hurt by the economic crisis of 1837, Phyfe continued to produce furniture until he closed his shop in 1847.⁴⁶⁸ By the time Manning commissioned Phyfe for the furniture at Millford in 1840-41, Phyfe's business was struggling. The company did not produce many examples of the Old French and Rococo Revival styles that became fashionable in the early 1840s, and commentators like James Henry Hammond, a planter and politician from South Carolina criticized Phyfe for being, "as much behind the times in style as [they were] in price. He thinks it is still 1836."⁴⁶⁹ Hammond married the younger sister of Manning's sister-in-law, making Hammond and Manning distant relatives. The two men doubtless knew one another, but if Manning heard Hammond's opinions about Phyfe's high prices and outdated furniture, it did not deter him as a consumer. For Manning, Phyfe's furniture perfectly suited the aesthetic composition he envisioned for his house. Manning pursued Phyfe furniture to create a complete and sympathetic marriage of spaces and objects in his South Carolina house, a marriage of New York furniture with New York-derived Grecian Revival architectural elements.

⁴⁶⁸ Peter M. Kenny, Michael K. Brown, Frances F. Bretter, Matthew A. Thurlow, "Life of a Master Cabinetmaker" in *Duncan Phyfe: Master Cabinetmaker in New York* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art; New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2011), 3, 28, 49-52

⁴⁶⁹ James Henry Hammond to Catherine E. Hammond, August 25, 1840, quoted in Kenny, Brown, Bretter, Thurlow, "Life of a Master Cabinetmaker" in *Duncan Phyfe: Master Cabinetmaker in New York*, 52

In three separate shipments in 1841, Manning received furniture for his double-parlors, library, dining room, central hall, and upstairs bedrooms.⁴⁷⁰ Most of Manning's Phyfe-made furniture was in the Grecian Plain style, often described as "architectural."⁴⁷¹ Sensitive, skillful use of materials to express cornices and friezes were typical of Phyfe's work in this style, and a wardrobe made for Manning provides a good illustration (Figure 4-1). Delicate mahogany veneers created effects of tonal variation and contrast, enlivening a sturdy piece of furniture with voluptuous richness. The simplified, clean appearance of the Millford furniture, rendered in high quality materials with elegant upholstery, matched the architecture and ornamentation of the building, an essay in New York Greek Revival distilled through the pages of Minard Lafever's *The Beauties of Modern Architecture*.

Manning patronized the shop of Duncan Phyfe's brother, in business as Phyfe and Brother in 1842, for curtains, curtain hanging hardware, cornices, mattresses, pillows, and bolsters. Most of these materials arrived at Millford in January 1842, according to a surviving bill of lading.⁴⁷² John Kirkpatrick was John Manning's commission merchant in Charleston, responsible for receiving the shipments of furniture from New York and storing it until Manning provided instructions for moving the goods to Millford. Kirkpatrick's Charleston warehouses handled the communications, received, and stored

⁴⁷⁰ D. Phyfe and Son to John L. Manning, New York, June 2, 1841, WCM Papers, R962b, SCL, USC; Kirkpatrick to John L. Manning, Charleston, 4 June 1841, WCM Papers Folder 106, SCL, USC; D. Phyfe and Son to John L. Manning, New York, September 11, 1841, WCM Papers, R962b, SCL, USC; Kenny, Brown, Bretter, Thurlow, *Duncan Phyfe: Master Cabinetmaker in New York*, 146-147

⁴⁷¹ Zimmerman 2005a, 14, quoted in Kenny, Brown, Bretter, Thurlow, "Furniture from the Workshop of Duncan Phyfe," *Duncan Phyfe: Master Cabinetmaker in New York*, 93; Thomas Gordon Smith, "Living with Antiques: Millford Plantation in South Carolina," *Magazine Antiques*, 151 (May 1997), 739

⁴⁷² Phyfe and Brother to John L. Manning, New York, January 7, 1842, WCM Papers, R962b, SCL, USC

the large, three-part furniture order from Duncan Phyfe and Son in 1841. On June 4, 1841, Kirkpatrick wrote Manning that he received twelve boxes of furniture and the bill of lading, itemizing the contents of forty-seven boxes of furniture. Of the forty-seven boxes, some were too large to fit into the canal boats that ran on the rivers between Millford and Charleston. As no steamboats were going between Charleston and Millford, Kirkpatrick asked Manning for advice about how to get the furniture to the newly constructed house.⁴⁷³ In September 1841, a letter from D. Phyfe and Son announced the shipment of the rest of Manning's order, thirty-nine boxes, to Charleston, in the care of Kirkpatrick. Manning must have mentioned to the Phyfe company that he intended to store the shipment temporarily in Charleston, and that the objects might not arrive at Millford until the following spring. Phyfe counseled Manning that, should the furniture remain in Charleston for that length of time, it required unpacking and storage in dry rooms, to prevent any damage to the objects.⁴⁷⁴ Exposing objects to dampness in storage was a significant concern; in 1840, mirrors from Millford arrived in Charleston for storage at Kirkpatrick's warehouse. C.E. Potter, Nathaniel Potter's brother, wrote that if the mirrors remained in Charleston until the fall, they required a different location, as "Kirkpatrick's store is too wet."⁴⁷⁵ The process of transporting large and delicate objects from point of origin in New York, through Charleston, to Millford was a logistical challenge for even the best financed patrons.

⁴⁷³ John Kirkpatrick to John L. Manning, Charleston, June 4, 1841, WCM Papers, Folder 106, SCL, USC

⁴⁷⁴ D. Phyfe and Son to John L. Manning, New York, September 11, 1841, WCM Papers, R962b, SCL, USC

⁴⁷⁵ C.E. Potter to John L. Manning, Charleston, June 17, 1840, WCM Papers, Folder 99, SCL, USC

Even though no evidence suggests that Nathaniel Potter encouraged Manning to patronize Duncan Phyfe's shop for the furniture for Millford, he recommended sources and makers for other architectural and decorative elements in the house. Potter sourced the large mirrors between the windows in the double parlor and over first-story mantelpieces from New York artisans, as well as the glass in the panes in the double parlor.⁴⁷⁶ As he had in the development of the architectural program at Millford, Manning actively collaborated with Potter about the finish details of his house. He stipulated gilded framing around the mirrors in the double parlor, bronze framing for the dining room, and pressed Potter to find brown glass for the windows, instead of green, even though Potter offered a better price for the less appealing option (Figure 4-2).⁴⁷⁷ The windows and mirrors, one of the most expensive items in the house, came from Gay, Lussac, and Noël, a company that represented the "Royal Manufactory of St. Gobain, and the Manufactory of St. Quirin and Cirey, in France." Based in New York, with a store on Broadway, the firm advertised "French Looking-Glass Plates and Plate Glass."⁴⁷⁸

Although Manning mostly shopped in New York, he went to Philadelphia to commission the carved marble mantelpieces in the first and second story rooms at Millford. John Struthers, in business with his son by 1840, was a marble mason who

⁴⁷⁶ Thomas Gordon Smith, "Living with Antiques: Millford Plantation in South Carolina," 737

⁴⁷⁷ Nathaniel F. Potter to John L. Manning, New York, August 31, 1839, WCM Papers, Folder 88, SCL, USC; John L. Manning to Nathaniel F. Potter, Columbia, September 22, 1839, WCM Papers, Folder 89, SCL, USC

⁴⁷⁸ On March 11, 1840, Manning purchased mirrors from Gay, Lussac, and Noël, priced at \$2309.45. This was the single largest expenditure during the construction of Millford. Materials Receipt, Millford, 1839-1841, WCM Papers, Folder 86, SCL, USC; Contracted Price and Pay Schedule for Millford, WCM Papers, Folder 91, SCL, USC; Sheldon & Co., *Sheldon & Co.'s Business or Advertising Directory: Containing the Cards, Circulars, and Advertisements of the Principle Firms of the Cities of New-York, Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore, etc.* (New York: John F. Trow & Company, 1845), 124.

specialized in mantelpieces and funerary monuments. An advertisement for his firm, carved into a scrolled marble tablet, proclaimed that he could “execute every description of plain and ornamental marble work (Figure 4-3).”⁴⁷⁹ With his training as a stonemason, Struthers superintended construction for the Second Bank of the United States in Philadelphia under architect William Strickland, established a large marble-yard, and, in 1837, carved marble sarcophagi to house the remains of George and Martha Washington in the new tomb at Mt. Vernon.⁴⁸⁰

Manning worked directly with artists and art dealers, many with ties to New York, to fill his house with paintings and sculptures appropriate for a man of wealth, who wanted to demonstrate his education, taste, and appreciation of culture. Manning purchased art through Joseph Binda, a New York gallery owner with contacts to European aristocracy, who married into a prominent South Carolina family. Manning relied on friendships with artists Henry Inman and Thomas S. Cummings for advice in selecting works of art from Binda’s collections, which has suggested to some scholars uncertainty in his own aesthetic judgments.⁴⁸¹ On the other hand, Manning was an assertive, active participant in the design of his house and the selection of its furnishings. In no other field did Manning appear as a tentative patron. Perhaps he strove to be an informed purchaser, collaborating with celebrated artists to create a collection of art that expressed his vision of cultured taste. From Binda, Manning purchased several works of

⁴⁷⁹ “Struthers,” Index of American Sculptors, DAPC, Winterthur

⁴⁸⁰ John Thomas Scharf and Thompson Westcott, *History of Philadelphia: 1609-1884* (Philadelphia: L.H. Everts & Company, 1884), 2293; Peggy McDowell and Richard E. Meyer, *The Revival Styles in American Memorial Art* (Bowling Green: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1994), 6-7

⁴⁸¹ Kenny, Brown, Bretter, Thurlow, “Patrons of the Cabinet Warehouse,” *Duncan Phyfe: Master Cabinetmaker in New York*, 146

art with inaccurate attributions and questionable provenances, including *Roman Ruins*, a classical scene painted in seventeenth-century Italy and reworked by a later artist, and marble statuary that combined antique heads on eighteenth-century torsos (Figure 4-4).⁴⁸² The bust pictured here was one of the works that Sallie Bland Clark Manning mentioned to her mother upon arriving at Millford for the first time, describing “old busts which were dug from the earth in Italy.”⁴⁸³ For these works and others, Manning paid Binda the enormous sum of \$3600 in October 1839.⁴⁸⁴

Manning had a reputation as an appreciator of art. Stephen Elliott, an Episcopal bishop in Savannah, Georgia purchased a painting, *The Head of Leda*, from Binda. Concerned with the propriety of having a portrait of a mythological figure of questionable moral virtue in his collection (even though it was his favorite painting), Bishop Elliott heard that Manning admired the painting and had expressed a wish to own it. To quell his misgivings about owning a work with a potentially controversial subject matter, he offered the painting to Manning for \$400.⁴⁸⁵

Manning established personal relationships with artists, especially Henry Inman and James DeVeaux. Inman was a prominent portrait artist in the 1830s and 1840s, working primarily in New York. A bill of lading recorded a box from Inman arriving in

⁴⁸² Kenny, Brown, Bretter, Thurlow, “Patrons of the Cabinet Warehouse,” *Duncan Phyfe: Master Cabinetmaker in New York*, 146

⁴⁸³ Sallie Bland Clarke Manning to Mary Clarke, Millford, May 11, 1848, WCM Papers, Folder 131, SCL, USC)

⁴⁸⁴ Manning’s relationship with Binda lasted through the early 1840s. In 1843, Binda wrote Manning a letter, explaining his tardiness in repaying a loan, bemoaning the slow market, and promising to make sales and recoup payments to get Manning’s money back to him shortly. Account Statement: John L. Manning in account with Goodhue & Company, October 9, 1839, WCM Papers, Folder 91, SCL, USC; Joseph Binda to John L. Manning, New York, July 27, 1843, WCM Papers, Folder 115, SCL, USC

⁴⁸⁵ Bishop Stephen Elliott to John L. Manning, Savannah, December 14, 1841, WCM Papers, Folder 109, SCL, USC

Charleston in July 1839, probably contained a painting from the artist commissioned by Manning.⁴⁸⁶ In 1840, about to embark for Europe, Inman offered Manning the opportunity to commission a work from him, painted during his trip, with Manning paying half the agreed-upon amount up front and the rest once Inman finished the work.⁴⁸⁷ This was a common and mutually beneficial scheme, which allowed artists to raise funds for travel and supplies and patrons to receive works from Europe.

Manning entered into a similar agreement with James DeVeaux. Wade Hampton I patronized DeVeaux and sent him to Europe to develop his craft between 1836 and 1838. On his return to the United States, DeVeaux spent time in Columbia, Camden and at Millford and painted members of the Hampton family, including portraits of John Manning and Susan Hampton Manning. The Hamptons, John S. Preston, and Manning pooled resources to finance DeVeaux's return trip to Europe in 1841.⁴⁸⁸ Accounts with commission merchants Fox and Livingston revealed three advances to support DeVeaux while he was in Florence, Italy in 1842. These small payments of 96.35, 48.90, and 192.72, respectively, helped DeVeaux finance room and board during his travels.⁴⁸⁹ DeVeaux died in Rome in 1844, never returning to the United States.

For his large collection of silver tablewares, lamps, candelabra, and fireplace materials, Manning purchased goods through Hayden and Gregg, a prominent Charleston silversmith. Manning ordered three dozen full sets of formal silverware, along with the

⁴⁸⁶ John Kirkpatrick to John L. Manning, Charleston, July 27, 1839, WCM Papers, Folder 87, SCL, USC

⁴⁸⁷ Henry Inman to John L. Manning, New York, April 29, 1840, WCM Papers, Folder 97, SCL, USC

⁴⁸⁸ Robert W. Gibbes, M.D., *A Memoir of James DeVeaux of Charleston, S.C. Member of the National Academy of Design, New-York* (Columbia: J.C. Morgan's Letter Press Print, 1846), 40-46

⁴⁸⁹ Manning and Preston Accounts with Fox and Livingston, December 31, 1843 (debts and payments from 1842), WCM Papers, Folder 118, SCL, USC

accoutrements and accessories required at a finished dining table. He selected materials in the King's pattern, which featured an acroterion stamped on the handle of each piece, matching the motif used on architectural elements and furnishings throughout the house. He also ordered four gilded seven armed candelabra, to stand in between the columns in the double parlor, and bronze hanging lanterns, all of which remain in the house (Figure 4-5). Manning's bill with Hayden and Gregg totaled over \$5500, an enormous sum that reflected the vast quantities of luxury items Manning required to fill his house.⁴⁹⁰

Manning was not afraid to spend money on luxury items and his tendency towards lavish expenditures extended to clothing. In the collection of Manning papers at the South Carolinana Library, there are numerous invoices for clothing orders, many coming from tailors in New York, but some bought from retailers in Columbia and Charleston. John Manning was a dandy. His well-stocked wardrobe ran the gamut from satinet pants to drilling pantaloons and vests, to "Kentuck Jeans."⁴⁹¹ In 1846, Manning paid an outstanding bill of \$1770.15 to a seamstress named Mary Hood in New York.⁴⁹² C.F. Cantey, Susan Hampton Manning's aunt and the godmother to their newborn daughter, acknowledged John's reputation as a clotheshorse. Making a dress for her newborn goddaughter, Cantey knew that "My dear John will say 'Aunty, that's not the fashion,' whether or not, I know her good mother will take the will for the deed - and Papa will see his little daughter come out, for once in the antiquated taste, of his old aunt,

⁴⁹⁰ Col. John L. Manning in account with Hayden Gregg and Company, 1840-1844, WCM Papers, Legal Folder 22, SCL, USC; Kenny, Brown, Bretter, Thurlow, "Patrons of the Cabinet Warehouse," *Duncan Phyfe: Master Cabinetmaker in New York*, 151

⁴⁹¹ John L. Manning Account with A. Alexander, Columbia, April 22, 1840, WCM Papers, Folder 97, SCL, USC; Account with Antwerp Frank, Columbia, October 9, 1842, WCM Papers, Oversize: January 14, 1834 – January 10, 1842, SCL, USC

⁴⁹² Mary Hood to John L. Manning, New York, July 13, 1848, WCM Papers, Folder 127, SCL, USC

who loves him dearly in spite of modern taste and refinement.”⁴⁹³ James DeVeaux’s 1838 portraits of John and Susan Manning probably marked the celebration of their wedding and illustrated his sitters’ fashionable personas (Figures 1-4 and 1-6). John Manning appears as a dashing, young man on the rise, with his gleaming white shirt and elegant bowtie. The glimpse of shimmering white satin lining of Susan Hampton Manning’s cloak suggests the inherent luxury that surrounded her. Manning’s wives did not hesitate to spend money on clothing. Susan Hampton Manning ordered clothing from seamstress Mary Hallett in New York.⁴⁹⁴ Sallie Bland Clark Manning shared her husband’s proclivity for fancy dress. An 1859 receipt from a New York dressmaker recorded Sallie’s expenditure of \$240.99 for dresses, laces, and linings.⁴⁹⁵

At Millford, John Manning worked with Nathaniel Potter to develop the architectural program of the house using Minard Lafever’s 1835 *The Beauties of Modern Architecture* as a common resource and inspiration. To furnish the house, Manning again looked to New York as the source for one-stop shopping of furniture made by Duncan Phyfe. The decision to buy en suite from a single maker was unusual for planters in the 1840s and 1850s. Given Manning’s deep involvement in the architectural details and construction of his house, his pattern makes more sense. Manning wanted the furniture to complement the New York-based architecture and had the capital to realize his aesthetic ambitions. Moreso than McMurran or Kenner, Manning celebrated the visual

⁴⁹³ C.F. Cantey to John L. Manning and Susan Hampton Manning, January 9, 1844, WCM Papers, Folder 119, SCL, USC

⁴⁹⁴ John Kirkpatrick to John L. Manning, Charleston, March 8, 1839, Folder 84, SCL, USC

⁴⁹⁵ Mme. Dieden to Mrs. John L. Manning, New York, November 29, 1859, WCM Papers, Folder 171, SCL, USC

connections between spaces, architectural detail, and furniture at Millford. The full order of furniture and upholsteries, along with silver and tablewares, completed the furnishing program at Millford. Works of art were the only elements that Manning accrued over time, in collaboration with artists he befriended and patronized, art dealers he patronized, or from friends and peers who knew of his interests in art. Even though Manning did not purchase all of the artwork for Millford at one time, he only actively collected art for the house for a short duration, with most of the paintings and sculptures purchased by 1845.

“We were brought up into our room--and a glorious one it is--I like it better than any--four tremendous windows--one opening on gallery--high ceilings--and very handsomely[sic] furnished, walnut Large high post bedstead handsome[sic] curtains to it white embroidered--& pink ribbons in profusion--then a couch--or what we would call little french bedstead little write table--large handsome[sic] square table covered with handsome[sic] cloth--writing desk--bureau--easy chairs in abundance--& little reception chairs--toilette fixings--this dear Mamma with bright fire & bed already turned down you may imagine how inviting and home like it looked”⁴⁹⁶

Compare Alie Austen McMurran’s first account of spaces at Melrose with Sallie Bland Clarke Manning’s comments upon arriving at Millford. Whereas Sallie remarked on Millford’s public spaces, describing them almost as if she were visiting a museum, Alie’s letter tells her family about her bedroom. She lists every piece of furniture in the room, even detailing the embroidery of the bed hangings. Letters of two young brides encapsulate the furnishing approaches taken by John Manning and John McMurran, which reflect differences in taste and priority. Unlike John Manning, who purchased entirely new furniture for Millford in a very short span of time, John McMurran collected furnishings and works of art over a long period. Melrose, finished in 1849, did not have

⁴⁹⁶ Mrs. John T. McMurran, Jr. to George Austen, Melrose, November 13 [1856], McMurran-Austen Family Papers, n.d. Correspondence 2:4, McMurran-Austen Family Papers, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

entirely new furniture. Instead, McMurran bought strategically, adding to what he already owned to fill the larger rooms and update his suburban villa. To emphasize the social importance of the drawing room at Melrose, McMurran purchased a set of furniture in the latest style, highly carved Rococo Revival, to prove his familiarity with changing trends.

In contrast, the prominent placement of furnishings brought to Melrose from Holly Hedges in the front hall, dining room, and parlor suggests McMurran's comfort with older objects coexisting in a new house with more up-to-date furniture. The McMurrans probably represented a more typical approach to purchasing goods than Manning did, with his extraordinary ability to spend vast sums of money at once. As with furnishings, the McMurrans collected art over time, preferring portraits of family members and admired figures. Like Manning, the McMurran's purchased their silver tablewares at one time. Even though silver represented a large investment, it makes sense that people purchased it at one time, as a required accessory to the rituals of dining. Whereas Millford came together as a comprehensive whole, with furniture from a single source relating directly to the architectural decoration, Melrose resulted from a heterogeneous pattern of patronage.

Philadelphia was the primary market patronized by John McMurran. Even though New York furniture makers like Duncan Phyfe, Charles Lannuier, and Joseph Meeks have remained more famous in the twenty-first century, Philadelphia boasted a vibrant, growing cabinetmaking community in the first half of the nineteenth-century. During the 1820s and 1830s, Philadelphia had over 1,290 cabinetmakers, along with hundreds of

other furniture craftsmen.⁴⁹⁷ Among the makers competing with New York rivals were Anthony Quervelle and Charles H. White. Charles H. White was particularly popular with Natchez patrons; at least two owners of Arlington, a suburban villa outside Natchez, purchased numerous pieces of Charles White furniture in the 1830s and 1840s.⁴⁹⁸ Levin R. Marshall, one of the wealthiest citizens of Natchez, bought three boxes of Charles H. White furniture in 1836 for his house, Richmond; three years later, his order from White filled thirteen more boxes. Another nabob, Henry Chotard, received thirteen boxes of goods from White.⁴⁹⁹ Even though Philadelphia furniture was very popular among the planter elite in Natchez during the 1820s and 1830s, tastes and available goods changed in the 1840s and 1850s, as commission merchants and retailers in Natchez favored companies in New York, Boston, and Cincinnati to fill their orders.⁵⁰⁰ Despite the more diverse market available towards the middle of the century, some nabobs remained loyal patrons of Philadelphia cabinetmakers. John McMurren purchased furniture from Charles H. White beginning in the 1830s and continued into the 1850s.

Even though McMurren did much of his shopping in Philadelphia, he also bought from New York cabinetmakers. The New York firm J.W. Meeks & Son actively cultivated Southern customers, even opening a shop in New Orleans in the 1830s, and

⁴⁹⁷ Kathleen M. Catalano, "Cabinetmaking in Philadelphia, 1820-1840: Transition from Craft to Industry," *Winterthur Portfolio*, Vol. 13 (University of Chicago Press on behalf of the Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum, 1979), 81

⁴⁹⁸ The owners were Charlotte Catherine Surget Bingaman, who died in 1841, and Samuel S. Boyd, a Natchez lawyer and judge. William Scarborough, *The Surget Family Residences*, Z 1496, Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson, MS, accessed from http://mdah.state.ms.us/manuscripts/z1496_res.html on June 11, 2013; Jason T. Busch, "Such a Paradise Can be Made on Earth:" Furniture Patronage and Consumption in Antebellum Natchez, Mississippi 1828-1863, Masters' Thesis, University of Delaware, 1998, 184-185

⁴⁹⁹ Jason T. Busch, "Such a Paradise Can be Made on Earth," 186, 187

⁵⁰⁰ Jason T. Busch, "Such a Paradise Can be Made on Earth," 175

were fierce competitors to Duncan Phyfe's workshop.⁵⁰¹ The mahogany center table with a black and white marble top in the parlor at Melrose was an example of Meeks' furniture, an exact copy of a table advertised on the Joseph Meeks & Sons broadside, published in 1833 (Figures 4-6 and 4-7). Patrons could order the center table (no. 27) with a white marble top for eighty dollars, or with an Egyptian marble top for \$100.⁵⁰² John McMurren opted for the more exotic, more expensive Egyptian marble option. The Meeks label dated the table between 1829 and 1835; the center table was another object bought for Holly Hedges that transferred to the new house in the late 1840s. It is uncertain whether McMurren ordered the table directly from the makers in New York, through the Meeks' New Orleans shop, or through a commission merchant in Natchez.⁵⁰³ From New Orleans, McMurren patronized C. Flint & Jones, a retailing firm that imported furniture for the regional market.⁵⁰⁴ From C. Flint & Jones, McMurren bought a mahogany hat stand with Grecian scrolls and a neo-classical urn, with a stenciled label on the bottom of the drip pan (Figure 4-8).⁵⁰⁵

McMurren purchased furniture from local cabinetmakers and commission merchants, who acted as retailers by the 1840s and 1850s. Robert Stewart was a popular

⁵⁰¹ Kenny, Brown, Bretter, Thurlow, "Life of a Master Cabinetmaker" in *Duncan Phyfe: Master Cabinetmaker in New York*, 42, 50, 54-55; John N. Pearce, Lorraine W. Pearce, and Robert C. Smith, "The Meeks Family of Cabinetmakers," *The Magazine Antiques*, 85 (April 1964), 414-420; John N. Pearce and Lorraine W. Pearce, "More on the Meeks Cabinetmakers," *The Magazine Antiques*, 90 (July 1966), 69-73; Jodi Pollack, "The Meeks Cabinetmaking Firm in New York City: Part I, 1797-1835," *Magazine Antiques* Vol 161 no 5 (May 2002), 106

⁵⁰² Broadside for Joseph Meeks & Sons. Lithograph with hand coloring. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Mrs. R. W. Hyde, transferred from the Library, 1943

⁵⁰³ Jason T. Busch, "Such a Paradise Can be Made on Earth," 54

⁵⁰⁴ Steven G. Harrison, "The Nineteenth-Century Furniture Trade in New Orleans," *The Magazine Antiques*, 151 (May 1997), 58

⁵⁰⁵ Jason T. Busch, "Such a Paradise Can be Made on Earth," 167

cabinetmaker turned merchant who supplied many Natchez nabobs with objects ordered from manufacturers elsewhere. McMurran ordered two walnut wardrobes from Stewart in April 1862 at twenty-six dollars apiece. Two walnut armoires at Melrose have identical construction techniques, veneers, and pierced pediments, suggesting that these are the objects in question (Figure 4-9).⁵⁰⁶ A bed at Melrose, stamped by manufacturer Charles Lee of Manchester, Massachusetts was another piece probably ordered for McMurran by a retailer like Robert Stewart (Figure 4-10). Charles Lee beds were common in Natchez, clearly popular among wealthy patrons, and likely ordered through a local source.⁵⁰⁷

John McMurran was not an active patron of artists and sculptors in the way that John Manning was, although portraits of relatives and admired figures and other works of art adorned the walls of Melrose. A painting of a very young Mary Louisa Turner McMurran attributed to Matthew Harris Jouett painted in the 1820s hung at Melrose, along with portraits of other relatives (Figure 1-3). Born in Kentucky, Jouett specialized in portraits, having spent a few months studying under Gilbert Stuart in Boston. Like many artists in the early nineteenth century, Jouett traveled extensively to generate business, and must have spent a considerable period in Natchez taking portrait commissions. During his sojourn in Natchez in the mid-1820s, Jouett painted Mary Louisa's parents, Edward and Eliza Turner, as well as her older half-sister, Theodosia

⁵⁰⁶ Jason T. Busch, "Such a Paradise Can be Made on Earth," 100

⁵⁰⁷ Jason T. Busch, "Handsomely Furnished in the Most Fashionable Style: Art and Decoration along the Mississippi River," in *Currents of Change: Art and Life Along the Mississippi River, 1850-1860* (Minneapolis: The Minneapolis Institute of Arts, 2004), 88-89

Turner Griffin.⁵⁰⁸ Later in the nineteenth century, the McMurrans had photographs and daguerreotypes taken to record their likenesses for far-away friends and future relatives. Mary Louisa McMurren sent a daguerreotype of John McMurren to her future daughter-in-law, Alie, bemoaning the medium's failure to capture an accurate portrayal of her husband (Figure 4-11).⁵⁰⁹

In December 1848, the McMurrans purchased silver tableware from New York for Melrose, an order that included two-dozen sets of full place settings (table, dessert, and tea spoons, dinner and breakfast forks, silver knives, steel dessert knives, and accessories like salt spoons, sugar ladles and tongs, soup ladles, and chamber candlesticks.) The list reflected the objects sent to Natchez from New York, even though it did not identify the maker, seller, or the pattern of the silver.⁵¹⁰

Photographs of John and Mary Louisa McMurren reveal richly, but soberly, dressed people, not displaying the latest finery for the camera (Figures 4-11 and 4-12). There are several possible explanations. McMurren was slightly older than Manning or Kenner, and came to Natchez in his early twenties. Kenner was a second-generation New Orleanian, born into a family with extensive land holdings, and Manning's family had been in upcountry South Carolina for generations. McMurren became wealthy as a

⁵⁰⁸ American Painters Research Files: Matthew Harris Jouett, DAPC, Winterthur Library; William Barrow Floyd, *Matthew Harris Jouett: Portraitist of the Ante-Bellum South* (Lexington: Morlan Gallery-Mitchell Fine Arts Center, Transylvania University, 1980), 60-61; Vera Jacobs Speakes, *Mississippi Portraiture* (Laurel: National Society of the Colonial Dames of American in the state of Mississippi and the Lauren Rogers Museum of Art, 1987), 179, 266

⁵⁰⁹ Mary Louisa McMurren to Alice Austen, Melrose, Mar. 4th, 1856, McMurren-Austen Family Papers, Correspondence 1:2, LLMVC, LSU Libraries; Mary Louisa McMurren to Alice Austen, Melrose, August 4, 1856, , McMurren-Austen Family Papers, Correspondence 1:2, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

⁵¹⁰ Invoice of Plate Received from New York, December 4, 1848, McMurren John T. Papers, Box 1, Folder 1, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

lawyer who turned to planting as a secondary career, whereas Manning and Kenner were planters with political careers. McMurran was a member of the Natchez elite, but worked his way to social prominence, which may explain his slightly more reticent engagement with fashionable furnishings and clothing.

Remaining evidence of Kenner's consumption patterns revealed someone fluent in the latest styles and trends, with the capital to actively purchase fashionable goods from well-regarded manufacturers. Unfortunately, the scarcity of remaining objects and documentation only hint towards Kenner's purchasing patterns. His probate inventory, taken in 1887, revealed an amalgamation of furniture in Ashland at that time, with a large number of low-valued objects with little description of materials, details, or form. Judging from the probate inventory, Kenner's consumption patterns more closely resembled McMurran's approach, rather than Manning's. There is little evidence that he outfitted Ashland from a single source, and less indication that he planned for his furniture to complement the architecture of the house. Notwithstanding, Kenner pursued high-quality objects. His primary hobby, horse racing, had a strong material component; his engagement in horse racing in the 1840s and 1850s offers a window into the types of material culture he consumed and the artists and artisans he patronized. Kenner's patronage of Edward Troye in 1845 was an example of Kenner commissioning a single artist for a large commission, an approach to collecting fine art not seen at Millford or Melrose.

Proximity and convenience suggest New Orleans as the likely source of furnishings and objects at Ashland. More information survives about Kenner as a patron

of the arts, especially his very productive relationship with Edward Troye, a Swiss-born artist who specialized in portraits of racehorses. Beginning in the 1830s, Troye built a career traveling around the southern United States, painting portraits of people and prominent (and not-so-prominent) horses for wealthy owners. Based in Kentucky, Troye traveled extensively through Virginia, South Carolina, and down the Mississippi River to Natchez and Louisiana.⁵¹¹ In the *New Orleans Daily Picayune* on December 18, 1844, Troye advertised his studio in the city, offering portraits “in a new and most beautiful style” to the residents of the city.⁵¹² Shortly after his time in New Orleans, Troye went to Ashland, where he must have spent a considerable period of time painting portraits of six horses. Of the Ashland horses Troye painted, Grey Medoc was the most famous and most distinguished racer. Troye probably went to Ashland to paint Grey Medoc, but extended his stay and paint the other horses, including *Grey Fanny*, *Luda*, *Music*, *Pat Gallwey*, shown with Kenner’s jockey Chisholm in the saddle, and *Brittania*.⁵¹³ Of these paintings, only *Grey Fanny*, signed E. Troye, 1845, survives, found in an outbuilding at Ashland in the early 1920s (Figure 4-13).⁵¹⁴ Rosella Kenner Brent blamed the group of Federal soldiers who landed at Ashland in 1862 for destroying or stealing the rest of the portraits.⁵¹⁵

⁵¹¹ J. Winston Coleman, Jr., “Edward Troye: Kentucky Animal Painter,” *The Filson Club History Quarterly*, Vol. 33 (1959), 32-37

⁵¹² *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, December 18, 1844

⁵¹³ Alexander Mackay-Smith, *The Race Horses of America 1832-1872: Portraits and Other Paintings by Edward Troye* (Saratoga Springs: The National Museum of Racing, 1981) 147-150

⁵¹⁴ Coleman, Jr., “Edward Troye: Kentucky Animal Painter,” 37; Mackay-Smith, *The Race Horses of America*, 150; Harry Worcester Smith, “Duncan Kenner, Grey Fanny, and Ashland Plantation,” *The Thoroughbred Record*, August 8, 1925, 66-68.

⁵¹⁵ Rosella Kenner Brent, *Recollections of the Federal Raid upon Ashland Plantation*, Rosella Kenner Brent Papers, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

The portrait of *Luda* had a tempestuous history even before the Federal occupation of Ashland. In June 1845, very soon after its completion, the painting went missing. Kenner placed announcements in twelve editions of the New Orleans *Daily Picayune* through June and July, searching for information about the painting's whereabouts and promising a reward to anyone who helped him find it. Even though there was no announcement of the painting's recovery, the heavy concentration of advertisements until the abrupt end of them on July 29 suggested that Kenner received information to recover his painting.⁵¹⁶

Even though information like receipts for clothing and personal purchases no longer exist, it is possible to glean information about Kenner's appearance and the kinds of clothing and personal goods he preferred through paintings and a few surviving personal mementos. In 1867, Victor Pierson and Theodore Moise painted *Life on the Métairie-The Métairie Race Course*, a large-scale, composed scene that included all the leading lights of Louisiana racing inspecting horses before a race (Figure 4-14). Kenner himself was represented, the sixth standing man from the left side of the composition, wearing a distinctive yellow waistcoat. Kenner's noteworthy accessories were an important part of his public persona. Harry Worcester Smith, writing in 1925, interviewed one of Kenner's acquaintances, who remarked that, "Duncan Kenner lent distinction to any race meeting which he attended. Both before and after the Civil War

⁵¹⁶ *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, June 8, 1845; *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, June 10, 1845; *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, June 11, 1845; *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, June 12, 1845; *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, June 15, 1845; *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, June 17, 1845; *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, June 21, 1845; *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, July 15, 1845; *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, July 18, 1845; *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, July 22, 1845; *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, July 26, 1845; *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, July 29, 1845

he always appeared in formal dress - top hat, high starched collar and cravat, and cutaway coat - a distinguished man, both in ability and appearance.”⁵¹⁷ A portrait of Kenner at thirty-three years old revealed a man with a clear sense of style; the width of his lapels and the way he tied his bowtie suggested someone interested in self-presentation and appearance (Figure 1-7).

Belonging to Nanine Bringier Kenner and probably used on social outings in New Orleans, this small purse decorated with a patch of the Confederate flag is a rare surviving object that belonged to the Kenners (Figure 4-15).⁵¹⁸ A small, portable, and highly political artifact given the heavy Federal presence in New Orleans and Louisiana beginning in 1862, Mrs. Kenner probably made this purse, which may have utilized excess fabric from a dress or other garment she owned. Even though it is a modest object, the purse is valuable evidence of the ways that people used objects to communicate social and political messages. By making and carrying this purse on social outings after the Federal occupation of New Orleans, Mrs. Kenner made an unmistakable statement about her faith in the Confederacy. Duncan Kenner was a high-ranking statesman in the Confederate government. The people she visited would have noticed her support of the cause.

Fragments of information about Duncan Kenner’s purchasing habits suggest that he looked to New Orleans as his primary marketplace for furnishings and objects.

⁵¹⁷ Mackay-Smith, *The Race Horses of America*, 151; Harry Worcester Smith, “Duncan Kenner, Grey Fanny, and Ashland Plantation,” 68

⁵¹⁸ Page Dame, the owner of this purse and Mrs. Kenner’s great great grandson surmises that, with the Federal occupation of Ashland Plantation in 1862, if this object had been on plantation, it likely would have been destroyed. I agree with his proposal. I would like to thank Page Dame for his generous and thoughtful information about his family and their relationship to objects.

Kenner clearly valued quality and pursued desirable objects. The best-documented instance of Kenner patronage, the Troye racehorse portraits became a proxy example of Kenner's relationship with furniture and objects. Like Manning, Kenner developed a personal relationship with an artist, which resulted in a large commission of highly valued paintings. It is difficult to imagine, even though that is all the evidence allows, that the man who engaged Troye to paint six portraits hung them in large, architecturally fashionable rooms filled with second-quality furniture.

John Manning was unusual, but not unique, in purchasing the furnishings and fittings for Millford from a single source at one time. John McMurran's brother-in-law, Lemuel Conner, followed Manning's purchasing model, and outfitted his new house from a single source, through a single, comprehensive order. In 1854, Lemuel Conner finished construction of his new house next to Melrose. To fill the house, Conner placed an order with Sampson and Keen in New Orleans. Samson and Keen were Boston merchants with a New Orleans shop, and were able to stockpile a very high quality inventory, including a rosewood secretary and bookcase, which Conner purchased for \$115.⁵¹⁹ Even though Lemuel Conner pursued a similar approach to furnishing their new house outside Natchez, there is no evidence to suggest that Conner shared Manning's interest in objects that matched the architecture of the house. John Manning patronized Duncan Phyfe for aesthetic reasons, intending Millford's furnishings to complement the architecture of the house. The Connors needed furniture quickly and probably prioritized the convenience of one-stop shopping.

⁵¹⁹ Jason T. Busch, "Such a Paradise Can be Made on Earth, 159-160

More common was the approach taken by John McMurran, and probably Duncan Kenner, where purchases accrued over time. With McMurran, purchasing furniture was a necessity, as Melrose was a larger house than Holly Hedges. In addition, new furniture for Melrose allowed McMurran to communicate his understanding of changes in furniture fashions and important domestic spaces. Generally, planters purchased luxury goods like silver and tablewares at once, confirming their role as necessary accoutrements to dining rituals. Unsurprisingly, planters took personalized approaches to purchasing fine arts. Manning, even though he bought over a relatively short period, allowed personal relationships with artists and dealers to determine his purchases. McMurran seemed to take a personal approach based on subject matter, while Kenner took advantage of a particular artists' presence and ability to create a body of work specifically for him. Planters' purchasing patterns highlighted different approaches to furnishing and decorating both the house and the body. The variations reveal men prioritizing the power of objects to make specific messages about their roles in society.

Having identified object and furniture purchasing patterns at plantation network great houses, the following section considers how planters bought for working houses. Is it possible to identify furnishing patterns for working houses? John Manning built or refurbished the house on Riverton plantation around 1855, which required additional furniture purchases. At this house, Sallie Clarke Manning took an active role in furnishing the spaces, in collaboration with a cousin named R. M. Dyson. Sallie Manning alerted Dyson, located in New Orleans, to her furniture needs at the contributing plantation. He found suitable objects to fill her requests, and directed his

correspondence about his purchases to her for approval. Unlike at Millford, the Mannings did not commission furniture for the great house at Riverton from a single, high-style maker, purchase furniture to compliment the Louisiana plantation house's architecture, or buy all the furnishings at once. The process of furnishing Riverton also differed from that at Millford in Sallie Manning's active role as the primary decision-maker. Susan Hampton Manning may have been an active participant in the Phyfe commission for Millford, but surviving correspondence only indicates John Manning's engagement with the cabinetmaker.

R.M. Dyson's letter revealed just how different the process of furnishing the secondary plantation house was from Millford. Dyson purchased second-hand furniture for Riverton, claiming that even though the pieces were old, they had been recently varnished and were better quality than furniture bought new, which sold for double the price. Dyson must have patronized both retailers and Sheriff's sales.⁵²⁰ If Millford was a house with strong aesthetic ties to New York, Riverton's connections were to New Orleans as the closest marketplace and to the specific needs of people living in a plantation context. John Manning easily could have ordered furniture from New York for Riverton, but instead relied on objects found in New Orleans. The difference was between the mansion house, which required a strong aesthetic presence, and the great house, where functional objects dominated.

⁵²⁰ R.M. Dyson to Sallie Bland Clark Manning, New Orleans, April 3 1856, WCM Papers, Folder 154, SCL, USC

Based upon examples provided by Manning, McMurren, and Kenner, an awareness of fashion was of primary importance at the great house of the plantation network. Fashionable presentation of the self through furniture, works of art, and clothing was significantly less important at the contributing plantations. Planters knew this. In 1855, John Manning reported to his wife Sallie, “Indeed with all this hot and dusty atmosphere I am entertaining a serious proposition in my own mind (secretly mind you) of buying a bathing tub to use on the plantation.”⁵²¹ Manning’s choice of words suggests the bathtub was a questionable accessory for fashionable people, even though it offered welcome physical relief from the heat. For Manning, the benefits of a bathtub at Riverton, the working house, outweighed reservations about purchasing such a thing. Unsurprisingly, he never considered such an item for Millford.

Of the contributing plantations in the Melrose network, the best evidence of the sources of furnishings and objects exists for Riverside. While in residence at Riverside, John McMurren, Jr. and Alie made a comfortable life the “log hut,” surrounded by pieces of mahogany furniture as well as utilitarian objects. Inventories from Riverside listed objects (a mahogany bedstead, two mahogany dressing tables (one with a mirror)) and furniture (set of “cottage chamber furniture,” a secretary and bookcase, a set of extension dining tables, a mahogany bureau, a “Spanish” or Campeche chair, six cane-seat walnut chairs, a large walnut armoire, and a mahogany ladies work table) that probably came

⁵²¹ WCM Papers, Folder 148, SCL, USC

from Melrose.⁵²² The 1865 inventory of furniture at Melrose did not account for one of the upstairs bedrooms; maybe the room was empty, its objects sent to Riverside.⁵²³ The McMurrans' taste for nice things included foodstuffs, clothing, and personal items, often sent directly from Natchez. Mary Louisa McMurren wrote her son, "I have sent for the Tea, of the kind you wish, by the bye, what tea drinkers you must be at Riverside--my box commenced at the same time is not exhausted yet." She continued, outlining the goods that John and Alie could expect from Natchez:

"I have had the trunk packed with clothes, Hops Tea (it is the same kind you had before but not put up in a box), and am only waiting to put up some fresh bread to have the trunk closed--in it I will put the papers & letters, believing you will receive the latter more promptly than by mail. Eliza says she put up the shaving apparatus[sic] in the small side box in the tray--of the trunk you took with you. She has found some additional articles of the kind, however, in your room and put them in the trunk."⁵²⁴

Mary Louisa McMurren routinely sent seeds for the vegetable garden at Riverside, as well as other treats, including bread, cakes made by Julia, the enslaved cook who worked for her parents, and vegetables from her gardens.⁵²⁵ Alie received shipments from her parents in Maryland, reporting "The pictures came safely & are so beautifully framed--Set off our log cabin amazingly. We had a good deal of fun hanging them last Wednesday."⁵²⁶

⁵²² List of furniture, etc. in dwelling house at Riverside, January 27, 1866, McMurren Collection, 11, SCL, ULM; McMurren-Austen Family Papers 1861-1881, n.d. Printed Items and Miscellaneous 2:6, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

⁵²³ Petravage, *Melrose Historic Furnishings Report*, 53

⁵²⁴ Mary Louisa McMurren to John T. McMurren, Jr., Melrose, January 16-17, 1857, McMurren-Austen Family Papers 1857 Correspondence 1:3, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

⁵²⁵ Mary Louisa McMurren to John T. McMurren, Jr., Melrose, Aug. 23, 1857, McMurren-Austen Family Papers 1857 Correspondence 1:3, LLMVC, LSU Libraries ; Mary Louisa McMurren to Mrs. John T. McMurren, Jr., Melrose, April 8, 1859, McMurren-Austen Family Papers 1859 Correspondence 1:5, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

⁵²⁶ Mrs. John T. McMurren, Jr. to Mrs. George Austen, Riverside, Dec. 10, 1858, McMurren-Austen Family Papers 1858 Correspondence 1:4, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

Alie's sister, Pattie Gilbert, sent clothing and accessories from New York to Riverside to be shared among Alie, her mother- and sister-in-law, and her aunt by marriage. Evidently, Alie asked Pattie to get clothes made with a budget in mind. In a letter, Pattie told Alie of the status of her order:

"I did not want to write to you 'till I had sent off your box--I went to the express office & found that a box wont reach you in three days, half at least it would reach New Orleans & twould not take many days more to reach Natchez--I could not get Nannie's lace scarph[sic] till today, twil soon be made Your box will leave here a week from today--I have had little travling[sic] suit made for Mary dress, sun bonnet alike of stone color jane corded material I hope they will be pretty--I took upon myself the ordering of this little dress I find I want to send you so many new things I have to check myself all the time--I send an organdy twas only 30 cents yd & if it does not suit you I think Aunt Fanny or Mrs. McMurran I think I must send you a hat as the shapes differ so very much they are so pretty this season, so don't think I am extravigant[sic]--I know you will not be displeased if I do not spend too much. I want so much to send a silk cloak, but this I wont venture upon. I had Mrs Edwards make you little Carries suit as I had not my seamstress & could not find time to make it myself--When you see it, I hope you will like it I will then tell you the price.

I hope they may reach you by the first of May they charge \$5.10 if not over 40 lbs. I will send them in a wooden hat box--Stockings & shirt I have bought, I could not get the scarph[sic] before or I would have sent the box before this."⁵²⁷

Pattie's letter suggested that she fed Alie's needs for fashionable clothing, taking advantage of residence in New York City for access to a wider variety of cloth and better prices. Her comments about the material, details, cost, and the fun of selecting and ordering clothes for Alie indicates that Pattie was the fashion-forward sister who enjoyed making selections for her relatives in the South.

⁵²⁷ Pattie Gilbert to Mrs. John T. McMurran, no location, April 6, 1860, McMurran-Austen Family Papers 1860-1863 Correspondence 1:6, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

Expensive and fashionable furnishings, along with finely rendered architectural details, privileged the mansion house over all of the structures of the plantation network. Even though fashion was a lower priority at working houses, it still exerted influence. A receipt for a large order of luxurious foodstuffs, liquors, wines, and condiments that John McMurran, Jr. placed in Baltimore in 1858 confirmed that the residents of Riverside had fancy tastes. McMurran spent \$555.09 on cigars, cases of French wine, including Chateau Margaux and Chateau Haut-Brion, Worcester sauce, anchovy paste, walnut catsup, tea, cheeses, tins of truffles, champagne, rye whiskey, cognac, and six cases each of lobster and salmon.⁵²⁸ John McMurran, Jr. and his wife imported luxury into the contributing plantation setting in the form of expensive foodstuffs, an attempt to bring an aspect of the luxurious surroundings he left behind at Melrose to Riverside.

At Millford and Melrose, where good documentation of the sources for the furnishings, upholsteries, and accessories exist, the national scope on which planters purchased is evident. At the plantation hub, wealthy southerners did not limit themselves to local markets to take advantage of convenience. Instead, they bought from the highest-end manufactures in the largest markets in the country. At working houses, like Riverton, convenience rather than fashion determined the source for goods. At Riverside, family members seem to have taken special care of the residents of the isolated plantation, sending care packages and supplies on regular intervals to John and Alie McMurran, Jr. A look at the sources planters used to fill their houses on hub and

⁵²⁸ P. Tiernan & Son to John T. McMurran, Jr., Baltimore, November 27, 1858, McMurran-Austen Family Papers 1858 Correspondence 1:4, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

contributing plantations reveals the different scope of consumption that planters pursued across the plantation network.

Thus far, the chapter has discussed the purchasing habits and patterns of slaveholders. Enslaved people also developed perceptions of fashion, developed patterns for acquiring objects, and patronized a variety of sources for objects. Of course, the practices of elite whites and enslaved blacks occurred on different scales, but they employed some of the same mechanisms. Many enslaved people were able to earn money, either through agreements with owners or hirers, extra work, incentives or gifts, or through sale of food products; domestic enslaved workers might collect tips. In addition, domestic enslaved workers patronized local stores and peddlers as well, but some, especially maids, valets, and butlers, had the opportunity to travel. As John McMurran wrote to John Quitman, “William, our servant, stands the sea like an old salt, not affected the least throughout the voyage, except by an increased appetite--and he was a very great service in attendance on us during the voyage.”⁵²⁹ William accompanied the McMurrans on their travels through Europe, and, several years later, went to Maryland with John McMurran Jr. and Alie to visit her family.⁵³⁰ While traveling, William may have been able to purchase objects or souvenirs; even if not, his experiences in different cities and foreign countries would have shaped his tastes and activities as a consumer.

⁵²⁹ John T. McMurran to John Quitman, New York, October 31, 1854, Quitman Papers, Box 4, Folder 6, Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson, MS (hereafter cited as MDAH)

⁵³⁰ Mrs. John T. McMurran, Jr. to Mrs. George Austen, Riverside, Dec. 10, 1858, McMurran-Austen Family Papers 1858 Correspondence 1:4, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

Limited free time, resources, and inventory restricted the consumer choices of enslaved people, but the activities of enslaved purchasers represent an important component of studies of enslaved communities.⁵³¹ In late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Virginia, Jillian Galle built upon Barbara Heath's studies of the material lives of enslaved people in piedmont Virginia, using the theory of costly signaling to explain why enslaved people became active consumers of luxury goods. Galle's model identified buttons and refined ceramics as evidence of enslaved people purchasing goods to assert position in society.⁵³² In Louisiana and southern Mississippi, the locations of the working plantation landscapes in this study, enslaved people participated in a long tradition of making money and buying goods for personal use. Since the end of the eighteenth century, enslaved people in Louisiana established an internal economy, which expanded into the cotton belt even as settlement densities and planter demands on enslaved people's time increased.⁵³³ Unsurprisingly, the enslaved communities of the Millford, Melrose, and Ashland networks participated in the internal economy of enslaved people by earning money to purchase small, personal luxuries.

⁵³¹ Anthony Kaye clearly describes the challenges and obstacles enslaved people faced in the pursuit of individual commercial activities that allowed them to become active consumers. Anthony Kaye, *Joining Places: Slave Neighborhoods in the Old South*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 103-118.

⁵³² Barbara Heath, *Hidden Lives: The Archaeology of Slave Life at Thomas Jefferson's Poplar Forest* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1999). Jillian E. Galle, "Costly Signaling and Gendered Social Strategies among Slaves in the Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake: An Archaeological Perspective," *American Antiquity*, Vol. 75, No. 1 (Jan., 2010), pp. 19-43

⁵³³ Ira Berlin, *Generations of Captivity: A History of African-American Slaves*, (Cambridge and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University, 2003), 150-151, 185-187; Roderick McDonald, *The Economy and Material Culture of Slaves: Goods and Chattels on the Sugar Plantations of Jamaica and Louisiana*, (Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1993), especially Chapter 2: The Slaves' Economy in Louisiana, 50-91.

Elite whites had ambivalent attitudes towards enslaved people's ability to earn money and actively purchase desirable goods. On one hand, enslaved people with resources made elite whites nervous; on the other, enslaved people with resources lessened planters' expenses for supplies, rations, and goods. Duncan Kenner worried that enslaved people on Ashland accumulated what he considered too much money, although he benefitted directly from sales of the poultry raised and sold by enslaved people at Ashland.⁵³⁴ Money made enslaved people active consumers, even though possibilities for access to goods differed between field and domestic workers and between enslaved people on the contributing plantations and enslaved people at the hub. Enslaved people could make purchases at nearby stores, many of which stayed open on Sundays to accommodate potential customers on their free day.⁵³⁵ Especially along the Mississippi River, enslaved people patronized itinerant peddlers, who traveled the waterways with goods for sale.⁵³⁶

John Manning's political career and his plantation interests in Louisiana required frequent travel. For the approximately twenty-five enslaved people living at Millford, Manning's frequent travel created opportunities to leave the property. Ben Pleasant traveled extensively with Manning around South Carolina during his tenure as governor between 1852 and 1854 and accompanied him to Louisiana on at least one occasion.⁵³⁷

⁵³⁴ Alexander Kenner in John W. Blassingame, ed., *Slave Testimony: Two Centuries of Letters, Speeches, Interviews, and Autobiographies* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1977), 393,

⁵³⁵ Barbara Heath, "Engendering Choice: Slavery and Consumerism," 27

⁵³⁶ Barbara Heath, "Engendering Choice: Slavery and Consumerism," 27; J. Carlyle Sitterson, *Sugar Country: The Cane Sugar Industry in the South* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1953), 103

⁵³⁷ John L. Manning to Sallie Bland Clarke Manning, Darlington CH 1 June 1853, WCM Papers, Folder 143, SCL, USC; John L. Manning to Sallie Bland Clarke Manning, Mobile, 19 April 1855, WCM Papers, Folder 148, SCL, USC

Pleasant's travels provided access to diverse goods and markets, more than what was available around Millford. Manning even charged Ben Pleasant with seeking out fashionable goods for Sallie Manning. In 1853, Manning wrote Sallie that he had no luck finding fans for her, that Ben searched "every where for them," to no avail.⁵³⁸ Pleasant had a keen awareness of the market for fashionable goods and access to it. He may have purchased objects for himself, his wife, or other members of the Millford enslaved community, in addition to the objects he bought for Mrs. Manning. Furthermore, Ben Pleasant brought information about fashionable goods and available markets back to the other enslaved people at Millford. Other men, specifically Joe and William, traveled to the railroad depot, delivered letters, and did other business that required travel around the South Carolina countryside.⁵³⁹ Even though they traveled in service of the Mannings, time away from Millford enabled them to see, and possibly purchase, objects for themselves and others.

The enslaved people at Melrose probably had similar opportunities to leave the domestic complex as the enslaved people at Millford. An enslaved man named William ran numerous errands into Natchez, delivering mail, picking up deliveries, or carrying messages. While in Natchez, he would have had the chance to see objects for sale in town, and, on some occasions, purchase them. Melrose's proximity to Natchez gave enslaved people wide exposure to a vast range of goods for sale in the port town. In

⁵³⁸ John L. Manning to Sallie Bland Clarke Manning, August 12, 1853, WCM Papers, Folder 143, SCL, USC

⁵³⁹ Sallie Bland Clarke Manning to John L. Manning, Millford, November 25, 1850, WCM Papers, Folder 137, SCL, USC; Sallie Bland Clarke Manning to John L. Manning, Homesley, December 1, 1852, WCM Papers, Folder 141, SCL, USC; Sallie Bland Clarke Manning to John L. Manning, December 12, 1852, WCM Papers, Folder 141, SCL, USC; John L. Manning to Sallie Bland Clarke Manning, Saturday evening, 1852, WCM Papers, Folder 141, SCL, USC

addition to going into Natchez, William brought back a petticoat to another enslaved woman, Mammy, after his trip north with the McMurrans in 1858.⁵⁴⁰ Whether the petticoat was something Mammy requested is not clear, but William clearly took advantage of a marketplace with a variety of goods to fill needs of his fellow enslaved people during his travels.

Because of its remote location, enslaved people at Riverside probably had diminished access to available goods, although they may have benefitted from small traders who worked up and down the Mississippi River. With a steamboat landing, Riverside could have attracted sellers who took wares along the river by boat to fill the needs of enslaved people on the property. The opportunities for enslaved people at Moro to purchase goods were probably similar to Riverside. The nine-mile distance to Vidalia and Natchez presented challenges for enslaved people to leave the property and patronize retailers in town, but the plantation's riverside position probably opened the possibility for trading with river-based sellers.

Planters supplied most of the material goods that enslaved people owned, distributed on an annual or bi-annual basis. These items, usually purchased in bulk, included bedding, tools, cookware, shoes, ready-made clothing, and fabric and sewing implements for plantation-made clothes. At Riverside, John McMurran, Jr. gave out dresses and hats to enslaved people at Christmas.⁵⁴¹ These gifts, selected by the planter, augmented the ready-made pants of Lowell cloth, yards of osnaburg, unbleached cotton,

⁵⁴⁰ Mrs. John T. McMurran, Jr. to Mrs. George Austen, Riverside, Dec. 10, 1858, McMurran-Austen Family Papers 1858 Correspondence 1:4, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

⁵⁴¹ Alice Austen McMurran Journal, Winter 1859, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

and calico, buttons for men's and women's clothes, and spools of thread supplied to enslaved people throughout the year.⁵⁴² Lowell fabric was a type of osnaburg, a plain weave cotton cloth; osnaburg and unbleached cotton were rough and durable fabrics, but relatively light weight to accommodate the intense Mississippi heat. The calico was a slightly higher quality fabric, relatively cool in the warm, humid climate.⁵⁴³ The yards of fabric listed in the account book indicated that enslaved people at Riverside made their own clothing from supplies distributed by the McMurrans.

In contrast to planter-supplied goods distributed among the enslaved population, archaeology exposed a world of enslaved people as active consumers, making choices about objects to increase personal comfort, give pleasure, and express individuality. Archaeological investigation of two cabin sites at Ashland in 1992 and 1993 revealed items selected and purchased by enslaved people and freedmen and women at Ashland in contrast to objects provided by Duncan Kenner. While it is impossible to definitively assign most of the recovered artifacts as evidence of pre- or post-Emancipation, the research and recovery of objects from the cabin sites allow an understanding of the purchasing habits of enslaved people on the property.

Even though the artifacts revealed a long period of habitation, stretching from the middle of the nineteenth century to the first decade of the twentieth, a few artifact types were solidly antebellum. At the houses, archaeologists found small but consistent

⁵⁴² Administrator's Record of Accounts, 1852-1853, 1863-1870, John T. McMurrans Papers, Box 1, Vol 1, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

⁵⁴³ Madelyn Shaw, "Slave Cloth and Clothing Slaves: Craftsmanship, Commerce, and Industry," *MESDA Journal*, Vol. 33, No. 1 (2012), 3

numbers of pearlware sherds, along with very few examples of creamware, and numerous sherds of whiteware and ironstone (Figure 4-16). Josiah Wedgwood, the English potter, developed a clear, lead-glazed ceramic known as creamware in 1762.⁵⁴⁴ Further refining his methods, Wedgwood manufactured pearlware beginning in 1779 to approximate the white paste of Chinese export porcelain better than creamware could.⁵⁴⁵ Manufacturing pearlware continued into the 1820s, when potters developed a harder paste, whiter ceramic, aptly called whiteware, which dominated the market after 1830. At the Cabin 1 site, in Stratum 1 were twenty-two sherds of pearlware, and three sherds of annular and mocha creamware surfaced from Stratum 2.⁵⁴⁶ Annular describes a decorative scheme of horizontal rings of colored glazes, and mocha was a brown, fern-like decoration on annular wares.⁵⁴⁷ A single finger-painted pearlware sherd, an ornamental technique with swirling lines, popular in the first decades of the nineteenth century, was in a post hole at Ashland (Feature 19), indicated an antebellum ceramic probably discarded by an enslaved resident of the Cabin 1 site.⁵⁴⁸ Two more pearlware sherds were in Feature 5, a trench associated with a line of postholes at Cabin 1.⁵⁴⁹ At Cabin 2, forty-two sherds of pearlware were in Stratum 1 (only 3.5% of the assemblage) and ninety-five pearlware

⁵⁴⁴ Ivor Noel Hume, *A Guide to the Artifacts of Colonial America*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1969), 125

⁵⁴⁵ Hume, *The Artifacts of Colonial America*, 128

⁵⁴⁶ Jill-Karen Yakubik, et. al., *Archaeological Data Recovery at Ashland-Belle Helene Plantation (16AN26), Ascension Parish, Louisiana*, Volume I: Investigations in the Quarters and Archaeological Monitoring (New Orleans: Earth Search, Inc., 1994), 8-6, 8-15

⁵⁴⁷ While Hume describes annular and mocha pearlware in the text, descriptions of the ornamentation remain the same for creamware. Hume, *The Artifacts of Colonial America*, 131

⁵⁴⁸ Yakubik, et. al., *Archaeological Data Recovery at Ashland-Belle Helene Plantation*, Volume I, 8-46; Hume, *The Artifacts of Colonial America*, 132

⁵⁴⁹ Yakubik, et. al., *Archaeological Data Recovery at Ashland-Belle Helene Plantation*, Volume I, 8-62

sherds came from Stratum 2 (7.4% of the assemblage).⁵⁵⁰ Near the remains of the fireplace at Cabin 2, archaeologists found a sherd of pearlware and a sherd of Albisola Trailed, identified as an unusual relic outside of a very early nineteenth-century context.⁵⁵¹ Its presence in a house built after 1840 made the sherd a remnant of a very long-lived object, maybe particularly treasured by the residents of the house. Near Cabin 2, an excavated ditch yielded sixteen sherds of pearlware (Feature 22), with eleven pieces coming from the same item, a chamber pot. The archaeologists noted that chamber pots were inherently conservative, often utilizing older materials in utilitarian objects.⁵⁵² At Feature 25, a brick scatter to the north of the house, finger-painted pearlware, blue shell-edged pearlware, and a pearlware/whiteware transitional fragment in Stratum 2 were antebellum artifacts.⁵⁵³ The ceramics at Cabin 1 and Cabin 2 argue for a long period of habitation, with production dates spanning from before the Civil War into the first decade of the twentieth century.

Evidence for leisure activities of the antebellum period is even more difficult to determine definitively than ceramics. Ironware tobacco pipe fragments were in Stratum 2 of both the Cabin 1 and Cabin 2 sites, as was a black bottle seal embossed “Bringiers/Tobacco.” Nanine Bringier Kenner’s family grew perique tobacco on various estates, and a resident of Cabin 2 either purchased or received some local tobacco as a

⁵⁵⁰ Yakubik, et. al., *Archaeological Data Recovery at Ashland-Belle Helene Plantation*, Volume I, 8-85, 8-99

⁵⁵¹ Yakubik, et. al., *Archaeological Data Recovery at Ashland-Belle Helene Plantation*, Volume I, 8-99

⁵⁵² Yakubik, et. al., *Archaeological Data Recovery at Ashland-Belle Helene Plantation*, Volume I, 8-117

⁵⁵³ Yakubik, et. al., *Archaeological Data Recovery at Ashland-Belle Helene Plantation*, Volume I, 8-118, 8-126

gift (Figure 4-17).⁵⁵⁴ At Cabin 1, a ceramic marble and a limestone marble provide evidence for games played and/or bets made by the residents of the house and members of the community (Figure 4-18).⁵⁵⁵ The presence of these marbles in the same context with a sherd of hand-painted pearlware suggests an early date of deposit, possibly by enslaved people living at Ashland. Archaeologists recovered beads from the Cabin 1 site, evidence of personal adornment, but they have not been confidently dated as either pre- or post-emancipation.

The vast majority of artifacts recovered at Ashland date from the second-half of the nineteenth-century. The paucity of antebellum objects raises significant and important points about the lives of enslaved people living at Ashland. The low frequency of antebellum artifacts, taken on its own, suggests a ten to twenty-year period of pre-Civil War habitation. Intensive sugar cultivation only began on the property in the late 1830s, with a large construction program that included the domestic core, the sugarhouse, and many of the houses for enslaved people only occurring around 1840. Jill-Karen Yakubik, the lead archaeologist on the Ashland excavations, observed that the houses were “artifact poor” during the antebellum period.⁵⁵⁶ When combined with anecdotal evidence of Duncan Kenner’s attitude towards the purchasing habits of enslaved people, the paucity of artifacts is strange. Alexander Kenner, Duncan Kenner’s formerly enslaved nephew, reported to the American Freedmen’s Inquiry Commission in 1863 that the planter wanted to know how much money the enslaved people had, specifically not

⁵⁵⁴ Yakubik, et. al., *Archaeological Data Recovery at Ashland-Belle Helene Plantation*, Volume I, 8-99

⁵⁵⁵ Yakubik, et. al., *Archaeological Data Recovery at Ashland-Belle Helene Plantation*, Volume I, 8-26

⁵⁵⁶ Yakubik, et. al., *Archaeological Data Recovery at Ashland-Belle Helene Plantation*, Volume I, 8-15

wanting them to have too much. Alexander Kenner added that masters wanted enslaved people to spend their earned money, to prevent anyone from accumulating a large amount.⁵⁵⁷ Given Alexander Kenner's testimony, it seems that Duncan Kenner should have encouraged enslaved people to buy goods, resulting in more antebellum artifacts at Cabin 1 and Cabin 2 than the archaeological investigation found.

Social and spatial hierarchies expressed by visual clues existed within the enslaved community, but for the properties in this dissertation, the remaining records are frustratingly scarce on how those kinds of communications worked.⁵⁵⁸ Enslaved people certainly had access to products and means of raising money or growing or creating goods for barter. This was true on plantations and at mansion houses. Some enslaved people had opportunity to travel, and observed and participated in a wide market of goods. Issues of affordability, availability, and desirability, compounded by the power of fashion, played out in enslaved communities as they did in other social groups.⁵⁵⁹

If a purchase depended on objects being affordable, available, and desirable, the first two conditions might have been the most critical for enslaved people with limited means or opportunities to make purchases from a relatively isolated plantation. Excavations of two enslaved houses at Ashland revealed that, even though archaeologists described the site as "artifact poor," the low numbers of sherds contained a variety of ceramics from the antebellum period. The sherds were not the same type or pattern,

⁵⁵⁷ Blassingame, ed., *Slave Testimony*, 393

⁵⁵⁸ Leland Ferguson, *Uncommon Ground: Archaeology and Early African America, 1650-1800* (Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992); Mechal Sobel, *The World They Made Together: Black and White Values in Eighteenth-Century Virginia* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987); Campbell, Faust, and Rice, *Before Freedom Came*

⁵⁵⁹ Ann Smart Martin, "Makers, Buyers, and Users," 156

suggesting that individuals purchased pieces one at a time, when a trader had wares or they had extra money. Some people in the Ashland community had money from selling poultry to Kenner. Others probably cultivated crops and sold the excess to the great house, neighboring planters, or traders. In the antebellum period, it does not seem that Kenner bought large lots of ceramics for distribution among or purchase by the enslaved community. Very little about availability is certain. People may have bought from traveling traders, or may have gone into markets in the neighborhood or in town. The objects people bought might have been second-hand. Another option was for objects to pass from one individual to another. The third and most subjective condition, desirability, unpacks questions of use, custom, individuality, and status within the community. In the situation of the recovered artifacts from the Ashland enslaved houses, the presence of a variety of sherds indicates that desirability took many forms. Even though availability and affordability were limiting factors in the purchasing power of enslaved people at Ashland and elsewhere, people clearly expressed individual preferences through the objects they bought.

How Fashions Spread

Having considered purchasing patterns of elite whites and enslaved people, using the plantation networks of Millford, Melrose, and Ashland as case studies, this chapter explores how people learned about material culture. Experiences, travels, advertisements, publications, and the opinions of peers, rivals, and friends shaped the perceptions of desirable and fashionable goods held by John Manning, John McMurran, and Duncan Kenner. Furnishings and clothing communicated messages about

sophistication, culture, and gentility. These messages were especially potent in and around the hub of the plantation network, the central location of a planter's power. The purchasing patterns adopted by Manning, McMurren, and Kenner, and the placement and presentation of furnishings, luxury goods, and works of art reveal complicated and nuanced understandings of the ways that objects defined planters' self-presentation.

By the late 1830s and into the 1840s, many wealthy Southerners sought desirable objects from the centers of American fashion: New York and Philadelphia. The period saw fewer cabinetmakers in smaller, more remote cities like Natchez making original furnishings; in the second quarter of the nineteenth century, even highly regarded craftsmen like Robert Stewart in Natchez became conduits for goods from producers elsewhere and assemblers of items ordered by patrons.⁵⁶⁰ Even in New Orleans, cabinetmakers, including Prudent Mallard and Dutreuil Barjon, found it more profitable to import pre-made furniture than to craft pieces in the city. As a result, they opened shops on Royal Street. Commercial outposts of New York producers, including J. & J.W. Meeks, quickly joined local artisans on the New Orleans retail landscape.⁵⁶¹ Patrons from the lower Mississippi River valley flocked to New Orleans for the wide range of purveyors. The owners of Rosedown Plantation, near St. Francisville, Louisiana, purchased twenty-seven pieces of furniture from Anthony Quervelle, the prominent Philadelphia cabinetmaker, from New Orleans. At the Exchange Hotel in New Orleans,

⁵⁶⁰ Miller, "General Overview of Natchez History" in Draft of Heritage Tourism Manual, unpublished document provided to the author, August 2009, 32

⁵⁶¹ Steven G. Harrison, "The Nineteenth-Century Furniture Trade in New Orleans," *The Magazine Antiques*, 151 (May 1997), 58; Jack D. Holden, H. Parrott Bacot, and Cybèle T. Gontar with Brian J. Costello and Francis J. Puig, *Furnishing Louisiana: Creole and Acadian Furniture, 1735-1835* (New Orleans: The Historic New Orleans Collection, 2010), 113-114

the owners commissioned J. & J.W. Meeks to provide 227 bureaus and 236 bedsteads for the hotel's guest rooms, a massive order which cost a phenomenal \$37,000.⁵⁶²

Similar circumstances unfolded in cities on the Atlantic seaboard even earlier than in New Orleans. In Charleston, ready-made furniture arrived in the city as venture cargo, stockpiled commodities, or as direct commissions from New York or Philadelphia producers. In the 1820s and 1830s, Charleston's cabinetmakers largely transitioned into merchants, either taking consignments of venture cargo that did not sell directly on the wharf, opening warehouses and advertising the specific goods accumulated from the North, or acting as middlemen between patrons and producers elsewhere.⁵⁶³

Improvements in transportation enabled wealthy consumers to travel to centers of fashion and purchase goods directly. As Frederick Law Olmsted discovered as he traveled from St. Francisville to Natchez, wealthy planters loved nothing better than traveling north to show off and revel in newly purchased finery. Olmsted asked another traveler to confirm that planters traveled to Kentucky in the summer; he had observed some estates allegedly belonging to residents of Natchez. The traveler responded, "No, sir; They go North, to New York, and Newport, and Saratoga, and Cape May, and Seneca Lake—somewhere that they can display themselves worse than they do here; Kentucky is no place for that."⁵⁶⁴ Journals, letters, inventories, and receipts reveal that John Manning, John McMurren, and Duncan Kenner were avid travelers in the mid-nineteenth century.

⁵⁶² Holden, Bacot, and Gontar, *Furnishing Louisiana*, 115

⁵⁶³ Maurie D. McInnis and Robert A. Leath, "Beautiful Specimens, Elegant Patterns: New York Furniture for the Charleston Market, 1810-1840," *American Furniture* (Hanover and London: The University Press of New England for the Chipstone Foundation, 1996), 143-146

⁵⁶⁴ Frederick Law Olmsted, *A Journey in the Backcountry* (London: Sampson Low, Son & Co., 47 Ludgate Hill, 1860), 26-27

Traveling created opportunities to observe new styles in fashionable goods and to purchase furnishings, art, clothing, and other goods for their and their families' personal use.

A native of Pennsylvania, John T. McMurran and his family made frequent visits north to relatives, trips that often included time in urban centers like Philadelphia and New York. When John McMurran, Jr. married Alie Austen, a native of Baltimore County, Maryland, trips to the north only became more regular. The McMurrans spent at least five summers in the North between 1851 and 1860, stopping in New York or Philadelphia en route to longer stays with McMurran's family in Pennsylvania or summer resort spots like Newport or Niagara Falls.⁵⁶⁵ John Manning and his new wife Susan Hampton Manning traveled to New York on their 1838 honeymoon and returned to the city in 1840.⁵⁶⁶ John Manning continued to visit the north sporadically during the 1840s and 1850s. Duncan Kenner spent two years in Europe in the early 1830s and went to the continent again in 1864, but less documentation for Kenner's domestic travel exists. Kenner spent a significant portion of the year in residence in New Orleans, a major commercial center that offered him access to fashionable furnishings and objects. Kenner may not have needed to travel for goods as extensively as McMurran in Natchez or Manning in upcountry South Carolina, as New Orleans merchants were better equipped to meet his requirements.

⁵⁶⁵ Petravage, *Melrose Historic Furnishings Report*, 23

⁵⁶⁶ John L. Manning to Elizabeth Peyre Richardson Manning, August 9, 1838, WCM Papers, Folder 81, SCL, USC; Astor House, New York City, October 13, 1840, WCM Papers, Folder 100, SCL, USC

In addition to traveling to major American commercial centers, wealthy planters in the 1840s and 1850s regularly saw advertisements and read about the latest fashions in newspapers and periodicals. In Natchez, the *Mississippi Free Trader* frequently advertised arrivals of furniture from New York. An 1850 ad for wares available through merchant Robert Stewart and Company exclaimed “Furniture! Furniture!” and promised “a lot of sofas and divans from New York, of the latest fashions, and a good quality. Mahogany chairs, all kinds.”⁵⁶⁷ Stewart began his career as a cabinetmaker in Natchez in the 1820s; by the early 1850s, the bulk of his business was importing furniture into Natchez and assembling it for patrons. The *Daily Picayune* in New Orleans also published numerous advertisements for imported, fashionable furniture. Prudent Mallard and Company advertised

“By recent arrival from Europe, we have received some of the richest assortments of carpeting ever imported into this city, consisting of Axminster, Velvet, Saxony, Tapestry Brussels, Brussels Imperials, Three-ply Ingrains, Dutch and Venetian CARPETINGS, RUGS, MATS, STAIR RODS &c., WINDOW BLINDS, TABLE AND PIANO COVERS, HAIR CLOTH, &c.

All the above goods are English and Scotch and have been selected at the factories by one of the partners of the firm. They will be sold 20 per cent lower than the same style of goods manufactured in this country.

→ FURNITURE, CURTAIN GOODS, LOOKING GLASSES, CUTLERY, Sevres CHINA and PORCELAIN WARE, and all kinds of FANCY ARTICLES, &c at the

Fancy Furnishing Warehouse of P. Mallard and Company”⁵⁶⁸

Mallard offered his customers objects straight from Europe, one of the great sources of fashion to New Orleans consumers. Not only did Mallard’s patrons have access to

⁵⁶⁷ *Mississippi Free Trader*, Natchez, April 17, 1850

⁵⁶⁸ *Daily Picayune*, New Orleans, October 15, 1852

international goods, they were less expensive than domestic items! Many merchants hawked furniture, carpets, curtains, books and stationary, clothing, and jewelry in the *Daily Picayune*. On the same page, P. Mallard had another advertisement for rosewood and mahogany furnishings from Europe. Clearly, New Orleans was a clearinghouse for objects, intended to appeal to an informed readership hungry for fashionable goods.

Consumers educated themselves through periodicals, and *Godey's Lady's Book* was one of the most popular in the 1840s and 1850s. Edward Turner, John McMurran's father-in-law, inscribed his name in surviving issues of *Godey's* between 1847 and 1855.⁵⁶⁹ These issues featured illustrations of "cottage furniture," which included tea and work tables, window hangings, cane-bottomed, elbow, and parlor chairs, and even plans and elevations for picturesque model cottages. These items reveal an emerging taste for exotic forms of the Rococo Revival and Gothic; heavy carving, floral decoration, and pointed arches abound. Edward Turner probably shared his copies of *Godey's* with his family, including the McMurrans, who absorbed lessons in taste offered by the authoritative periodical.

One question that arises from a detailed discussion about the sources, shops, and cabinetmakers that wealthy planters like Manning, McMurran, and Kenner patronized is how stylish, how covetable were goods produced by these makers in the period. Was Duncan Phyfe still regarded as a highly fashionable cabinetmaker by the time of John Manning's order in 1840 and 1841? John T. McMurran reused furnishings from his older

⁵⁶⁹ Jason T. Busch, "Such a Paradise Can be Made on Earth," 63; "Cottage Furniture," *Godey's Lady's Book*, April 1849; "Cottage Furniture," *Godey's Lady's Book*, May 1849; "Cottage Furniture," *Godey's Lady's Book*, December 1851

house in Melrose. How did Natchez society respond to the practice of holding on to older objects? It is worthwhile, to step back slightly from the goods themselves and consider them as objects of desire. It is also informative to think about the relationships around goods that can be recovered, specifically how peers, friends, relative, and even social rivals influenced the choices made by wealthy planters like Manning, McMurran, and Kenner. The furniture that filled each planter's new house was comfortable, and suited each family's lifestyle, but it was also a signal to visitors about the resources, taste, and position of the resident.

Between 1817 and 1820, an unidentified artist painted Phyfe's shop and warehouse on Fulton Street, in New York City (Figure 4-19). In the image, Phyfe's "centre store" with its large windows to allow furniture to be artfully displayed was a light-colored brick building with elaborate fanlights, three large windows into the second story topped by infilled arches and a complicated balustrade that combined open-work panels with Chinoiserie decoration. The open door reveals a figure, probably Phyfe, showing chairs to two female customers. The three-story, light-colored brick building next door was an additional warehouse and showroom, based on the large windows, pilasters, and pediment. Based on their costume, the figures emerging from the door were probably Phyfe's employees. The three-and-a-half story, red brick structure on the right of the composition was the workshop, suggested by the presence of skylights to light additional space and the even more casually dressed artisan leaning out of the window. The elegance of the warehouse and showroom spaces spoke to the high level of

consumers who patronized Phyfe, and to his success in meeting his wealthy patrons' orders.⁵⁷⁰

One of Phyfe's main New York competitors was the cabinetmaker Joseph Meeks, who, with his sons, remained in business from 1798 until 1868.⁵⁷¹ After a fire, Meeks upgraded from a two-story frame shop to a six-bay, five-story brick warehouse with large windows on the ground floor, indicating use as a warehouse and showroom space in 1829 (Figure 4-20). Meeks' larger building suggests that his business was booming by the late 1820s, success which would carry through the following decades. Simpler, and less showy than Phyfe's showrooms, the large windows surrounded by Doric pilasters on ground floor of the Meeks warehouse allowed the maker to display his furniture to the public. The four gable-roof dormers allowed light into the upper story, shifting the attic into a working space for Meeks employees. Unlike the Phyfe watercolor, where the artisan conducted business in his showroom, the Meeks image shows furniture forms pulled out on the street, enticing customers to explore the wares stored inside. The Meeks broadside of 1833, a hand-colored lithograph that advertised the available forms and materials, revealed that the Meeks firm manufactured many of the same forms as Phyfe, including Grecian and French beds and mirrored pier tables (Figure 4-7).

A comparison of the images of Phyfe's storerooms and workspace with the Meeks' building reveals several notable points. Phyfe's manufacturing square footage

⁵⁷⁰ Kenny, Brown, Bretter, Thurlow, "Life of a Master Cabinetmaker" in *Duncan Phyfe: Master Cabinetmaker in New York*, 41

⁵⁷¹ John N. Pearce, Lorraine W. Pearce, and Robert C. Smith, "The Meeks Family of Cabinetmakers," 419; Jodi Pollack, "The Meeks Cabinetmaking Firm in New York City," 105-106

was smaller, not surprising since he mostly worked for private clients and did not actively sell his furniture outside New York. The Meeks opened a shop in New Orleans in the 1820s and 1830s, and utilized a large family network as agents and representatives for the company.⁵⁷² The Meeks firm, with greater capacity to manufacture large volumes of furniture, aided by advertisements like the 1833 broadside, reacted to changes in American shopping habits in the 1830s and 1840s. With an advertising program and franchises, Meeks could respond to an order without the patron having to visit the New York shop. To buy from Phyfe, the customer came to him. The 1843 advertisement for Phyfe's furniture at reduced prices specified "Southern gentlemen are respectfully requested to call before they make their selections," demanding business agreements forged upon personal interactions (Figure 4-21).⁵⁷³ Patrons continued to patronize Phyfe through the changing retail landscape, but his sales slipped in the 1840s, partially because patrons found him behind the times. James Henry Hammond's criticism that Phyfe was outdated could have applied to his business practices as well as his furniture designs.

The Meeks company conducted business in more up to date ways, but was not safe from customer criticism. In 1850, Francis Surget, Jr., a wealthy Natchez planter and a peer of McMurran's, wrote to his cotton factor in New York, registering his dissatisfaction with his order of Meeks furniture. An absentee patron, Surget engaged his New York agent to go to the Meeks warehouse and order the *étagère*. When it arrived

⁵⁷² John N. Pearce, Lorraine W. Pearce, and Robert C. Smith, "The Meeks Family of Cabinetmakers," 417; Jodi Pollack, "The Meeks Cabinetmaking Firm in New York City," 105, Kenny, Brown, Bretter, Thurlow, "Life of a Master Cabinetmaker" in *Duncan Phyfe: Master Cabinetmaker in New York*, 50

⁵⁷³ Kenny, Brown, Bretter, Thurlow, "Life of a Master Cabinetmaker" in *Duncan Phyfe: Master Cabinetmaker in New York*, 53

incorrectly made, Surget lost confidence that Meeks could fill his order to his specifications. In the first letter, Surget complained that the étagère he ordered from Meeks was incorrect, with only two drawers instead of the three specified, too small, and constructed from unattractive wood. He directly criticized the way Meeks filled orders, griping “There is no use of ordering one by letter, for if he could not make one from a verbal order, he certainly cannot make one from a letter.”⁵⁷⁴ In a later correspondence, still incensed, Surget continued, “Do the best you can with that rascal Meeks...he neglected to take the order as it was given and I have no doubt sent me an étagère that he has already made, and not worth what he charged for it.”⁵⁷⁵ Surget’s displeasure negatively affected Meeks’ business. Surget wanted Meeks furniture for one or two parlors in the following year; disillusioned with his experience, he promised to patronize other cabinetmakers and use his influence to discourage his peers from buying Meeks furniture.

Planters knew that friends, family members, and social peers noticed relationships between buildings and objects and recognized sources, trends in fashion, and quality. In his article on Berry Hill in Virginia, Clifton Ellis clearly illustrated James Bruce’s social understanding of the power of objects. Eliza Bruce requested her husband to purchase napkin rings in Philadelphia; James Bruce demurred, saying that he did not see them on the tables of his elite Philadelphia acquaintances and thought them “rather ultra for

⁵⁷⁴ Francis Surget, Jr., to Charles P. Leverich, January 24, 1850, Leverich Papers, Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson, quoted in Jason Busch, “Handsomely Furnished in the Most Fashionable Style: Art and Decoration along the Mississippi River,” in *Currents of Change*, 102

⁵⁷⁵ Francis Surget, Jr., to Charles P. Leverich, March 17, 1850, Leverich Papers, Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson, quoted in Jason Busch, “Handsomely Furnished in the Most Fashionable Style: Art and Decoration along the Mississippi River,” in *Currents of Change*, 102

Halifax.”⁵⁷⁶ John Manning had a well-documented interest in presentation, given his participation in the design of his house, his eagerness to fill his house with furniture that complemented the architecture, and his ample investments in clothing and fashion. Manning knew, Hammond’s criticism notwithstanding, his peers would recognize Duncan Phyfe furniture. William Aiken, a social peer of Manning’s, purchased furniture from Phyfe in 1838 for his house in Charleston.⁵⁷⁷ Manning probably heard about Aiken’s purchases and how his social equals responded to the objects.

Many planters purchased objects seen in the house of a friend or associate, suggesting that furniture spoke a specific language about status, taste, and experience to members of high social rank. In 1845, after Troye was at Ashland and painted six portraits of Kenner’s horses, he spent time in Natchez with William J. Minor, Kenner’s first cousin and friendly rival in horse racing. In Natchez, he painted Minor’s horse Britannia. One version of the painting remained in Minor’s house outside of Natchez, while Kenner owned another copy at Ashland.⁵⁷⁸ Minor and Kenner’s shared patronage of Troye was similar to John McMurran and John Quitman owning the same bureau. Two of the leading lights of horseracing in the Deep South hired the most celebrated horse painter of the time for portraits of their prized animals. Troye’s paintings documented the men’s racing successes, and, in owning copies of the same painting, Kenner and Minor had a visual totem of their connected relationship.

⁵⁷⁶ James C. Bruce to Eliza Bruce, 13 March 1837, BFP-UVA, Box 5 quoted in Clifton Ellis, “Greeking the Southside: Style and Meaning at James C. Bruce’s Berry Hill Plantation House,” in *The Journal of Early Southern Decorative Arts*, Summer 2002, 22

⁵⁷⁷ Kenny, Brown, Bretter, Thurlow, “Life of a Master Cabinetmaker” in *Duncan Phyfe: Master Cabinetmaker in New York*, 52

⁵⁷⁸ Mackay-Smith, *The Race Horses of America*, 151

Even more explicitly, John McMurran shared information about the vendor and specifics of his orders of Venetian blinds for Melrose with his friend John Quitman.⁵⁷⁹ John McMurran purchased sets of Venetian blinds for the first and second story windows at Melrose from a manufacturer in Philadelphia named B. J. Wilhams. Venetian blinds were useful tools in the quest for personal comfort in warm climates like Natchez, providing a screen of privacy while allowing air to circulate through open windows. The blinds were an attractive, successful accessory at Melrose; McMurran's friend and neighbor, John A. Quitman, clearly wanted to know where McMurran bought the Venetian blinds and how much he paid. McMurran provided a detailed answer,

“The manufacturer of my inside venetian window blinds at Melrose was B. J. Wilhams, No 12, North Sixth Street, Philadelphia. The 12 blinds for parlor and other rooms below cost in Phila. \$126. and the 15 for the bedrooms cost \$112 50/100. The difference in the price must be chiefly in the trimmings, I imagine – the trimmings for the parlor and dining room blinds being of silk, and those for the bedrooms of worsted. The color of the blinds is, I believe, called French green.”⁵⁸⁰

The correspondence between McMurran and Quitman about the blinds revealed how friends and social peers influenced one another in the firms they patronized and the objects they purchased.

In addition to sharing information about the blinds, McMurran and Quitman also shared taste in furniture. The two men owned identical bureaus with mirrors at Melrose and Monmouth, their neighboring estates (Figure 4-9). Probably one saw the bureau in

⁵⁷⁹ John T. McMurran to John Quitman, Natchez, January 30, 1859, Quitman Papers, Z66, box 3, folder 1, MDAH

⁵⁸⁰ John T. McMurran to John Quitman, Natchez, January 30, 1859, Quitman Papers, Z66, box 3, folder 1, MDAH

the other's house, liked it, and purchased a version for himself.⁵⁸¹ Another example of shared influences were the set of Philadelphia-made Gothic Revival dining chairs owned by McMurren at Melrose (Figure 4-22). Stephen Duncan, the owner of nearby Arlington, had a set of the same chairs. Who owned the chairs first, or who influenced whom, is uncertain.⁵⁸² The point remains that planters made decisions about the furniture they purchased based upon influences of friends, relatives, and peers. The expanding universe of available goods in a wide variety of materials and styles renders episodes of shared objects among wealthy Natchez planters even more striking. Their tastes and resources made an enormous variety of objects available, whether purchased while traveling, from a New Orleans retailer, or through a Natchez merchant. Shifts and expansions in furniture-making and the ability for rapid distribution through steamboats and railroads brought the world to Natchez, enabling people to choose objects based on personal preference, not availability.⁵⁸³ In this light, having the same set of chairs as your neighbor was a powerful statement about taste, fashion, and status.

Conclusion

Wealthy southern planters like Manning, McMurren, and Kenner valued, sought, and understood the social meanings of luxury goods and furnishings. At Millford, John L. Manning pursued a comprehensive approach to purchasing furniture and objects for his hub plantation, patronizing Duncan Phyfe in New York City to fill the house with furniture that complemented the architecture. At Melrose, John T. McMurren reused

⁵⁸¹ Jason T. Busch, "Such a Paradise Can be Made on Earth," 171-2

⁵⁸² Jason T. Busch, "Such a Paradise Can be Made on Earth," 173-4

⁵⁸³ Jason T. Busch, "Such a Paradise Can be Made on Earth," 237- 239

furniture from his previous residence, Holly Hedges, in the new house, using new furniture rather than type of wood to highlight important social spaces. Remaining evidence of the material culture at the Ashland great house was slim. Duncan Kenner probably followed a model of consuming closer to McMurran; no indication that he purchased all the furniture for the house from a single provider exists. Ashland's contributions to the discussion of material culture came from excavations of two houses inhabited by enslaved people. Information from the Millford and Melrose networks supported consideration of retail opportunities and possible sources for goods entering the enslaved community; the Ashland network provided concrete evidence of enslaved people as active consumers.

Evidence from the Millford, Melrose, and Ashland networks revealed that planters accepted differences between furnishings for the hub and the contributing properties. This distinction was an important component of widely held beliefs about which objects were appropriate for particular spaces. In particular, people had strong convictions about the kinds of furniture suitable for residences in the country. In 1819, Charleston upholsterers Barelli, Torre & Co. advertised a set of window curtains made in the latest London fashion. Upon their completion, the planter who ordered the curtains found them too ostentatious for his rural residence and returned them.⁵⁸⁴ In 1834, her New York-based sister-in-law suggested highly ornamental tables and sofas for Alicia Hopton Russell Middleton's plantation. Middleton responded critically, finding the furniture far too ostentatious for her plantation residence. Middleton knew that furniture

⁵⁸⁴ McInnis and Leath, "Beautiful Specimens, Elegant Patterns," 142

prized in an urban house would be ridiculous in a rural setting.⁵⁸⁵ Both of these examples, in which consumers spurned furnishings they found inappropriate for country houses, probably involved contributing plantations in a network. The opinions of these Charlestonians matched the activities of planters like Manning, McMurran, and Kenner, where the furnishings on the contributing plantations clearly indicated secondary status.

Plantation networks affected planters' relationships to furniture, clothing, art, and luxury items in many of the same ways that networks influenced planters' architectural choices. By moving the physical work of plantation agriculture to another site, under the management of trusted overseers and plantation managers, planters had fewer daily obligations to plantation duties and more opportunity to travel and observe trends developing throughout the United States and, in the McMurran's case, Europe. The three planters in this study were vastly wealthy men, with plentiful resources generated by the plantation network. The ability to purchase luxurious furniture and high fashion clothing directly resulted from the planters' investments in multiple properties and hundreds of enslaved people in a network, as failure at one property did not spell complete financial disaster.

John Manning, John McMurran, and Duncan Kenner had the resources to purchase fine things, the opportunities to travel and observe current fashions, and the social standing to impress their peers with their goods. Importantly, they all chose to invest in furnishings and objects that were popular and recognized on a national scale. These planters did not patronize regional producers; elite people nationwide recognized

⁵⁸⁵ McInnis and Leath, "Beautiful Specimens, Elegant Patterns," 146

the quality of furniture from Phyfe, Meeks, and Charles White, and paintings by Edward Troye. Manning, McMurran, and Kenner engaged in national trends on a national market. Plantation networks, by distancing slavery, allowed these planters to indulge in the charade that they were just like wealthy people throughout the country. In contrast, abolitionists attempted to portray Southern slaveholders as ignorant, brutal, and uncultured. In 1852 and 1853, C.G. Parsons traveled throughout the South and recorded his observations for publication. Parsons addressed the architecture of the cities, describing

“many elegant private dwelling houses, surrounded with beautiful scenery, and fitted up with rich and costly furniture. It is to such scenes that Northern visitors are generally introduced. Here they receive those impressions that are so widely disseminated in the North - that slavery is usually associated with refinement of manners, a cultivated taste, and a luxurious style of living.”⁵⁸⁶

Parsons does not say it directly, but his perception of wealthy, urban houses (probably suburban villas), filled with fine furnishings would have been familiar and agreeable to people in the North, who also strove for refinement, cultivation, and luxury. It was when Parsons traveled away from Southern cities that he delivered his most stinging commentary on the living conditions (and, by extension, the moral values) of planters.

“The paucity of furniture and books in the homes of the slaveholders is most unaccountable. Even in families that possess abundant means to supply these wants I have frequently seen them living without conveniences of which the poorest Northern family is seldom destitute. Sometimes you will not see furniture amounting to five dollars in value in a wealthy planter’s house. I have seen such houses without a particle of paint on the inside, or on any article of furniture. A few old oak chairs,

⁵⁸⁶ C. G. Parsons, M.D., *Inside View of Slavery: or, A Tour among the Planters*, Boston: Published by John P. Jewett and Company, Cleveland, Ohio, 1855, 106

made by hand, in the rudest manner, covered with deer skins or green hides untanned - a hard, pine table, unplanned - a wooden poker, instead of shovel and tongs, in the rock chimney fire place, comprise the whole inventory. There is no closet, nor wardrobe. All the bedding is suspended on poles overhead, or placed on an open shelf against the wall. The wearing apparel is hung on nails or wooden pegs, all in sight. And yet you will find on the premises several hundred dollars' worth of elegant saddles, and costly rifles. And, perhaps a thousand dollars will be expended for jewelry and ornaments to adorn the person and dress of the daughter - but not five dollars appropriated for furniture or books."⁵⁸⁷

Manning, McMurren, and Kenner wanted to disassociate themselves from Parsons' description of a "typical" planter, filling their houses with recognizable, fashionable furniture and elements of genteel, cultivated family life, like musical instruments and books, deployed in a parlor around a circular center table. Wealthy planters strove to define themselves just like their wealthy social peers in the north, participating in the same language of goods. The presence of plantation networks, particularly the long-range and scattered networks exemplified by Millford and Melrose, allowed planters to physically disassociate themselves and their families from the working landscapes of slavery and large populations of enslaved people. Mansion house architecture in the 1840s placed additional barriers between planter families and enslaved people. The pursuit of fashionable goods from a national scope was yet another layer planters devised to distance themselves from the enslaved people who created their wealth.

⁵⁸⁷ Parsons, *Inside View of Slavery*, 112-113

Living Houses and Landscapes

On the door that separates the secondary hallway and the dining room at Melrose is a doorknob that deserves a second glance (Figure 5-1). On one side, in costly silver, was the lavish dining room, one of the most important social spaces in the house for elite white visitors and residents. On the other side, rendered in agatized ceramic, enslaved people grabbed the doorknob as they brought food from the kitchen, having plated it on fine china dishes and serving platters, and prepared it for presentation to the McMurrans and their important guests. One side faced a space of display, the other, a place of work and preparation. The doorknob sent an unmistakable message; materials defined the border between elite and enslaved spaces. And this single doorknob, while a particularly acute example, is only one iteration of the expansive material cues that governed circulation around Millford, Ashland, and Melrose. Each of these three domestic cores offers material evidence for circulation patterns around and through these sites, as landscape, architecture, and objects shaped social interactions between the enslaved and free residents of these properties.

In the past, scholars of southern plantations wrote exclusively about the mansion houses, lavishly describing fine architectural details and generous, gracious spaces.⁵⁸⁸ Instead of limiting this discussion to the interior and exterior surfaces of a single

⁵⁸⁸ Mills Lane, *Architecture of the Old South*, 10 Volume Series (Savannah: The Beehive Press, 1984-1997); older scholarship like J. Frazer Smith, *White Pillars: Early Life and Architecture of the Lower Mississippi Valley Country* (New York: W. Helburn, 1941); and more recent, coffee-table type publications that rely on extraordinary photography paired with short, descriptive entries, including Randolph Delehanty, *Classic Natchez: History, Homes, and Gardens* (Savannah and New Orleans: Martin – St. Martin Publishing Company, 1996); Hugh Howard, *Natchez: The Houses and History of the Jewel of the Mississippi* (New York: Rizzoli, 2003)

building, focusing solely on the presence of ornamental elements and architectural style, this chapter addresses questions of use, access, circulation, and spatial hierarchies within houses and domestic outbuildings.⁵⁸⁹ This chapter uses plans, letters and diaries, and furniture to establish social and spatial hierarchies in mansion houses, great houses, and domestic core and to map how people used and moved through spaces. The chapter opens by moving the reader through the planter's carefully cultivated landscape, arriving at the mansion house. The next section considers the plans and fills the house with furniture. Furniture forms, decorative finishes, materials, and whether something was old or new conveyed how people defined and valorized space in the mansion house, revealing spatial hierarchies. The final section uses letters and diaries describing wedding celebrations and parties to map the social landscapes in the house and domestic core. Even though less evidence exists, discussions of spatial hierarchies and social landscapes of great houses and enslaved people in the domestic cores provide a contrast to the spaces of the mansion house.

Arriving at the Mansion House

When she first came to Millford as John Manning's second wife, Sallie Bland Clarke Manning wrote to her mother, describing her approach to the house and her

⁵⁸⁹ Inspirations for this discussion of social hierarchies mapped architecturally: Dell Upton, "Black and White Landscapes in Eighteenth-Century Virginia," reprinted in Clifton Ellis and Rebecca Ginsburg, eds., *Cabin, Quarter, Plantation: Architecture and Landscapes of Nineteenth-Century Slavery* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2010) 121-140; Clifton Ellis, "The Mansion House at Berry Hill: Architecture and the Changing Nature of Slavery in Antebellum Virginia" *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture* 13, no. 1(2006): 22-48; Mark R. Wenger, "The Central Passage in Virginia: Evolution of an Eighteenth-Century Living Space," *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture*, 2, ed., Camille Wells (Columbia, Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 1986), 137-149; Mark R. Wenger, "The Dining Room in Early Virginia," *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture*, 3, ed., Thomas Carter and Bernard L. Herman, (Columbia, Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 1989), 149-159

impressions of the house and landscape,

“The house is beautifully situated - it looks like an old place that had been settled for a century. You enter by a large iron gate, near which, on a little elevation, is a beautiful porter’s lodge, and drive by a winding arena up the hill to the house. The piazza is of mosaic marble with large Corinthian pillars going up to the roof. Near the fish pond is a beautiful Gothic spring house built over an opening of delicious water. I have not had time to go over all the grounds yet, for I have been in company all the time.”⁵⁹⁰

In Manning’s day, the primary entrance to Millford was a gate near Tavern Creek, which lead on a winding route through the property that displayed scenic vistas before dramatically introducing visitors to the columned portico. Visitors passed through the Nathaniel Potter designed gate, past the Grecian Porter’s Lodge, which housed an enslaved family. Unfortunately, we do not know who lived here, or how many people inhabited the structure. The residents lived in relative isolation, as this house is located at a considerable distance from the mansion house and domestic core. The topography of the property did not allow someone at the mansion house to view the occupants of this building.

Having traveled up the road to the main house, Manning organized the rest of the domestic core both for efficiency and to frame picturesque views. Flanking the mansion house, visible to approaching guests, were the kitchen/wash house and residential quarters for enslaved people, designed to “produce the best effect, and at the same time be the most convenient for domestic purposes?”⁵⁹¹ Facing the mansion house across a courtyard was the Nathaniel Potter designed carriage house. Ben Pleasant’s house was

⁵⁹⁰ Sallie Bland Clarke Manning to Mary Clarke, Millford, May 11, 1848, WCM Papers Folder 131, SCL, USC

⁵⁹¹ John L. Manning to Nathaniel F. Potter, Columbia, September 22, 1839, WCM Papers, Folder 89, SCL, USC

on one side of the rear courtyard, while the Gothic-folly spring house presided over the small, picturesque reservoir on the other side of the domestic core. The domestic courtyard was a carefully designed, complementary space to the mansion house. Manning engaged Potter to design the largest structures (the carriage house and the two flanking outbuildings) and painted them to match Millford.

Antebellum visitors to Melrose arrived via a road established by John McMurren, in collaboration with the residents of the neighboring properties (Monmouth, Linden, Sedge Hill/Roselawn, and Woodlands), all relatives of the McMurrens (Figure 5-2). In 1854, each of these properties deeded right-of-way access for the construction of a road that linked their homes to one of the major roads leaving Natchez. In the 1850s, this road was Quitman's Lane; now it is Melrose Avenue and the Melrose-Montebello Parkway.⁵⁹² Visitors arriving at Melrose followed a curving lane, revealing a series of views of the house, framed by grand trees, with glimpses of the regimented layout of the outbuildings aligned in matching rows behind the house (Figure 5-3).

Immediately behind the house were the kitchen building on the north and the dairy structure on the south, identical buildings with facing double-height galleries. To the east of the kitchen and dairy buildings were cisterns, shielded by octagonal surrounding structures. To the east of the south cistern was the privy. Directly across from the privy, the property smokehouse was next to the north cistern. The symmetry of the domestic work areas was strict; each structure lined up perfectly with its mate across the courtyard, and the insistence on equal footprints and matching building materials

⁵⁹² Beha, Melrose Historic Structures Report, Volume I, 34

created a formal workspace of visual harmony. Away from the mansion house, the insistence on symmetry lessened (Figure 3-43). Two double houses for enslaved workers, the privy for the inhabitants of the two houses, the carriage house, and the stables were out of view from the mansion house, distributed towards the back of the property, away from the processional layout of house and immediate support structures.

Of the buildings off the organizational grid directly behind the house, the only building with architectural treatment is the carriage house. Horses and carriages were the primary means of transportation for McMurren women, as they traveled into town to attend church or visit relatives and friends, and for visitors to the property. Visitors might have glimpsed the carriage house as enslaved people put their vehicles away or pulled them out again for use. As the storage space for these items, the carriage house at Melrose received more architectural emphasis than the barn or the houses for enslaved workers, at least on the elevation most visible from the house and domestic core.

Visitors arrived at Ashland either from a steamboat on the Mississippi River, which served as a moving panorama of mansion houses and domestic cores belonging to wealthy plantations along the River Road, or from the River Road. Either way, visitors entered the Ashland property, passed through about 360 meters of ornamental gardens, up a curving path to the mansion house. Four outbuildings flanked the mansion house; the larger buildings housed the kitchen, wash house, and garconniere, and the smaller buildings were pigeoniers.⁵⁹³ In a written reminiscence about the horse trainer, George Washington Graves, Rosella Kenner Brent, the youngest daughter of the family,

⁵⁹³ David W. Babson and Charles E. Orser, *Pillars on the Levee: Archaeological Investigations at Ashland-Belle Helene Plantation, Geismar, Ascension Parish, Louisiana* (Normal: Midwestern Archaeological Research Center, Illinois State University, 1989), 16, 37

described a five-acre yard behind the mansion house with a kitchen garden, deer lot, chicken yard, and live oak, oak, and pecan trees.⁵⁹⁴ An orchard, to supply fruit to the family, was to the north of the yard, as indicated on the 1847 map. As recently as 1989, foundation ruins of the plantation hospital were still visible, located about 140 meters behind the main house, confirming its location on the 1847 Powell map (Figure I-1).⁵⁹⁵

It remains uncertain which outbuilding was the kitchen. In Ashland, placement of the small pantry and well suggests the dining room was the middle room on the northwestern side of the house. Dining rooms were not usually included in double-rooms connected by pocket doors. If correct, the north flanker probably contained the kitchen, being in closer proximity to the dining room. Complicating this logical evidence was the lack of mid-nineteenth century ceramics in the north flanker site, which was remarkably clean. The scarcity of diagnostic artifacts for a kitchen or laundry in the site, combined with no evidence from the south flanker, leads only to a conclusion based upon circumstantial evidence. In the 1980s, family members remembered the north flanker as a kitchen, even though Rosella Kenner Brent's recollections described the south pigeonier, where her father hid his wine collection during the Union soldiers' occupation of Ashland in 1862, as near the kitchen.⁵⁹⁶

The other flanking building behind Ashland may have been a garconniere. Many Louisiana plantations had garconnières, which were residential spaces for the planter

⁵⁹⁴ Rosella Kenner Brent, *George W. Graves*, Rosella Kenner Brent Papers, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

⁵⁹⁵ Babson and Orser, *Pillars on the Levee*, 39

⁵⁹⁶ Babson and Orser, *Pillars on the Levee*, 79-80; Rosella Kenner Brent, *Recollections of the Federal Raid Upon Ashland Plantation*, Rosella Kenner Brent Papers, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

family's teenaged sons and bachelor guests located within the domestic core.⁵⁹⁷ The best conclusion is that two buildings housed the kitchen, laundry, and probably a garconniere, but the evidence available at present is not enough to diagnose which activities took place in which building.

Many plantations included pigeonniers as part of the domestic outbuilding complex, which, in addition to their useful functions, often featured fanciful and highly decorative architecture, framing the main house. Pigeonniers served multiple functions. In her recollections of the Federal raid on Ashland in July 1862, Rosella Kenner Brent recalled that her father moved his wine to a storage space under the concrete floor of the south pigeonnier near the kitchen. "My father's wine, of which he had a good supply, had fortunately been removed from the house and put under the flooring of one of the large brick outhouses which stood at a little distance from the main house." Federal soldiers wanted wine; according to Rosella, enslaved people knew the hiding spot, revealed it to the soldiers, helped them unearth and drink it, even though the soldiers disparaged it as "think, weak stuff."⁵⁹⁸ At all three houses, visitors arrived at mansion houses on planned routes. Once the vehicle left the road, it followed a path calculated to offer pleasing views of foliage and glimpses of the house and domestic core, heightening the anticipation of crossing the threshold.

Through the Front Door

⁵⁹⁷ Bacot and Poesch, *Louisiana Buildings*, 140-142

⁵⁹⁸ Rosella Kenner Brent, *Recollections of the Federal Raid Upon Ashland Plantation*, Rosella Kenner Brent Papers, LLMVC, LSU Libraries; Babson and Orser, *Pillars on the Levee*, 39; Bauer, *A Leader Among Peers*, 196-197

Any understanding of circulation must begin, of course, with plans. Under the columns, across the portico, and through the front door, Millford opens into a symmetrical, central-hall plan, seventeen feet wide on the first story (Figure 5-4). The central hall separated the double parlor on the northeastern side of the house and the dining room and library on the southwestern side, with doors providing access to the interior from the front and rear of the house. From the central hallway, four doors open into the dining room, library, and each room of the double parlor. Windows on the front and rear elevations are noticeably large, six-over-nine panes, and reach to the floor. Nathaniel Potter built pockets in the wall above the window frames, so the sashes could lift up for people to walk through the space.⁵⁹⁹ Ceiling heights on the first story are fifteen-feet tall. On the second story, a narrower, twelve-foot wide central hallway had six doorways, which opened into the four upstairs bedrooms. Ceiling heights on the second story were a lofty fourteen-feet tall. Access to the second story was from the cylindrical stairhall at the rear of the house. On the southwestern wall, the middle doorway provided access into the stairway to the third level, while the opposite door opened into a dressing room/antechamber. The third story had a very similar footprint to the second story, with the largest rooms placed at the four corners of the building.

In contrast to the strict rectilinearity of the plan, a cylindrical stairhall projects from the rear elevation of the house (Figure 5-5). Accessed through a doorway from the central hall, the stairs curved counterclockwise to the second story. Potter stipulated the

⁵⁹⁹ Nathaniel F. Potter, Specifications for a House to be built in Sumpter [sic] District South Carolina for John L. Manning, May 1839, WCM Papers (Legal), Folder 20, South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina (hereafter cited as SCL, USC)

mahogany newel post, which he described as a truss, and the “mahogany moulded (sic) rail and bannisters (sic), all of the most approved patterns.”⁶⁰⁰ Above the stairs, in Potter’s “Rotunda,” a paneled ceiling curved to create a shallow dome that sprang from the cornice, capped by a round, stained glass window, with a protective glass on the roof. The short parapet wall on the exterior of the cylindrical stairhall hides the dome from exterior view.⁶⁰¹

The cylindrical stairhall at Millford resembles the cylindrical stair on the rear elevation of the South Caroliniana Library, on the campus of the University of South Carolina (Figure 5-6). Completed in 1840 to designs provided by Robert Mills, and under construction at the same time as Millford, the similarities of the spaces are striking. Manning spent a lot of time in Columbia, and, as a recent graduate of the College, would have been aware of the latest building program at the school. It seems possible that he knew about Mills’ design for the stairhall and wanted something similar at his home. The Salisbury House in Worcester, Massachusetts, constructed between 1836 and 1838, also had a cylindrical stairhall, with a rotunda that looks remarkably similar to the example at Millford (Figures 5-7 and 5-8). As a result, the circular stair hall might have come from Manning, via the Mills design, or from Potter, via Salisbury House in Massachusetts.

For Millford, John Manning ordered furniture that clearly defined the rank of that room in the spatial hierarchy of the house. For the double parlor, the most formal space

⁶⁰⁰ Nathaniel F. Potter, Specifications for a House to be built in Sumpter [sic] District South Carolina for John L. Manning, May 1839, WCM Papers (Legal), Folder 20, SCL, USC

⁶⁰¹ Nathaniel F. Potter, Specifications for a House to be built in Sumpter [sic] District South Carolina for John L. Manning, May 1839, WCM Papers (Legal), Folder 20, SCL, USC

in the house, Manning ordered a suite of exotic, expensive, rosewood furniture from Duncan Phyfe. Manning's deployment of materials throughout his house followed the rule set by Rudolph Ackermann, an Anglo-German furniture designer who mandated rosewood as the proper material for drawing room furniture in *The Repository of Arts, Literature, Commerce, Manufactures, Fashions and Politics* (1809–1828).⁶⁰² A rosewood-veneered couch and sofa commissioned for the double parlor featured a dramatically scrolled end and highly decorated leg (Figures 5-9 and 5-10). Other pieces of furniture in the drawing room, including four rosewood-veneered window seats that flanked the fireplaces, bore Phyfe's interpretation of an open work anthemion, gesturing to the carving on the mantelpieces, ceiling medallions, and door and window surrounds (Figure 5-11). The other room in the house that received rosewood furniture was Manning's bedroom. The bed, described as Grecian, but inspired by French fashion, eschewed posters for a circular canopy, which hung from a hook in the ceiling to support the bed hangings, had rosewood veneers, carved, ogee-shaped ends, and sturdy feet characteristic of Phyfe's later work (Figure 5-12).⁶⁰³ The rest of the suite, including a basin stand, nightstand, and double-door wardrobe in sumptuous rosewood veneers, only confirmed suggestions of Manning's vanity.⁶⁰⁴

In the dining room, an important, but secondary space in a mid nineteenth-century house, the furniture was mahogany, an expensive, but less highly valued material than

⁶⁰² McInnis and Leath, "Beautiful Specimens, Elegant Patterns," 152

⁶⁰³ Kenny, Brown, Bretter, Thurlow, *Duncan Phyfe: Master Cabinetmaker in New York*, 248-250, 253, 254-255

⁶⁰⁴ Kenny, Brown, Bretter, Thurlow, *Duncan Phyfe: Master Cabinetmaker in New York*, 248-250, 253, 254-255

rosewood. A mahogany celleret has gently sloping S-curves supporting the top, as well as strap banding, and, according to the bill of lading, accompanied a mahogany sideboard table that no longer exists (Figure 5-13).⁶⁰⁵ The strap banding on the celleret appeared on many pieces of Phyfe furniture at Millford and echoed strap banding found on the newel post, a clear connection between the furniture and the architectural detailing in the house.⁶⁰⁶

In the central hallway, the furniture was walnut, appropriate for the tertiary social importance of the space. A walnut-veneered couch, visible in a c. 1900 photograph of the central hallway at Melrose, is another example of the popular Grecian Plain style of furniture (Figure 5-14). The gently sloping back ends in a delicate S-shaped arm, with blocky legs and rounded feet, with the rail decorated with strap banding.

The style of furniture ordered from Duncan Phyfe supported the spatial hierarchy defined by the type of wood used in the pieces. At Millford, the rosewood furniture in the double parlor exhibited French influences, Phyfe's accommodation of changing fashions. Phyfe introduced French forms into his furniture as updates to the popular Grecian Plain style of the 1830s, the objects that elicited James Henry Hammond's criticism of the cabinetmaker in 1840 as outdated. The double parlor pieces married the solid, monumental forms of furniture from the 1830s with decorative overlays derived from French influences in the early 1840s. A mahogany armchair in the drawing room, painted to resemble rosewood, featured a Gothic crest, arm rails that ended in dramatic

⁶⁰⁵ D. Phyfe and Son to John L. Manning, New York, June 2, 1841, WCM Papers, R962b, SCL, USC; Kenny, Brown, Bretter, Thurlow, *Duncan Phyfe: Master Cabinetmaker in New York*, 258-259

⁶⁰⁶ Kenny, Brown, Bretter, Thurlow, *Duncan Phyfe: Master Cabinetmaker in New York*, 264

volutes, and arm supports carved as lotus-flowers (Figure 5-15). This expressive, exotic chair, painted to match the rest of the drawing room furniture, revealed Phyfe's adaptations of dramatic, decorative elements coming into style in 1840. The rest of the Phyfe pieces in the house were examples of the Grecian Plain style. By the time of Manning's order in 1840, Grecian Plain furniture remained fashionable, but was not trendy. The transitional pieces in the double parlor, even though they gestured towards changing fashions and were trendier than the Grecian Plain furniture, remained deeply rooted in Phyfe's established style, which complemented Millford's Minard Lafever-derived architecture.

Along with material and style of furniture, mantelpieces communicated information about spatial hierarchies at Millford. On the first story, Manning ordered pure white marble mantelpieces for the two fireplaces in the double parlor, with capitals that referenced the anthemion motifs of the door and window frames (Figure 4-2). In the dining room and library, dramatic black marble mantelpieces with gold veins were simple and monumental (Figure 5-16). Upstairs the scheme continued, with white and veined marble mantels in the chambers above the double parlors and black with gold veined mantels in the rooms above the dining room and library.⁶⁰⁷

The question of old versus new furniture at Millford was a moot point. John Manning commissioned Duncan Phyfe to furnish his entire house. Manning did not bring furnishings from a former residence into Millford, nor did he continue buying furniture

⁶⁰⁷ I am treating the mantels at Millford as furnishings rather than as part of the architectural development of the house because Manning commissioned them specifically, without Potter's assistance. John Struthers and Son to John L. Manning, Philadelphia, March 19, 1840, WCM Papers, Folder 95, SCL, USC

into the late 1840s or 1850s. Manning created a comprehensive aesthetic effect, a sympathetic relationship between furniture and architecture, in 1840, and preserved it throughout the rest of his occupation of the house.

At Melrose, instead of a continuous space spanning the entire length of the house, the house had a two-part central hallway with a smaller front hall separated from a large center hall by a doorway (Figure 5-17). The smaller front hall served as an entrance vestibule, with access into the dining room and drawing room. The central hall had doors into a parlor and library, as well as access to the offset, dogleg stair. Behind the stairs, connected by a hallway that ran from the back gallery into the dining room, were storage rooms and staging areas for enslaved people to prepare food service. Melrose devoted an unusual amount of interior square footage to spaces for storage and work by enslaved people; in fact, there was no precedent for a service hallway and staging rooms in Natchez.⁶⁰⁸ Upstairs, the footprint was similar. The smaller front hall and large center hall ran the length of the house, with bedrooms opening off the halls. Ceiling heights on the first story were fourteen feet four inches, while second story ceiling heights were twelve feet six inches. On the rear gallery, a louvered bay contained the doorway into the service hall, as well as a secondary stairway that provided access from the basement up to the second story of the house. The main stair at Melrose opened from the back central hall, offset and oriented perpendicularly from the primary axis of the house. The staircase extended from the first story all the way to the attic and roof on the third story, a vertical ventilation shaft that moved hot air up to be dispersed through the clerestory

⁶⁰⁸ Miller, "Melrose and American Architecture," unpublished draft supplied to the author in August, 2009, 66

windows of the rooftop monitor. The placement of the stair was similar to the placement of the stairs in eight contemporary houses.⁶⁰⁹

The plan of Melrose is unusual for several reasons. First, most of the grand Natchez mansions of the 1830s and 1840s had a continuous central hall like Rosalie, instead of the smaller front hall and larger back hall (Figure 5-18). The organization of rooms and spaces, with the split central hall, the service hallway, and the public room creates a more complicated plan. Some have associated the plan of Melrose as an adaptation of the Creole house plan with a hall and small cabinet rooms flanking a rear gallery, often found in older and smaller houses outside of Natchez.⁶¹⁰ Significantly enlarged, enclosed, and Grecianized from the Creole house plan, Melrose is not dissimilar from the plan of Holly Hedges, the McMurren's townhouse in downtown Natchez before they built Melrose, which also had a two-part center hall with the rear room used as the dining room.⁶¹¹ Melrose was big enough to include a separate dining hall, leaving the large central hall open for circulation and socialization. Similarities between the plans of the McMurren's old and new houses, in contrast to the simpler plans more commonly associated with houses like Melrose, suggest tantalizing hints of the McMurren's involvement with the design of the "palace mansion."

⁶⁰⁹ Miller, "Melrose and American Architecture," 66

⁶¹⁰ Jay Edwards is the premier scholar on the importation and development of the Creole house plan in Louisiana. Jay D. Edwards, "The Origins of Creole Architecture," *Winterthur Portfolio*, XXIX (1994), 155-189; Jay D. Edwards, *Louisiana's Remarkable French Vernacular Architecture, 1700-1900* (Baton Rouge: The Louisiana State University Press, 1988.)

⁶¹¹ Miller, "Melrose and American Architecture," 65-66

Notwithstanding its plan, Melrose exhibits many characteristics associated with mansion houses in and around Natchez from the first half of the nineteenth century.⁶¹² The hipped roof, topped by a balustraded monitor with clerestory windows, is a common feature also found on Rosalie. Another feature common to many houses in Natchez was a mahogany punkah in the dining room, decorated with an anthemion pattern, affixed to the ceiling by a wooden medallion (Figure 5-19). Imported into America from India in the early nineteenth-century, the punkah was a large wooden paddle attached to a rope, operated by an enslaved worker. The constant motion of the punkah kept air moving through the room and insects off the food on the dining room table.⁶¹³ An ingenious, if labor-intensive, solution for increasing comfort while dining, the punkah was common around Natchez; thirteen other mansion houses in Natchez had them.⁶¹⁴ The watercolor of an enslaved woman manning a three-punkah system at Chapman Springs, Virginia reveals the presence of this comfort-enhancing and wealth-showcasing architectural feature throughout the American South (Figure 5-20). The high concentration of the form in Natchez suited the high concentration of wealthy planters in the town.⁶¹⁵ A third feature found at Melrose with connections to other houses in Natchez was the jib window in the library, which provided access to the back gallery (Figure 5-21). The jib window is a regular six-over-six window with a removable panel at the bottom, an alternative, very

⁶¹² Delehanty, *Classic Natchez*; Howard, *Natchez: The Houses and History*

⁶¹³ Miller, "Melrose and American Architecture," 70, Dana E. Byrd, "Punkahs and Fly Brushes," *World of a Slave: Encyclopedia of the Material Lives of Slaves in the United States*, Martha B. Katz-Hyman and Kym S. Rice, eds. (Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood, 2011), 381-385

⁶¹⁴ Miller, "Melrose and American Architecture," 70

⁶¹⁵ Natchez is often cited, scholarly and popularly, as having the highest per-capita concentration of millionaires in the 1850s. The context for that statement ranges from in the American South, in the United States, and even in the world! A recent use of the figure is in John Stauffer, "Interspatialism in the Nineteenth-century South: The Natchez of Henry Norman," *Slavery and Abolition*, Volume 29, no. 2 (June 2008), 249

casual point of entrance and egress for John McMurran, the usual occupant of the library.⁶¹⁶ Jib windows appeared at D'Evereaux, built in 1836, and were added during renovation projects to at least three other houses in Natchez.⁶¹⁷

John McMurran's approach to furnishing his house differed from Manning in many important regards. McMurran's furniture did not follow the strict hierarchy that related expensive materials to formal spaces, and McMurran did not purchase new furnishings for every room of Melrose. At Melrose, the rooms featured furniture crafted from a combination of woods, with pieces of rosewood, mahogany, and walnut furniture scattered throughout the house. This is not to say that McMurran ignored or did not know how materials related to spatial hierarchies. In a discussion of his newly installed Venetian blinds, McMurran wrote "The difference in the price must be chiefly in the trimmings, I imagine – the trimmings for the parlor and dining room blinds being of silk, and those for the bedrooms of worsted. The color of the blinds is, I believe, called French green."⁶¹⁸ McMurran clearly understood that silk defined the formal public spaces of his house, while worsted sufficed for private rooms.

While the drawing room had a rosewood sofa table with a marble top, the chairs, "tete a tete" sofa, revolving sofa, and an étagère were all made of walnut.⁶¹⁹ For this room, the most formal in the house, McMurran purchased a set of Rococo Revival furniture in walnut, with abundant foliage carved on the crests of the chairs, armchairs,

⁶¹⁶ Miller, "Melrose and American Architecture," 56

⁶¹⁷ Miller, "Melrose and American Architecture," 64

⁶¹⁸ John T. McMurran to John Quitman, Natchez, January 30, 1859, Quitman Papers, Z66, box 3, folder 1, MDAH

⁶¹⁹ In the late 1840s and 1850s, walnut regained popularity with the introduction of Gothic and Rococo Revival forms of furniture, even though it was not as expensive as mahogany or rosewood.

and sofa. In addition, McMurran bought a revolving sofa probably made by Charles H. White (Figure 5-22). A revolving sofa was an uncommon form, two armchairs connected by an ottoman, from which a small round table on a thin, cylindrical base emerged. The revolving sofa at Melrose is very similar to a labeled Charles H. White revolving sofa in a collection in Richmond, Virginia. The unusual forms match perfectly, as do the carved duck head arms, and the scrolls and foliage on the crests of the chairs, suggesting that Charles H. White made the sofa at Melrose.⁶²⁰ It is unclear if White made the other furnishings in the room. Even though the chairs, armchairs, and sofa were walnut, covered in green and gold upholstery, the crest carvings are more ornate than the example on the revolving sofa and do not match (Figure 5-23).⁶²¹

The parlor served as an extension of the drawing room when the pocket doors were open and featured a mix of rosewood, mahogany, and walnut furniture.⁶²² The mahogany Joseph Meeks center table found in the parlor was a common object for this space, suitable in a room that became the location of family gathering and the center for refined activities (Figure 4-6). Surrounded by side chairs, with a large lamp to provide light for reading, needlework, and other domestic activities, the center table was the focal point of the parlor.⁶²³ The piano was another parlor-appropriate accessory of refined domesticity for elite people in the 1840s.⁶²⁴ Mary Louisa McMurran was an

⁶²⁰ Jason T. Busch, "Such a Paradise Can be Made on Earth," 189-190

⁶²¹ Inventory of Melrose furnishings sold with the house, 1865. Typescript of original in possession of Mrs. Marian Kelly Ferry. Petravage, *Melrose Historic Furnishings Report*, 47-49

⁶²² Inventory of Melrose furnishings sold with the house, 1865. Typescript of original in possession of Mrs. Marian Kelly Ferry. Petravage, *Melrose Historic Furnishings Report* 47-49

⁶²³ Bushman, *The Refinement of America*, 263; Wendy Cooper, *Classical Taste in America, 1800-1840* (Baltimore: Baltimore Museum of Art, 1993), 215, 217

⁶²⁴ Bushman, *The Refinement of America*, 231-232; Cooper, *Classical Taste in America*, 260-264

accomplished pianist, and the instrument declared the family's taste, gentility, and education to visitors who saw it. The McMurrans prized their piano at Melrose, made clear by a letter from Mary Louisa McMurren to her sister, Fanny Turner. After describing the available cultural events happening in Natchez, Mary Louisa told her sister that they

“preferred staying at home and I giving Mr. McM a few of his favorites on my piano. I missed the “Empress Henrietta’s Waltz” – have you taken it home? If so, send it on to me by the first good opportunity, as I find I cannot play it without the notes and you can. I received “Sweet Afton” by Charles last evening.”⁶²⁵

This letter revealed the important role of the piano in the lives of the McMurrans. Mary Louisa McMurren's ability to play, sheet music or not, gave her family the possibility to partake in an alternate form of entertainment in the comfort of their house.

Furniture in the library was primarily walnut.⁶²⁶ The library was a working space, where John McMurren and his son discussed and settled plantation matters.⁶²⁷ In this room, McMurren hung portraits of political figures he admired, including John Calhoun, Zachary Taylor, and Chief Justice John Marshall. When McMurren sold Melrose to George Malin Davis in 1865, he included many of the furnishings, and offered Davis a choice of the portraits in the library. After some negotiation, it was determined that Mary Louisa McMurren would keep the portrait of Chief Justice Marshall, the largest of the

⁶²⁵ Mary Louisa McMurren to Fanny Turner, Melrose, n.d. (c. 1848), Edward Turner Papers, Series S:120, #1403, Folder 15, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

⁶²⁶ Inventory of Melrose furnishings sold with the house, 1865. Typescript of original in possession of Mrs. Marian Kelly Ferry. Petravage, *Melrose Historic Furnishings Report*, 47-49

⁶²⁷ John T. McMurren, Jr. to Mrs. John T. McMurren, Jr., Melrose, October 1, 1858, McMurren-Austen Family Papers #4795 1858 Correspondence 1:4, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

paintings, which she gave to James Carson, her husband's law partner, in gratitude for his assistance with estate issues after McMurran's untimely death in 1866.⁶²⁸

In the dining room, mahogany furniture prevailed, including the mahogany sideboard and two mahogany drop-leaf tables, probably made by Charles H. White in Philadelphia (Figures 5-24 and 5-25). Stylistic clues on the furniture and the presence of engraved labels suggest these pieces predated the construction of Melrose. The dramatically carved lion's paw feet, gadrooning, and the cornucopias of fruit on the sideboard at Melrose bear striking similarities to the sofas and dressing tables formerly at Arlington, probably shipped to Charlotte Catherine Surget Bingaman in Natchez in the mid-1830s. The engraved labels on the sideboard and drop-leaf tables indicate a manufacturing date in the early 1830s.⁶²⁹ McMurran probably bought this furniture for the dining room at Holly Hedges. The dining room also had a set of mahogany chairs with Gothic detailing, made in Philadelphia (Figure 4-22). McMurran purchased them in the city, or the manufacturer sent them to Natchez as venture cargo, for sale through a local retailer.

In the back hall, the furniture was mahogany, appropriate for a space often used for entertaining.⁶³⁰ In the front hall, visible to all guests entering Melrose, was a hat

⁶²⁸ James Carson to Mary Louisa McMurran, February 4, 1869, McMurran Collection, Box 2, Folder Jan-Feb 1869, ULM SC; Mary Louisa McMurran to Eliza Davis, Woodlands, February 5, 1869, McMurran Collection, Box 2, Folder Jan-Feb 1869, SCL, ULM; Mary Louisa McMurran, February 9, 1869, McMurran Collection, Box 2, Folder Jan-Feb 1869, SCL, ULM; James Carson to Mary Louisa McMurran, Natchez, February 8, 1869, McMurran Collection, Box 2, Folder Jan-Feb 1869, SCL, ULM

⁶²⁹ Jason T. Busch, "Such a Paradise Can be Made on Earth," 188-189

⁶³⁰ For a discussion of the spaces used for entertaining at Melrose, please see Chapter 4. Inventory of Melrose furnishings sold with the house, 1865. Typescript of original in possession of Mrs. Marian Kelly Ferry. Petravage, *Melrose Historic Furnishings Report*, 47-49

stand, made around 1840, purchased for Holly Hedges, and moved into a place of prominence in the front hall at Melrose (Figure 4-8). The restrained, classical lines suited the monumentality of the Greek Revival house. Even though the hat rack was almost ten years old, classical elements on furniture remained popular among Natchez planters through 1840s and 1850s. Despite its relative age, and the increasing popularity of Gothic and Rococo Revival furniture forms, the classical hat rack remained suitably stylish.⁶³¹

McMurren did not fill Melrose with entirely new furniture. He was comfortable using the mahogany sideboard and dining tables that occupied Holly Hedges in his grand suburban villa dining room nearly twenty years later. The classical design elements of these pieces, made by Charles H. White of Philadelphia in the early 1830s, remained popular in Natchez, even as ornate Rococo Revival furniture gained traction among the Natchez elite in the 1850s. In addition to the sideboard and dining tables, McMurren brought a set of Gothic Revival mahogany dining chairs, a Grecian hat stand, and a Grecian center table to Melrose from Holly Hedges. McMurren did not ignore changing fashions. The Rococo Revival sofas and chairs purchased in the 1850s for the drawing room and parlor show McMurren's awareness of fashionable forms and his willingness to buy updated furniture for the most important rooms of his house. At the same time, McMurren's dining room featured a high concentration of reused and older furniture, the hat stand, prominently displayed in the entry vestibule, was visible to everybody entering the house, and the twenty-year old, Meeks Grecian center table in the parlor coexisted

⁶³¹ Jason T. Busch, "Such a Paradise Can be Made on Earth," 167

harmoniously with the dramatic, Rococo Revival furniture of the adjacent, connected drawing room.

Ashland's plan resembles Millford more than it does Melrose. At Ashland, the central hallway extends the full depth of the house (Figure 5-26). Accessed from doors on the southwest (the primary entrance) and the northeast elevations, the hall was approximately twelve feet across and provided access into every room. The first story of Ashland had six rooms, not including the stair niche or the central hall, under a ceiling height of approximately fourteen feet. With the exception of the rear elevation, all windows at Ashland were nine-over-nine panes that reached to the floor and provided access onto the peripteral gallery. From the front door, on the right was a pair of rooms, separated by pocket doors. Each room had two doors from the central hall, aligned with the windows on the southeastern wall and a fireplace, centered between two windows. Behind the double-rooms was a smaller space in the northeast corner of the house, which may have been an office for Kenner to conduct plantation business. To the left of the central hallway were two rooms of equal footprint to the double-parlor, with the library at the front of the house and the dining room behind it. Behind the two rooms was the stair niche; in the northwestern corner was a small room with a brick-lined well in the center of the floor. Interpreted as a pantry, the subterranean well may have been an early cooling mechanism, possibly a wine cellar, since Ashland had no basement. Kenner had an extensive collection of wine, a valuable commodity, which he stored in the house.⁶³² Presently flooded, it is unclear if this space originally had a finished floor. In a niche off

⁶³² Rosella Kenner Brent, *Recollections of the Federal Raid Upon Ashland Plantation*, Rosella Kenner Brent Papers, LLMVC, LSU Libraries)

the hall, near the door on the southeastern elevation of the house, a spiraling staircase reaches up to the second story, continuing to the attic (Figure 5-27). The dramatic engineering feature may have been inspired by plate sixty-two in Asher Benjamin's *Practical House Carpenter* (Figure 5-28). Examples of this elegant stair appeared throughout the country in buildings of the late 1830s. In Pelham Bay, New York, a circular staircase at the Bartow-Pell Mansion, constructed between 1836 and 1842, bears a striking resemblance to the stair at Ashland (Figure 5-29).

Like Millford and Melrose, the second story of Ashland was private space, reserved as bedrooms for members of the Kenner family. The footprints of the rooms match the spaces downstairs exactly, and ceiling heights were almost twelve feet. Upstairs, the approximately thirteen-foot wide hall stretched the entire length of the building. The bedrooms had single doors opening from the hallway. Internal doors connected each room to the adjacent bedroom or dressing room, making it possible to move between rooms without entering the central hallway.

Even though every room on the first and second stories open into the central hall, as expected in a traditional central-hall plan building, elements of Ashland's layout reveal a combination of Grecian Revival influences with elements taken from buildings in tropical or semi-tropical climates (Figure 5-30). Both upstairs and downstairs, on each side of the passage, it was possible to communicate from room to room without entering the hall. This form of room organization, *en suite* (with no hall) and *enfilade* (in a line), was characteristic of Creole planning in Louisiana in the late eighteenth- and early

nineteenth-centuries.⁶³³ One surprising detail of the Ashland plan is the number of doors opening into rooms from the central hall on the first floor. From the primary entrance, the two closest rooms on each side, the primary living and entertaining spaces for the Kenners, had two doors opening from the central hall. This gave three or four points of access into every room on the first floor, including the smaller staging and storage rooms located at the back of the house. Even more telling, with the exception of the small room in the northeastern corner of the house, the doors line up with the windows on the side elevations. Section drawings of the windows show that the double-hung sash windows reached the floor in these rooms, and the walls had pockets above the windows to receive the sashes when fully raised. In other words, the windows and doors could be flung open to allow breezes into the house, a necessity for comfort on hot, humid Louisiana days. Closing the louvered shutters on the exterior of the windows provided privacy, while maintaining free air circulation throughout the house. As compared to Millford and Melrose, Ashland is a distinctly open building, both from the exterior and in the interior.

In addition to the openness of the plan at Ashland, the peripteral piers, along with the large louvered shutters on the windows, created a screen, thoroughly obscuring activities happening within the house. Ashland used the mass and solidity so often associated with the Grecian Revival to solve a local problem, to create the impression of privacy in a very open house. Architects, builders, and patrons from all over the nation used Grecian Revival forms in buildings during the 1830s and 1840s; what makes Ashland so interesting was the combination of national forms into a local expression, to

⁶³³ Bacot and Poesch, ed., *Louisiana Buildings*, 98-99

suit the needs of a family living in a climate very different from New York or New England.

Unfortunately, Ashland does not allow for the same kind of exploration of the ways that materials, forms, and new furniture versus old defined spaces. One remaining object in Ashland with connections to Duncan Kenner is a half-tester bed in the Rococo Revival style of the 1850s, with heavy carvings, rounded posts, and gadrooning (Figure 5-31). This bed has a pencil inscription on the half-tester, “D. Kenner, Ashland Landing,” indicating that it arrived on the plantation from a steamboat.⁶³⁴ Kenner probably ordered the bed through a New Orleans retailer, but with no label, the provenance remains uncertain.⁶³⁵ The most detailed information on the furnishings at Ashland is Duncan Kenner’s probate inventory, taken in July 1887. The inventory recorded the status of furnishings in the house many years after the height of Kenner’s plantation network. Duncan Kenner and his wife spent the vast majority of their time after the Civil War in New Orleans, leaving Ashland largely uninhabited. The appraisers assessed the furniture at a mere \$569.25. The low value of Ashland’s furnishings reflects the change in the Kenner’s habitation practices after the Civil War. The most valuable objects were a polariscope and scale in the front bedroom downstairs for ninety dollars; a mahogany extension table in the dining room for twenty-five dollars, a walnut table and glass in an upstairs bedroom for twenty-five dollars, and a set of six silver dinner forks,

⁶³⁴ I would like to thank Gary Lacombe, External Affairs Manager of the Shell Chemicals Geismar Plant, for sharing this observation with me.

⁶³⁵ Steven Harrison, *Furniture Trade in New Orleans, 1840-1880: The Largest Assortment Constantly on Hand*, Master’s Thesis, University of Delaware, 1997, 71-77

table spoons, and tea spoons for thirty dollars. Most of the chairs in the house were worth a dollar or less.⁶³⁶

Comparing Kenner's probate inventory with other documents revealed that high quality, fashionable objects and furnishings did exist at Ashland at one time. The six large silver dinner forks, six large silver table spoons, and six silver tea spoons, listed in the probate inventory, might have been what remained of the family silver after the Civil War.⁶³⁷ When the Union soldiers came to Ashland, Rosella Kenner Brent wrote that, except for forks and spoons, the family silver was no longer on the property. Rosella remembered her mother gathering up the remaining pieces in the house and storing them upstairs, where the family remained during the occupation. As a safeguard against the possibility of a raid, Kenner directed enslaved workers to pack up most of the family valuables and sent the trunks away, for an associate of the family to care for during the war. According to Rosella, the enslaved man who drove the cart told the Union soldiers about the location of the hidden trunk, who confiscated the silver.⁶³⁸

In her reminiscences about George Washington Graves, her father's trusted horse trainer, Rosella described a silver tea and coffee set imported from England, as well as silver bowls with colored glass inserts at Ashland. She described the larger bowl in some detail, remembering a green glass lining and a wreath of strawberries, worked in silver,

⁶³⁶ Duncan Farrar Kenner Probate Inventory, July 22, 1887, Duncan Farrar Kenner Papers, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

⁶³⁷ Duncan Farrar Kenner Probate Inventory, July 22, 1887, Duncan Farrar Kenner Papers, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

⁶³⁸ Rosella Kenner Brent, *Recollections of the Federal Raid upon Ashland Plantation*, Rosella Kenner Brent Papers, LLMVC, LSU Libraries; Rosella Kenner Brent, *George W. Graves*, Rosella Kenner Brent Papers, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

around the edge.⁶³⁹ Probably hidden with the rest of the silver table and serving wares, confiscated by Union soldiers, were Kenner's racing trophies. Rosella remembered,

“A large, tall silver urn, with a turret on which stood a mare and colt and other horses grouped around the ball. A gold cup, shaped like a charlie [chalice?] and about ____ tall, plain except for a sketch of horses racing, enframed on its side – a pitcher, rather large with the steamboat Natchez pictured on the sides. This pitcher was given as a prize by the steamboat Natchez and was won at Natchez, where the horses went to run annually – as they did also at New Orleans.”⁶⁴⁰

Of all the pieces lost, Kenner recovered a single item. According to his daughter, Colonel Sawtelle, an army officer, invited Kenner to a meeting at headquarters in New Orleans. Once there, Sawtelle,

“took out from his desk a green large bag & drawing out from the bag, the Cup of Gold, he handed it to Mr. K asking, ‘Do you know anything about this’ – Mr. K took the Cup & after looking at it carefully, said, ‘This was mine’ – ‘Then’ said Col. Sawtelle, ‘if it was yours it is yours’ – And Mr. K brought home with him the Cup, in the identical green bag in which it had always been kept.”⁶⁴¹

The racing trophies probably resembled the example shown here, won in the 1840s at the Pharsalia racetrack in Natchez (Figure 5-32).⁶⁴² Pitcher and urn shaped trophies in gold and silver, with commemorative decorations and memorializing inscriptions were the usual rewards for winning races.

⁶³⁹ Rosella Kenner Brent, *George W. Graves*, Rosella Kenner Brent Papers, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

⁶⁴⁰ Rosella Kenner Brent, *George W. Graves*, Rosella Kenner Brent Papers, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

⁶⁴¹ Rosella Kenner Brent, *George W. Graves*, Rosella Kenner Brent Papers, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

⁶⁴² The Pharsalia Plate shown here celebrated the victory of a champion, four-miler mare named Sarah Bladen at the Pharsalia course in November 1840. Kenner's horse, Luda, the subject of a portrait by Edward Troye, beat Sarah Bladen in New Orleans in 1842. John Hervey, *Racing in America: 1665-1865*. New York: Privately printed for the Jockey Club, volume 2; Mackay-Smith, *The Race Horses of America*, 147-150

By 1887, the low appraised value of the Ashland objects suggests that many of them were old, outdated, and worn. Even a marble topped center table in the downstairs hall only received a value of seven dollars (compare this to the Meeks table at Melrose, valued at eighty-five dollars in 1865). The mahogany dining table, a small walnut table in the dining room, a walnut table and glass in the bedroom over the parlor, and eight mahogany chairs and two old arm chairs in the front bedroom on the right were the only articles in the inventory listed with an identifying wood. By 1887, Ashland was shabbier than it had been before the Civil War; thirty-one of the sixty-five appraised lots on the probate inventory were valued at five dollars or less.⁶⁴³

Access and circulation through Millford was very straightforward. The central hall established the main axis, and all rooms and the stairhall opened from this space. On either side of the hall, rooms communicated internally, and each of the four rooms had full-height windows, allowing access to the front and rear galleries. Millford had a single stair to connect the first story and the second, used by the Manning family and the enslaved people who worked in the house. Access and circulation at Ashland was equally simple as Millford. Again, the central hallway created an axis that provided access to almost all of the rooms on the first story and the stair. The only space not directly accessed from the central hall was the small pantry with the subterranean well in the northeast corner of the house. A door under the spiraling stair offered access to this room, a clear statement of the secondary status of the storage space. The pantry had an

⁶⁴³ See Appendix C: Inventory of Melrose Furnishings Sold with the House, 1865 and Appendix D: Ashland Furniture from Inventory of Property in Ascension Parish belonging to Duncan Farrar Kenner, July 22, 1887

internal door into the dining room, suggesting that the space held valuable objects and may have been a place for enslaved people to stage food before delivering it into the dining room. Like Millford, the first-story rooms communicated internally, and a single stair connected the first and second story, used by the Kenners and enslaved people alike. In all of the rooms at Ashland, full-height windows opened onto the surrounding gallery, creating a very open house with many points of entrance and egress.

Access and circulation at Melrose was more complicated and structured than the other two houses and more effectively segregated enslaved people from the McMurrans and their visitors. With a two-part central hall, the front hall effectively sorted people into the dining room or drawing room, and the doorway between the two halls either blocked access or allowed people to continue into the large center hall. The center hall was the primary circulation space for elite residents and visitors, granting access into the remaining rooms on the first floor and the stair. Unlike Millford and Ashland, the center hall at Melrose was not the only passage through the house. A secondary hallway on the northeastern side of the house gave enslaved people access into the dining room from the kitchen (Figure 5-33). The small rooms that opened from the secondary hall provided space for the storage of valuables and a place to prepare food presentation.⁶⁴⁴ The northeastern bay of the rear gallery featured a secondary staircase, shielded from view by louvers, giving access for enslaved workers to the basement, first story, and second story. The center doors on the front and rear elevation were the primary means of access for elite whites into the interior. Enslaved people entered through a secondary doorway into

⁶⁴⁴ Ann Beha Associates, Melrose Estate, Natchez National Historical Park, Historic Structures Report, Volume I (1997), 72; Ellis, "The Mansion House at Berry Hill," 29-31

the small hallway through the rear elevation, and John McMurran had a jib door in his library, to give the master private access into his working space.

At Melrose, a system of bells summoned enslaved people to where the white residents required their services. In January 1857, Mary Louisa McMurran wrote her son at Riverside, apologizing for her delayed letter. William, an enslaved man who lived at Melrose, had been busy with the bell hanger, and could not take her letter to the Post Office. She continued, “I knew you would feel disappointed in not hearing from Melrose yesterday. I had a bell hung for you in Alie's room.”⁶⁴⁵ The McMurran’s son and heir and his new wife needed to be able to communicate their needs and wishes directly to enslaved workers. Located in the dining room, drawing room, parlor, and library downstairs, and in the two front bedrooms upstairs, the bell pulls connected to bells in the basement passage. The location of the bells in the basement reveals where enslaved people spent considerable time, isolated from the rooms occupied by the McMurrans, and their friends and relatives, but on-call at the slightest whim of the white residents.⁶⁴⁶ Millford also had a system of bells and bell pulls to summon enslaved people. Each room on the first and second stories had a bell pull, even though Potter did not specify where the cords connected to the bells.⁶⁴⁷

The bell systems at Millford and Melrose, the secondary passageways and stairs at Melrose, and the staging area/pantry used by enslaved people at Ashland raise

⁶⁴⁵ Mary Louisa McMurran to John T. McMurran, Jr., Melrose, January 16, 1857, McMurran-Austen Family Papers 1857 Correspondence 1:3, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

⁶⁴⁶ A very similar organization of working spaces that separated and hid domestic enslaved workers from the sight of the planter family developed about the same time at Berry Hill Plantation, in Halifax County, Virginia. Ellis, “The Mansion House at Berry Hill,” 32, 43

⁶⁴⁷ Nathaniel F. Potter, Specifications for a House to be built in Sumpter [sic] District South Carolina for John L. Manning, May 1839, WCM Papers (Legal), Folder 20, SCL, USC

important questions about the presence, movement, and visibility of enslaved people in the mansion house. At Melrose, the hallway between the dining room and the kitchen building obscured activities of enslaved people bringing food to the elite white residents. At Ashland, the pantry acted similarly. Interestingly, it was impossible to hide the presence of enslaved people who orchestrated food in front of the white diners. In a similar elision, slave-owning women frequently wrote about their daily schedules, but never mentioned enslaved people. Eating breakfast, feeding pet birds, taking a ride on her horse – all of these activities required the work and presence of enslaved people who cooked, served, knew where the bird food was, and fetched the horse.⁶⁴⁸

At Millford and Melrose, the bell-pull system limited the presence of enslaved people in the house. With bells, enslaved people worked elsewhere in the mansion house or domestic core, called to a specific room to carry out a specific duty. Staging areas, passageways, and alternate stairs to make work appear effortless and invisible were not new architectural features in the 1840s and 1850s. What seems to indicate a shift in the ways that elite white families interacted with enslaved people on a daily basis was the popularity of labor-hiding devices that emerge in these decades. Melrose built obscuring features into the plan, but even Millford and Ashland, with simple, straightforward plans, incorporated elements to hide the movement and work of enslaved people. Planters were successful at hiding movement and work. In one of her earliest letters, Alie Austen McMurran wrote her father, “everything in such perfect order - ten servants in the house

⁶⁴⁸ Louisa Quitman to John Quitman, Monmouth, May 10, 1844, Quitman papers, Subseries 1.1, Folder 36, SHC, UNC; Louisa Quitman to John Quitman, Monmouth, February 1847, Quitman papers, Subseries 1.1, Folder 48, SHC, UNC

and you would never know of there being there excepting that they are always ready for orders--I never saw so perfectly arranged household."⁶⁴⁹ Along with the residents, frequent visitors to Melrose commented on the ease and quiet experienced at the house. Antonia Quitman dramatically remarked,

“Dear, delightful Melrose! It is to me like a haven of rest into which I can retire and be free from all care & sorrow--can lay aside all unpleasant feelings & be for a time perfectly happy. But it is like taking chloroform, at first so delightful & after the influence has passed away the reaction is so great so after I have passed the boundaries of Melrose the reaction begins to take place.”⁶⁵⁰

Antonia felt utterly carefree at Melrose, a direct result of the architectural program to obscure the movement and presence of enslaved people

Architectural strategies to hide enslaved people in the mansion house were part of a nationwide tendency in large residences in the 1840s and 1850s to obscure work. The suburban villa, the typological source for architecturally significant mansion houses sited on beautifully landscaped show-grounds, was widely adopted as a space for rest and relaxation. Throughout the United States in the 1840s and 1850s, wealthy patrons adopted work-obscuring architectural strategies in their residential structures. The urge to hide work from genteel residences was part of a national uneasiness over growing industrialization and a celebration of the home as the seat of domestic and moral happiness. Those tensions were amplified in the American South, where enslaved people performed domestic work that became harder and harder to see, but they affected

⁶⁴⁹ Alice Austen McMurren to George Austen, Riverside, November [1856], McMurren-Austen Family Papers 1856 Correspondence 1:2, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

⁶⁵⁰ Antonia Quitman to Louisa Quitman, Monmouth, February 25th, 1851, Quitman papers, B-8, Folder 1:3, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

architectural decisions across the United States. In Madison, Indiana, the Lanier House, an architect-designed house completed by 1844 offers a non-Southern example of shielding work from the view of the elite white residents (Figure 5-34). A small hallway on the side of the house offers a secondary route from the attached kitchen building into the dining room, with small storage closets creating a T-shaped space. Intended to serve as a staging area, the hall has a small shelf in the corner of what is now a bathroom. Hired laborers placed finished dishes on the shelf behind a cabinet door, opened and served by someone stationed in the dining room. As you can see, this opening cuts through the wall the modern-day bathroom, suggesting a point of access.⁶⁵¹ Remnants of this system remain visible in the plan. Yet another example, Lindenwald, in Kinderhook, New York, was the Richard Upjohn renovated home of Martin Van Buren. Now open to visitors as a National Park Service site, Patricia West uses Lindenwald as a case study to call for a greater scholarly emphasis on and interpretation of the hidden working passages of the house.⁶⁵²

The House Full of People

Room organization, circulation patterns, access, and furniture clearly designated spaces for social interactions in mansion houses. In mansion houses, social events took place in the public rooms on the first story, centered in the drawing room, often utilizing the parlor by opening the pocket doors, and the dining room. The drawing room was the most formal space in the house, the parlor complemented the drawing room, and the

⁶⁵¹ I would like to thank Benjamin Ross for bringing the Lanier House to my attention.

⁶⁵² Patricia West, "Uncovering and Interpreting Women's History at Historic House Museums," in Dubrow & Goodman, eds., *Restoring Women's History through Historic Preservation*, 2003, 83-95

dining room was necessary for the presentation of food and drink to guests. For formal entertainment, the consistency of architectural treatment through the drawing room, parlor, and central hall created an integrated space, while pocket doors sheltered private spaces from guests. At Melrose, during parties and gatherings, pocket doors restricted access to the library, and its simpler architectural features suggest that the McMurrans intended this room to be a private space.

Despite their wealth and social prominence, the McMurrans did not frequently host large parties, preferring intimate and informal socializing with relatives. In a letter to her sister soon after she moved to Melrose, Mary Louisa McMurren wrote, “I enjoy my quiet days at Melrose so much that I give them up with reluctance to pay morning calls, but it is a duty for all our society, and the sacrifice must be made occasionally.”⁶⁵³ Exceptions included special occasions like Mary Elizabeth McMurren’s wedding, which took place on Thursday, January 24, 1856.⁶⁵⁴ Rosalie Quitman described the ceremony in her diary, noting that she visited with the bride in her bedroom before the event then moved to the parlor to watch all the visitors arrive. From the parlor, she saw “the folding doors drawn back, & there stood the Bride, Groom, & the bride’s maids & groom’s men ranged according to their ranks on either side.”⁶⁵⁵ Despite Rosalie’s mistaken description of the pocket doors as folding doors, her report located the event in the drawing room, with guests gathered to watch in the parlor. The Quitman girls provided detailed

⁶⁵³ Mary Louisa McMurren to Frances E. Conner; Melrose, September 18th 1849, Lemuel Parker Conner and Family Papers, Series 1, Folder 1:6 LLMVC, LSU Libraries

⁶⁵⁴ John T. McMurren to John Quitman, Natchez, January 22, 1856, Quitman papers, Subseries 1.1, Folder 87, SHC, UNC

⁶⁵⁵ Diary of Rosalie Quitman, 1856, quoted in Carol Petravage, *Natchez National Historical Park, Melrose Historic Furnishings Report*, (Harpers Ferry Center, National Park Service: Media Development Group, 2004), 25

descriptions of the parties that celebrated the marriage, including a dance that probably occupied the central hall, and the bridal supper, with elaborate cakes displayed on the dining room table.⁶⁵⁶ Louisa Quitman reported to her father that the newlyweds “received the congratulations of their friends & acquaintances. Everything went off well, all had a look at the Bride & Groom & a taste of wedding cake & then drove off & Melrose soon settled back into its old quiet.”⁶⁵⁷ “Melrose was brilliant with lights & gay dresses, & never appeared to better advantage” during the wedding, but Louisa Quitman was more familiar with the house as a quiet hub of family life.⁶⁵⁸

The Kenners hosted social engagements at Ashland; a few references to gatherings and events at Ashland exist in the limited documentary evidence on the house. Sadly, none of the comments described the location of events in the house; for example, we know that guests got stuck on the racing track trying to leave Ashland after a party, but we do not know where they had been in the house.⁶⁵⁹ The double rooms provided ample and flexible space for much entertaining, large enough for dancing with the pocket doors open. With all the doorways into the central hall open, the whole first floor would have been a fluid space, one easily filled by the rituals of southern slaveholding social practices.

Millford was also a site for elite social events, but the documentary records hold frustratingly few references to who attended or where they took place in the house.

⁶⁵⁶ Diary of Rosalie Quitman, 1856, quoted in Petravage, *Melrose Historic Furnishings Report*, 25

⁶⁵⁷ Louisa Quitman to John Quitman; Monmouth, February 14, 1856, Quitman papers, Subseries 1.1, Folder 87, SHC, UNC

⁶⁵⁸ Louisa Quitman to John Quitman; Monmouth, February 14, 1856, Quitman papers, Subseries 1.1, Folder 87, SHC, UNC

⁶⁵⁹ Harry Worcester Smith, “Duncan Kenner, Grey Fanny, and Ashland Plantation,” *The Thoroughbred Record*, August 8, 1925, 66-67

Throughout the correspondence are numerous references to family members expressing hopes and wishes to visit. Most of these people would have been overnight guests, and they would have socialized with the Mannings in the library, dining room, and in the grand double parlors. John Manning wrote to his wife Sallie in 1851, upon arriving in Charleston. He evidently visited with some relatives and friends, and let Sallie know that two people in particular, Aunt Anna and Mrs. Norris, want to see her and expect an invitation to Millford. If she invites them, and when they come, John Manning urged his wife to treat them with “utmost civility” and to order up foodstuffs and supplies from Charleston to prepare impressive meals for the guests.⁶⁶⁰ Given the social importance John Manning placed on these two visitors, expressed in his instructions of how they should be treated at Millford, Sallie Manning probably entertained Aunt Anna and Mrs. Norris in the double parlor and dining room.

In contrast to high-status guests and special occasions, informal socializing between close friends and relatives typically occurred in the parlor. In 1852, Rosalie Quitman recorded a typical visit to her cousins at Melrose. As family members and frequent visitors, when they viewed a carriage already at the front, they continued around to the back of the house. The Quitman girls joined the visitors and Mary Elizabeth McMurren in the parlor, where they spent most of the day. Rosalie and Antonia stayed at Melrose for the mid-day meal, then returned to the parlor, before spending some time in

⁶⁶⁰ John L. Manning to Sallie Bland Clarke Manning, Charleston, February 27, 1851, WCM Papers, Folder 138, SCL, USC

the gardens. Based on Rosalie Quitman's diary entry, the parlor was the most frequented space in the house, the primary scene of domestic entertainment.⁶⁶¹

Cleared of furniture, central hallways often hosted dancing during formal social events, but usually served less glamorous purposes. The central hall at Ashland played an important role during the Federal raid in July 1862. Henry Hammond, an enslaved man who served as cook, gardener, and butler at different times, took charge of running the house.⁶⁶² While the soldiers occupied Ashland, Hammond managed the kitchen and monitored supplies while the overseers and horse trainer from Ashland and overseers and owners of nearby plantations, arrested by Union troops, remained sequestered at Ashland. Rosella Kenner Brent recalled that mattresses and pallets from the second story and attic moved down to the first story, and that the men slept in two rows in the central hallway.⁶⁶³

In all of the mansion houses, the second story was private space for white residents. Because of its private nature, access between rooms on the second story was even more fluid than downstairs; the center hall had a door into every room and it was common for rooms to have internal doors. Members of the McMurren family used the wide hall upstairs as a place for private relaxation and recreation. Mary Elizabeth McMurren Conner's son Farar, born in 1857, was sensitive to the heat as an infant. As his grandmother described, "he wears, now, only a thin slip, and has a broad pallat on the

⁶⁶¹ Anna Rosalie Quitman Diary, January 31, 1852, Quitman papers, Series 3.1, vol. 13, SHC, UNC; Richard Bushman, *The Refinement of America: Persons, Homes, Cities* (New York: Vintage Books, 1992), 262-279

⁶⁶² Rosella Kenner Brent, *Henry Hammond*, Rosella Kenner Brent Papers, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

⁶⁶³ Rosella Kenner Brent, *Recollections of the Federal Raid Upon Ashland Plantation*, Rosella Kenner Brent Papers, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

hall floor, where he rolls about or sits up as he pleases.”⁶⁶⁴ The open hall was a safe, comfortable space for the baby. Mary Elizabeth McMurran Conner was not healthy and spent much time at Melrose in the early 1860s, under the care of her mother. Mary Louisa McMurran wrote her daughter-in-law’s sister “Mary’s health is about the same, only she is more helpless, and rarely moves except from her bed to her couch in the hall.”⁶⁶⁵ Along with the infant Farar, Mary Elizabeth enjoyed a change of scene and the more comfortable temperature and breezes in the central hall, while remaining in a private part of the house.

The private second story also was a place of sequestration. With Union soldiers present on the plantation in July 1862, Nanine Bringier Kenner and her three children remained on the second story, taking their meals in the upstairs hallway. Several enslaved domestic workers spent time with the Kenners upstairs while the soldiers were on the property, including several women who waited upstairs with Nanine Kenner and her children when the soldiers arrived, having been put to work securing doors and retrieving the last valuables from downstairs upon hearing that Union troops had landed. Another enslaved woman, Nancy, swept and made the beds of the men sleeping in the central hallway on the first floor. She was able to get a couple of pistols belonging to the incarcerated men, hide them in her apron, and bring them upstairs to Nanine Kenner.⁶⁶⁶ Interestingly, the presence of Federal troops at Ashland did not alter the ability of

⁶⁶⁴ Mary Louisa McMurran to Mrs. John T. McMurran, Jr., Melrose, July 20, 1857, McMurran-Austen Family Papers 1857 Correspondence 1:3, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

⁶⁶⁵ Mary Louisa McMurran to Mrs. Gilbert, Melrose, August 6, 1861, McMurran-Austen Family Papers 1860-1863 Correspondence 1:6, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

⁶⁶⁶ Rosella Kenner Brent, *Recollections of the Federal Raid Upon Ashland Plantation*, Rosella Kenner Brent Papers, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

enslaved people to access all parts of the house. Nancy freely moved from upstairs to downstairs, a privilege not given to Nanine Kenner or the Ashland horse trainer, George Washington Graves.

Enslaved people used the landscape of the domestic core for social events as well. Planters preferred symmetrical domestic cores because the regular landscape made work more efficient and easier to supervise, usually from the rear gallery of the main house. The plans of domestic buildings also made surveillance easier, as the kitchen at Melrose makes clear. The kitchen staircase, which provided access from the work spaces downstairs to the residential rooms upstairs, opened from an external doorway on the galleried elevation – the one most visible to the residents of Melrose. The single point of access between stories allowed the McMurrans to visually monitor the movement of enslaved people between living and working spaces from the back gallery at Melrose, insuring that supplies from the kitchens did not disappear into the upstairs living quarters.

The McMurrans' cook in the 1850s was Rachel; she may have lived in the second story chambers above the kitchen. In February 1850, Rachel was pregnant, but we do not know if her husband or partner lived at Melrose.⁶⁶⁷ Mamie also assisted in the kitchen; Alie described her “nice baked custards” in a letter to her sister Pattie Gilbert.⁶⁶⁸ Charlotte Taylor, another enslaved woman mentioned in the Melrose correspondence, was married to Bill Taylor, John McMurran, Jr.'s personal enslaved person. Charlotte

⁶⁶⁷ Mary Louisa McMurran to Fanny E. Conner; Melrose, February 22, 1850, Lemuel Parker Conner and Family Papers, Series 1, Folder 2:25, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

⁶⁶⁸ Mrs. John T. McMurran, Jr. to Pattie Gilbert, Melrose, January 4 [1858], McMurran-Austen Family Papers n.d. Correspondence 2:4, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

worked and lived at Melrose, but moved to Riverside with her husband after John and Alie married. A woman named Dicey took over some of Charlotte Taylor's duties at Melrose.⁶⁶⁹ Marcellas was the second waiter; he served cake and wine to Alie and John McMurren, Jr. on the evening they arrived at Melrose after their marriage.⁶⁷⁰ These few mentions of enslaved people by name in the McMurren correspondence only provides the briefest suggestions of how people lived and worked at Melrose. With few exceptions, relationships between enslaved people at Melrose are unknown, as are the family groups that developed over the several decades of McMurren ownership of the property. Unfortunately, knowing the names of some of the enslaved workers at Melrose does not give much information about where people lived on the property, if they lived in family groups, or anything about their histories.

A few reports by Mary Louisa McMurren highlight marriages between enslaved people and the celebrations that accompanied the rituals, but we do not know where on the property these events took place. Reporting a marriage between two young enslaved people at Melrose, "two we have reared and trained in the family--the children of old and favourite servants," Mary Louisa wrote Eliza Quitman, "A portion of the servants were here a few evenings since, to attend the wedding of Patrick & Mime. Viola was bridesmaid. They were married in our presence, behaved with perfect propriety, and they

⁶⁶⁹ Mary Louisa McMurren to John T. McMurren, Jr., Melrose, August 8, 1857, McMurren-Austen Family Papers 1857 Correspondence 1:3, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

⁶⁷⁰ Mrs. John T. McMurren, Jr. to George Austen, Melrose, November 13 [1856], McMurren-Austen Family Papers n.d. Correspondence 2:4, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

all seemed very merry and happy over their games and supper afterwards.”⁶⁷¹ Since Eliza Quitman knew the enslaved people at Melrose, Mary Louisa took the trouble to name them specifically; in her letter to Alie Austen, who did not know the people involved, they remained nameless. Mary Louisa also took care to let Eliza Quitman know that some of the enslaved people from Monmouth traveled to Melrose for the festivities, and that they shared a celebratory supper and other pastimes afterwards. These events probably did not happen in the mansion house, but elsewhere on the property. During 1856, a number of weddings took place among the enslaved people at Melrose, as Mary Louisa wrote to her son, John, “It was Bob's wedding night. From his shiney visage, and white rolling eyes last night, --I supposed he had attained the summit of earthly happiness! Bob is a good fellow, but "not a gifted man.” Mamey is well, and sends you her best how d'y's.”⁶⁷² Mary Louisa gave no other details of the wedding or celebrations; since she did not name the bride, Bob may have married someone who did not live at Melrose. In both cases, the ceremony may have taken place at a location on the property with significance to the parties involved, the dinner hosted from the kitchen, and the games and celebrations in the courtyard.

Weddings and celebrations of Melrose’s enslaved community may have taken place in the kitchen building. Christian Mayr, a German artist who worked in the American South during the 1830s and 1840s. His painting “Kitchen Ball at White

⁶⁷¹ Mary Louisa McMurran to Alice Austen, Melrose, August 4, 1856, McMurran-Austen Family Papers 1856 Correspondence 1:2, LLMVC, LSU Libraries; Mary Louisa McMurran to Eliza Quitman; Melrose August 11, 1856, Quitman papers, Subseries 1.1, Folder 89, SHC, UNC

⁶⁷² Mary Louisa McMurran to John T. McMurran, Jr., Melrose, August 14, 1856 McMurran-Austen Family Papers 1856 Correspondence 1:2, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

Sulphur Springs, 1838” captured a ball or dance held by enslaved people at the popular vacation destination in Virginia (Figure 5-35). Mayr specialized in scenes of everyday life; it is unknown whether this scene depicted a special occurrence, like a wedding, or if it documented a normal gathering, with slightly embellished fancy clothing from the artist’s imagination. The exposed roof framing system, with pegs to hang baskets and bags driven into the girts, and objects scattered around the room, including the Windsor chair in the back corner, suggest the scene of the dance was a working space, possibly a kitchen or a preparation room. The painting is notable for the range of skin tones and detailed facial expressions Mayr captured. It seems plausible that Mayr’s representation of an African-American gathering, although predating the weddings at Melrose by eighteen years, was a familiar type of social event to the enslaved workers of Melrose

The wide-ranging correspondence associated with the McMurran family at Melrose made it possible to map social events at the mansion house and the domestic core. Even though the documentation of Millford and Ashland had less conclusive evidence, what survives supports the map suggested for Melrose. For elite whites, the map of social interactions was straightforward. The most formal events centered in the drawing room, the most formal room of the house, often incorporating the parlor and central hall into the social activity. Architectural tools like pocket doors and consistent treatment of door and window surrounds and mantelpieces show how spaces in the house flowed together, creating an integrated social space. Dining rooms often performed in formal entertainments, but they also served the daily needs of the elite white family. In plan and in architectural decoration, dining rooms typically were separate from the

formal entertaining suite of room. Doors and decorative motifs alerted visitors to the presence of more private space. The library at Melrose and the office at Ashland are good examples of first floor spaces not involved in formal social events.

Among close friends and relatives, informal socializing happened in the parlor and the dining room. These were places of easy, comfortable communication on everyday visits. At Millford, an architectural distinction between drawing room and parlor does not exist, as the double parlors have a similar decoration scheme. It did not appear in any of the Millford correspondence, but the Mannings may have engaged with close friends and relatives in the double parlor with the central doors closed, to make a slightly more intimate space. The double parlor appealed to the full range of social obligations in the 1840s and 1850s. Closing the doors created smaller, quieter spaces for intimate conversation, while opening the pocket doors allowed for grand, luxurious spaces with ample room to perform expected social rituals.

The upstairs at Melrose, Millford, and Ashland was private. Along with her bridesmaid sisters, Rosalie Quitman was allowed upstairs to see Mary Elizabeth McMurrin before her wedding, but only because she was a cousin and close friend. Everyone else had to wait for the couple's grand reveal in the drawing room.⁶⁷³ Because it was private space, the upstairs of mansion houses have fewer architectural barriers and distinctions than the first story. Rooms often had multiple points of communication, creating an environment of informality among the family and favored guests.

With the documentation available, we only have evidence to map planter-

⁶⁷³ Diary of Rosalie Quitman, 1856, quoted in Petravage, *Melrose Historic Furnishings Report*, 25

approved sites and social engagements among enslaved people. At Melrose, weddings between enslaved people took place in the kitchen, a site that many enslaved people probably associated with work, using planter-approved rules and rituals. Doubtless, enslaved people had meaningful places (to say nothing of rituals and traditions) of which planters were deeply unaware.

Just as field workers did, domestic enslaved people tried to run away, act out against their owners, and disrupt masters' lives in any way possible. At Millford, Betsy, an enslaved woman who lived on the property since her purchase in 1845, attempted escape in 1852.⁶⁷⁴ Manning wrote to Sallie about her, "I have received from Robertson notice of the lodgement of Betsy in the work house. I shall let her remain there until I can dispose of her to go out of the state. My only desire to have her at home would be to make her a memorable example to other servants."⁶⁷⁵ Betsy's willingness to risk her own sale by leaving the property proves that the lives of domestic enslaved people were no less harsh, demanding, and unsatisfying than the lives of enslaved field workers. Domestic enslaved people were just as willing and prepared to take advantage of opportunities to shape their own fates, and just as likely to risk punishment in the process of attempting it.

Elsewhere

Great houses were smaller, rougher, less sophisticated, and more likely to follow local architectural precedents than mansion houses. The physical features and characteristics of great houses altered how planters used the houses. Having discussed

⁶⁷⁴ Bill of Sale, N.R. Hill to John L. Manning, July 10, 1845, WCM Papers, Folder 125, SCL, USC

⁶⁷⁵ John L. Manning to Sallie Bland Clarke Manning, Senate, December 7, 1852, WCM Papers, Folder 141, SCL, USC

the plans of mansion houses and mapped the locations of social interactions of elite whites and enslaved people, plans and instances of socializing in great houses presents a significant contrast. The first difference, immediately noticeable, is that while Millford, Melrose, and Ashland still stand, of the six great houses on contributing plantations in this study, only one survives. This section begins with Killarney in Concordia Parish, Louisiana, and continues with conjectural discussions of the house on Riverside. These were the only great houses with enough information to allow for a study of the landscapes of access and socializing.

An almost square building, raised slightly off the ground on brick piers, Killarney is a story and a half under a gable roof, with the surfaces covered in clapboard (Figure 2-1). The five-bay façade, with two, six-over-six windows flanking the central doorway, is an example of a building that retains a local plan, adapted to the climate and intended use of the house as the residence of the plantation manager, articulated through the forms of a nationally fashionable architectural forms, the Greek Revival. The door surround has a simple, low pediment lintel and shoulder moldings with a three light transom and four panel sidelights to either side of the door, a simplified version of the *Parlour Door* in Minard Lafever's *Beauties of Modern Architecture* (Figures 5-36 and 3-8).⁶⁷⁶ Simple molding profiles surround the windows, which, raised slightly from the floor, do not operate as means of access between the interior rooms and the porch. A wide, single-story porch stretches across the front of the house, sheltering the front rooms, with six squared Doric piers supporting a simple cornice below the edge of the steeply pitched,

⁶⁷⁶ Minard Lafever, *The Beauties of Modern Architecture* (New York: D. Appleton, 1849 edition), Plate 19

over-hanging roof.

The interior is an adaptation of the Creole cottage, four-room plan with accommodations made to the Greek Revival, with two primary rooms front and back on either side of a central passage. The central passage has doors into each of the original rooms, and, on each side, rooms communicate internally through four-panel doors. The spaces are not grand, and have no flourishes like the pocket doors found at Melrose. Each of the four primary first floor rooms has a fireplace centered on the exterior wall, with mantelpieces featuring simple Grecian molding profiles (Figure 5-37). The fireplaces in the two back rooms of the original footprint continue to function, while the fireplaces in the two front rooms have been blocked in and the chimneys removed. Even with these alterations, the mantelpieces in the two front rooms remain in situ, and appear original. A rear gallery with flanking cabinet rooms possibly stretched across the back of the house, although the back of the house experienced significant alterations. As constructed, the house utilized the second story as a storage space, accessed by ladders, and did not have an interior staircase, another element typical of a Creole cottage.

Thanks to the detailed correspondence, it is possible to reconstruct the plan and construction techniques of Riverside. It was a two-story, central hallway building with one room on either side of the hall, on both floors, a plan that suggests the building was an I-house, a one-room deep structure with two rooms flanking a central passage. In her first letter home upon arriving at Riverside, Alie describes the “log hut,” claiming that someone with her father’s skill could easily turn it into a “large two story house and without a single

additional room.”⁶⁷⁷ The rooms were large, with tall ceilings and a “fine hall,” and the interior surfaces were plastered.⁶⁷⁸ Part of the first story was log; the timbers settled, making replastering more difficult than it might have otherwise been. The surfaces of the two upstairs rooms and the passage were more regular, and did not require the same level of supervision over the refurbishment as the work on the first story. August 1857 was a good time for extensive renovations to the house at Riverside, as John and Alie McMurran spent the summer in the north. The workers were enslaved carpenters, Dixon and Robert, who resided the exterior of the house with weatherboard along with the plastering on the interior.⁶⁷⁹

Furniture in the mansion house defined hierarchies of space through visual clues. At Millford, rosewood, mahogany, and walnut clearly defined the range of social spaces in the house. At Melrose, new furniture elevated some rooms over others. Furniture at the great houses revealed similar hierarchies of space defined by goods and materials, although on a less dramatic scale. For Riverton, R.M. Dyson purchased a mahogany bedroom set, including bedstead, armoire, bureau, table, and washstand, as well as a black walnut set that included the same pieces. The mahogany furniture, valued at ninety-six dollars and fifty cents, probably filled John and Sallie Manning’s bedroom at Riverton, with the walnut furniture, worth seventy-seven dollars and fifty cents, intended

⁶⁷⁷ Alice Austen McMurran to George Austen, Riverside, November [1856], McMurran-Austen Family Papers 1856 Correspondence 1:2, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

⁶⁷⁸ Mrs. John T. McMurran, Jr. to Pattie Gilbert, Riverside, Nov. 11 [1856], McMurran-Austen Family Papers 1856 Correspondence 1:2, LLMVC, LSU Libraries; Mary Louisa McMurran to John T. McMurran, Jr., Melrose, August 13, 1857, McMurran-Austen Family Papers 1857 Correspondence 1:3, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

⁶⁷⁹ Mary Louisa McMurran to John T. McMurran, Jr., Melrose, August 13, 1857, McMurran-Austen Family Papers 1857 Correspondence 1:3, LLMVC, LSU Libraries; John T. McMurran to John T. McMurran, Jr., August 30, 1857, McMurran-Austen Family Papers 1857 Correspondence 1:3, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

for a secondary chamber. Even though Riverton generally followed the pattern of matching hierarchy of space with hierarchy of material so clearly set forward by Millford, evidence suggests that the rules relaxed a bit on the contributing plantation. Dyson's purchases included a small rosewood table for a bedroom and a "MAGNIFICENT old-fashioned" pianoforte, probably intended for the parlor. Dyson promised to continue searching New Orleans for a "suitable second hand sideboard and rocking chair," items specifically requested for the house.⁶⁸⁰ Dyson's letter to Sallie Clarke Manning revealed significant differences in the expression of spatial hierarchy between the hub and contributing plantations. At Riverton, Dyson prioritized economy and convenience in the furniture he offered for Sallie Manning's approval, unapologetically buying second-hand objects. Dyson explained, "You will see that they are all old, but newly varnished. I think you will find them all good - much better than you can buy new for nearly double the price. Indeed nearly all the new furniture is veneered and sells at a high price."⁶⁸¹ Even so, consistently higher assigned values for the mahogany furniture suggests that notions of spatial hierarchy expressed through materials remained potent at the contributing plantation.

Most of the furniture at Riverside was functional, not fancy. In 1866, an inventory of furniture in the house listed a center table and a small stand, a sofa, a rocking chair with a hair bottom, a writing desk, a common table, two arm chairs with cane seats, four cottage chairs, and fireplace tools. These objects probably occupied the

⁶⁸⁰ R.M. Dyson to Sallie Bland Clark Manning, New Orleans, April 3 1856, WCM Papers, Folder 154, SCL, USC

⁶⁸¹ R.M. Dyson to Sallie Bland Clark Manning, New Orleans, April 3 1856, WCM Papers, Folder 154, SCL, USC

parlor, which may have also served as the dining room. In the other downstairs room were an old sideboard, six old chairs, a bedstead, mahogany dressing bureau, a washbowl and washstand, and fireplace tools. Upstairs, one bedroom had a mahogany bedstead and dressing bureau, with a mirror, as well as a washstand, small stand, two rocking chairs, and two common small chairs.⁶⁸² Based on the presence of mahogany furniture, John McMurran, Jr. and his wife, Alie, probably used this room as their primary bedchamber. The other bedroom had a common bedstead, washstand, and mirror, and three chairs.⁶⁸³ This list may account for objects that remained at Riverside after John McMurran Jr. and Alie left the plantation in 1862. It matches very closely the list of objects that overseer R.A. Dowty sent back up to Natchez upon his eviction from the property.⁶⁸⁴

Once John McMurran, Jr. and Alie relocated to her parents' farm in Maryland in 1864, John McMurran, Sr. sent objects to them from Riverside in 1866. John McMurran, Sr. wrote, "I am glad your furniture arrived safely, which must add to your household comforts. True, the expenses on it was very heavy--but as you needed it, that could not be avoided."⁶⁸⁵ An undated list of objects probably written by Mary Louisa McMurran could be the furniture sent to their son.⁶⁸⁶ The materials and descriptors for these

⁶⁸² List of furniture, etc. in dwelling house at Riverside, January 27, 1866, McMurran Collection, 11, SCL, ULM

⁶⁸³ List of furniture, etc. in dwelling house at Riverside, January 27, 1866, McMurran Collection, 11, SCL, ULM

⁶⁸⁴ R.A. Dowty to Mary Louisa McMurran, Riverside, May 21, 1868, McMurran Collection, Box 1, 145, SCL, ULM

⁶⁸⁵ John T. McMurran to John T. McMurran, Jr., April 30, 1866 (sent to JTMcM Jr. in Baltimore County), McMurran-Austen Family Papers 1865-1868 Correspondence 2:2, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

⁶⁸⁶ McMurran-Austen Family Papers 1861-1881, n.d. Printed Items and Miscellaneous 2:6, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

furnishings indicated pieces of higher quality than what the overseer described in his 1868 letter.

At Riverside, the connection between materials and spaces existed, but in an even more watered-down form than at Riverton. While the north room upstairs had a mahogany bedstead and dressing bureau, possibly sent to the contributing plantation from Melrose, the washstand, small stand, two rocking chairs, and two common small chairs also in the room did not have their material identified on the list.⁶⁸⁷ The most important pieces in the room were mahogany, but the other, lesser pieces probably were not. Downstairs, the furniture was frustratingly unidentified. The center table, sofa, writing desk, and sideboard had no descriptors; the three mahogany items in the house were clearly labeled. There were no pieces of rosewood furniture at Riverside. Some of the unspecified furniture at Riverside was walnut. An undated, but contemporary, list of furniture at the contributing plantation identified two pieces of walnut furniture in the house.⁶⁸⁸ On the other hand, the unidentified pieces easily could have been a less expensive, common wood. Riverside also had some painted furniture, popularized by sources like *Godey's Lady's Book* in the early 1850s, although the fate of these objects is unknown.

Of the sample, John Manning's furniture at Millford offers the most compelling narrative of a planter using furnishings to define the spatial hierarchy of the mansion

⁶⁸⁷ List of furniture, etc. in dwelling house at Riverside, January 27, 1866, McMurran Collection, 11, SCL, ULM

⁶⁸⁸ McMurran-Austen Family Papers 1861-1881, n.d. Printed Items and Miscellaneous 2:6, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

house. Commissioned from a single maker, the objects used decorative features that reinforced the architectural elements of the house, and the style and material of the furniture clearly demarcated the most important rooms. John McMurran and Duncan Kenner, on the other hand, took a less rigid approach to furnishing the plantation hub. McMurran mixed materials and old and new furnishings within rooms at Melrose, an approach suitable in Natchez, where elite planters had a tradition of holding on to older architectural styles longer than in other wealthy enclaves. Kenner appeared to collect furnishings and objects over a long period at Ashland, but little remains to allow much interpretation of Kenner's relationships to fashion. On the contributing plantations, the links between material, style, new furniture, and the importance of space were even more relaxed. Planters privileged specific rooms, likely personal chambers, but elsewhere, a wide variety of objects coexisted. With this information, it seems that furnishings at the contributing plantations did not participate in the presentation of fashionable self so obvious in houses at the plantation hub.

The social world of the contributing plantation was very different from the plantation hub. The primary visitors to contributing plantations were relatives and nearby neighbors, and the social events were smaller, quieter, and more intimate than what took place at the mansion house. John McMurran, Sr. was a regular visitor to Riverside, Killarney, and Moro, although his trips had everything to do with plantation business and little with socializing. The most frequent social visitors to Riverside were members of the McMurran and Austen families. Mary Louisa McMurran visited Riverside before John and Alie's wedding; Mary Louisa was able to report to Alie about her future

home.⁶⁸⁹ John's sister and brother-in-law spent a few days at Riverside in June 1856; she complemented her brother's housekeeping skills, particularly noting that he kept a good table, an acknowledgment of his love of fine foods.⁶⁹⁰ Alie's brother-in-law from New York visited Riverside in the spring of 1858. After he returned home, he wrote

"I have read your letter over "ever so many times" with the idea of writing to you but insted[sic] of writing, I would get to dreaming of you & John & Daisy--Riverside in general. Some of your people, as for instance "Bill Taylor"--Horses--Duck shooting. Attempted "Turkey Hunting & Fox Chasing Four Pups & older dogs, Mississippi River Steam Boats-- & time would not wait for me while dreaming... But if you knew how delightful those--dreams--were, you would not have roused me."⁶⁹¹

Enraptured by the plantation lifestyle he observed so closely, Coley Gilbert's report on the idyllic life at Riverside celebrated the pace, activities, and structures of life on the contributing plantation.

Aside from family members, visitors to the contributing plantations were unusual. Soon after her arrival at Riverside, Alie received the compliments of and a piece of venison from Mr. Brandon, a bachelor neighbor across the river. She worried that he would feel compelled to make a more formal visit.⁶⁹² While visiting Louisiana, John Manning noted that a collection of neighbors, including Hore Browse Trist of Bowden, Duncan Kenner of Ashland, Mr. Thibaut, and the Cottman brothers dined with him once.⁶⁹³ This was one of the few social events at Riverton not involving relatives. John Manning's younger brother

⁶⁸⁹ Mary Louisa McMurren to Alice Austen, Melrose, May 10, 1856, McMurren-Austen Family Papers 1856 Correspondence 1:2, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

⁶⁹⁰ Mary E. McMurren Conner to Rosalie Quitman, Melrose, June 23, 1856, Quitman papers, B-8, Folder 1:4, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

⁶⁹¹ Coley Gilbert to Mrs. John T. McMurren, Jr., New York, April 22, 1858, McMurren-Austen Family Papers 1858 Correspondence 1:4, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

⁶⁹² Alice Austen McMurren to George Austen, Riverside, November, no day [1856], McMurren-Austen Family Papers 1856 Correspondence 1:2, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

⁶⁹³ John L. Manning to Sallie Bland Clarke Manning, Houmas, March 26, 1851, WCM Papers, Folder 138, SCL, USC

spent some time on the sugar plantation, in the capacity of a manager, and Sallie Clarke Manning's brother-in-law visited the property in 1855.⁶⁹⁴ The overall impression of socializing on the contributing properties was of informal visits between relatives. Residents on contributing plantations hosted neighbors and close relatives, and did not host formal parties. The plans of most contributing plantation houses did not include spaces for formal social events. Neither Riverside nor Killarney had a formal drawing room, the primary space in the mansion house intended for social events.

Just as houses on contributing plantations were not equipped for hosting fashionable social events, neither did they use architectural strategies to make slavery invisible to the white residents. Killarney and Riverside each had simple, straightforward plans that did not include service halls, separate staircases, or isolated access routes used by enslaved people. People, enslaved and free, moved through the domestic spaces of the great houses in the same ways. It would have been nearly impossible to mask the presence of slavery on contributing plantations, which were the home of hundreds of enslaved people. Alie Austen McMurran was deeply aware of the presence of enslaved people at Riverside, noting in her diary how the enslaved community stared at her on her arrival to the plantation.⁶⁹⁵ It was impossible to architecturally contain slavery, surveillance, and management of the working plantation landscape in great houses on contributing plantations. Planters and managers who built and resided on contributing

⁶⁹⁴ Brown Manning to John L. Manning, Upper Houmas, November 26, 1850, WCM Papers, Folder 137, SCL, USC; Brown Manning to John L. Manning, Upper Houmas, December 14, 1850, WCM Papers, Folder 137, SCL, USC; John L. Manning to Sallie Bland Clarke Manning, Houmas, March 26, 1851, WCM Papers, Folder 138, SCL, USC; D. H. Gordon to John L. Manning, December 4, 1855, WCM Papers, Folder 151, SCL, USC

⁶⁹⁵ Alice Austen McMurran Journal, November 1856, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

plantations did not begin to try.

Killarney appeared in the McMurren family's correspondence as a destination and a source of vegetables enjoyed at Melrose, acting as a distant kitchen garden for the family at their main residence. In 1857, Mary Louisa wrote about Mamey, one of the domestic enslaved people at Melrose, putting up figs and peaches from Killarney. Even with some information about the crops grown on the property, very little is known about the landscape of the domestic core at Killarney, where buildings like the wash house, smoke house, and other domestic support structures have vanished from the landscape.⁶⁹⁶ The little surviving information about the identities of enslaved people at Killarney comes from legal documents. In 1859, John McMurren Sr. completed the process of transferring two-thirds of the estate to his daughter and son-in-law, transferring two-thirds of the enslaved people on Killarney to legal ownership by Farar Conner. In this document, only three enslaved people had listed occupations; these were Sam, the fifty-seven year old driver, George, a fifty-two year old carpenter, and Tom G., a twenty-seven year old bricklayer.⁶⁹⁷ George and Tom G. may have helped build the house, in addition to their primary responsibilities of keeping plantation structures and mechanisms in working order. The lack of listed domestic occupations suggests that the people who

⁶⁹⁶ John Michael Vlach's *Back of the Big House* is the best source to estimate the scale, construction techniques, and appearance of these buildings. For more information, please see John Michael Vlach, *Back of the Big House: The Architecture of Plantation Slavery*, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1993), Chapters Three, Four, Five, and Six especially.

⁶⁹⁷ Names of Slaves, Killarney, Lemuel Parker Conner and Family Papers, A 98, Side B, Box 26, Folder 330, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

worked at the house and in the domestic core may have traveled between Natchez and Killarney along with the Conners.⁶⁹⁸

The contrast between spacious, brick, fashionably appointed Melrose and Riverside could not have been greater. Mary Elizabeth McMurren Conner's surprise at finding her brother's bachelor pad a comfortable place, frequent references to the "log hut" and "log cabin," and Mary Louisa McMurren's concern over the tightness of the roof in storms revealed that the urbane residents of Natchez thought a log building was a rough residence.⁶⁹⁹ It was not a building with a long lifespan. After the Civil War, when John and Alie McMurren no longer lived in the house, the banks of the Mississippi River encroached on the property, threatening the main house, which, by 1868, no longer stood.⁷⁰⁰

In the same way that artisans and field workers moved between properties in the plantation network, domestic enslaved people moved frequently between Riverside and Melrose. One example was a woman named Adaline, who, according to Mary Louisa McMurren, "has promised to be ready to go with you. She says she does not mind being in the country, quietly, --it is the same to her wherever she is. I hope you will find her a good servant & nurse."⁷⁰¹ The ambivalence of Adaline's response to her imminent move, and

⁶⁹⁸ Mary Louisa McMurren to John T. McMurren, Jr., Melrose, July 17, 1857, McMurren-Austen Family Papers 1857 Correspondence 1:3, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

⁶⁹⁹ Mary E. McMurren Conner to Rosalie Quitman, Melrose, June 23rd, 1856, Quitman papers, B-8, Folder 1:4, LLMVC, LSU Libraries; Alice Austen McMurren to George Austen, Riverside, November [1856] McMurren-Austen Family Papers 1856 Correspondence 1:2, LLMVC, LSU Libraries; Mary Louisa McMurren to Mrs. John T. McMurren, Jr., Melrose, December 3, 1856, McMurren-Austen Family Papers 1856 Correspondence 1:2 LLMVC, LSU Libraries

⁷⁰⁰ RA Dowty to Mary Louisa McMurren, Riverside, February 28, 1866, Letter 17, McMurren Collection, Letters 10-19, 1866, SCL ULM; RA Dowty to Mary Louisa McMurren, Langside, Aug 21 1867, McMurren Collections, Box 1, July- December 1867, SCL, ULM; RA Dowty to Mary Louisa McMurren, Riverside, May 21, 1868, McMurren Collections, Box 1, April - July 1868, SCL, ULM

⁷⁰¹ Mary Louisa McMurren to Mrs. John T. McMurren, Jr., Melrose, April 8, 1859 McMurren-Austen Family Papers 1859 Correspondence 1:5, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

Mary Louisa's willingness to take her words on face value, reveal a disconnect in communication between enslaved and slave holding that characterized many of the McMurrans interactions with their enslaved people.

Conclusion

Wealthy southerners adopted the Grecian-inspired surfaces of buildings in the north, and accepted a shift in the spatial hierarchy of the interiors, part of a nationwide trend. During the first half of the nineteenth-century, the parlor surpassed the dining room as the most important internal space, a well-documented shift that responded to the growing cult of domesticity.⁷⁰² That shift, seen clearly in Millford, Melrose, and Ashland, was part of a reconsideration of how people should live in their homes, with greater emphasis placed on uplifting family activities that included playing music and singing, reading aloud to each other, and writing letters. All of these activities took place in the parlor, the central space where the ideal of the home as the center of solid moral values happened. The shift was not limited to families in the north. The Mannings, McMurrans, and Kenners bought into the idea of the reformed interior and commissioned their houses accordingly. Even more, the systematic removal of the family away from enslaved field workers on the contributing plantations and away from enslaved domestic workers by stairs, halls, and bells, allowed southern slaveholding families to imagine

⁷⁰² Mark Wenger, "The Dining Room;" Mark Wenger, "The Central Passage;" Clifford E. Clark, Jr., "Domestic Architecture as an Index to Social History: The Romantic Revival and the Cult of Domesticity in America, 1840-1870," in *Material Life in America, 1600-1860*, Robert Blair St. George, ed. (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1988), 535-549

themselves unaffected by the growing criticisms of the institution of slavery and their complicity in it.

Besides different sources, the greatest difference between houses and domestic cores on contributing plantations and the hub was the separation of elite whites from enslaved people. Hubs did this most efficiently by removing the planter family from the fields and the enslaved workers who cultivated the cash crop. The architecture of the plantation hub and the relationships between the house and outbuildings reveal further attempts to exclude enslaved people from the mansion house. Limiting movement to specific points of access and installing bell systems largely removed enslaved people from the interiors of the mansion houses, except to perform specific duties. Of the hubs in this study, Melrose had the most complete architectural eradication of the enslaved presence from the house, although Millford and Ashland both had features that obscured the movement and presence of enslaved people. This was not a southern phenomenon. Contemporary houses of wealthy people in the north also utilized architectural strategies to hide work. Since houses on contributing (i.e. working) plantations did not use architecture to hide work, the discussion becomes one of national scope, about wealthy people's growing discomfort with the processes of work, instead of a solely southern phenomenon. By moving working plantation landscapes away from the primary residence of the elite white family, plantation networks allowed southern planters to successfully employ the same architectural strategies of their social peers in the north.

A useful way to distinguish mansion houses from the great houses is to consider Millford, Melrose, and Ashland as suburban villas, a popular architectural concept in

America in the mid-nineteenth century. A building type developed in eighteenth-century England, suburban villas were a type of “rural mansion or retreat, for wealthy men” that offered “seclusion and privacy” to its inhabitants.⁷⁰³ Suburban villas were places of relaxation, removed from working landscapes, which often introduced high style architecture, inspired by urban forms, into rural landscapes.⁷⁰⁴ By the time Frederick Law Olmsted visited the Natchez area in the late 1850s, he noted

“Within three miles of the town the country is entirely occupied by houses and grounds of a villa character; the grounds usually exhibiting a paltry taste, with miniature terraces, and trees and shrubs planted and trimmed with no regard to architectural and landscape considerations. There is, however, an abundance of good trees, much beautiful shrubbery, and the best hedges and screens of evergreen shrubs that I have seen in America. The houses are not remarkable.”⁷⁰⁵

Although unimpressed by the architecture he saw, Olmsted’s comments were the earliest application of the term villa to the estates outside Natchez. The type had been developing throughout the nineteenth century in the United States. In Natchez, Charleston, along the Hudson River, and outside Philadelphia, villas occupied large parcels of land, with the houses placed at a distance from the street featuring sophisticated and fashionable architecture. In a southern context, these houses became powerful symbols of planter success, proclaiming themselves part and parcel of a plantation setting – without the messy realities of agricultural life on a working

⁷⁰³ W. Barksdale Maynard, *Architecture in the United States, 1800-1850* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 119

⁷⁰⁴ James Ackermann, “The Villa as Paradigm,” *Perspecta*, Vol. 22, *Paradigms of Architecture* (1986), 11

⁷⁰⁵ Frederick Law Olmsted, *A Journey in the Back Country* (New York: Mason Brothers, 1860), 34.

plantation.⁷⁰⁶ The concept of the suburban villa as a place to relax away from work significantly informed the ways that planters and elite whites inhabited and used mansion houses, made possible by the plantation network.

The association of plantation hubs, especially Millford and Melrose, as suburban villas was a step in the unconscious or subconscious attempt of wealthy southern plantation network owners to be just like their wealthy social peers in the north. Melrose is easy to classify as a suburban villa, with its 133-acre lot two miles outside Natchez. Millford is a suburban villa without its suburb; not located on the outskirts of a city or town, Millford's 300-acre parcel and small number of resident enslaved people make it fit the profile. Ashland is not a suburban villa; it is the center of a large working plantation, in addition to being the hub of a condensed plantation network. Unsurprisingly, Ashland is a hybrid. The house and domestic core, surrounded by orchards, gardens, and fronted by the Mississippi River, separated itself as much as possible from the cane fields of the plantation and put a quarter mile between the planter's residence and the enslaved community. On the other hand, the mansion house does not feature as many architectural methods for making enslaved workers invisible seen at Millford and Melrose. The openness and fluidity of the interior space reveal the line Ashland straddled between its regional interior and its Grecian Revival shell. The house presented Kenner's sophisticated taste to passersby, accomplished by using Grecian Revival forms. The open interiors, however, suggest that Kenner realized the house functioned as the operations center of the plantation, later the plantation network, which rendered attempts to hide enslaved workers futile.

⁷⁰⁶ Maurie D. McNinnis, *The Politics of Taste in Antebellum Charleston* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 47

The potent ideals of the villa as a place away from work, a resort, and the associations that the wealth that built such a building with success and sophistication were as true in suburban villa neighborhoods outside Natchez as they were in Charleston, New Haven, New York, and Philadelphia. An abolitionist physician, visiting the south in the early 1850s, spoke to the universality of the villa's appeal:

“In the cities of the slave states there are not only many fine public buildings, but also many elegant private dwelling houses, surrounded with beautiful scenery, and fitted up with rich and costly furniture. It is to such scenes that Northern visitors are generally introduced. Here they receive those impressions that are so widely disseminated in the North - that slavery is usually associated with refinement of manners, a cultivated taste, and a luxurious style of living.”⁷⁰⁷

Alie Austen McMurran reflected similar thoughts to her father upon arriving at Melrose after her 1856 marriage.

“Melrose is beautiful--very elegant one of the handsomest [sic] place [sic] I have ever seen North or South--and everything in such perfect order system papa in everything But we that think the south behind the times--certainly so far I have seen nothing to prove it--beautiful residences well kept grounds fine.”⁷⁰⁸

Alie was a quick student of the culture of wealthy planters she joined. Instead of associating slavery with the refinements, cultivation, and luxury that Parsons mentioned, she described a system. The physical dissociation of the suburban villa hub from the working landscapes of the contributing plantations enabled planters to superficially disassociate from the realities and increasing criticisms of slavery. In 1859, Alie Austen McMurran acknowledged the anxiety she felt surrounded by the inescapable presence of enslaved people on contributing

⁷⁰⁷C. G. Parsons, M.D., *Inside View of Slavery, or, A Tour among the Planters* (Boston: Published by John P. Jewett and Company, Cleveland, Ohio, 1855), 106

⁷⁰⁸Alice Austen McMurran to George Austen, Riverside, November [1856] McMurran-Austen Family Papers 1856 Correspondence 1:2, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

plantations, writing from Riverside, “Nature never meant me for a slaveholder. I do not think it wrong, but for myself I would not be one.”⁷⁰⁹ Alie never commented on her duties as a plantation mistress while at Melrose, which revealed how far removed from her responsibilities she felt while visiting the suburban villa hub. Millford, Melrose, and Ashland become significantly more interesting considered as planter responses to contemporary social, economic, and political forces, rather than as static examples of an architectural style transplanted into the South.

Despite differences in scale, materials, sophistication, and design sources, the most significant distinction between houses and domestic cores on contributing plantations and the hub was the separation of elite whites from enslaved people and the purposeful obfuscation of work. Hubs did this most efficiently by removing the planter family from the fields and the enslaved workers who cultivated the cash crop. The architecture of the plantation hub and the relationships between the house and outbuildings exclude enslaved people from the mansion house. Limiting movement to specific points of access and installing bell systems largely removed enslaved people from the interiors of the mansion houses, except to perform specific duties. Of the hubs in this study, Melrose had the most complete architectural eradication of the enslaved presence from the house, although Millford and Ashland both had features that obscured the movement and presence of enslaved people. This was not a southern phenomenon. Contemporary houses of wealthy people in the north also utilized architectural strategies to hide work. Since houses on contributing plantations did not use architecture to hide

⁷⁰⁹ Alie Austen McMurran to her sister, Riverside, December 8 [at least 1859], McMurran-Austen Family Papers n.d. Correspondence 2:4, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

work, the discussion becomes one of national scope, about wealthy people's growing discomfort with the processes of work, instead of a solely southern phenomenon. By moving working plantation landscapes away from the primary residence of the elite white family, plantation networks allowed southern planters to successfully employ the same architectural strategies of their social peers in the north.

Conclusion

“I regret that their short visit prevented me from showing more of the southern planting life, a wider view of the grand forests hereabout, and the production of other staples than sugar. All that I could exhibit to them in so short a space of time I did with no embellishment or disguise - our negroes, their treatment, mode of life, and system of labour - and, although our views doubtless were widely different upon these points yet I feel that both their opinions and mine as interchanged between us were characterized by liberality and tolerance. Indeed the subject of slavery was but little discussed and more in detail or upon isolated points than upon the general question.”⁷¹⁰

While visiting his sugar properties in Louisiana in the spring of 1859, John L. Manning was asked to host Lord Cavendish, a visiting English aristocrat, and his friends. The Englishmen expressed an interest in seeing a plantation, and their host wrote John Manning, hoping that he would be able to provide them the experience they craved. Manning reported a successful visit – he was able to show his guests the “southern planting life.” Manning continued, describing discussions about the institution of slavery between the slaveholder and the aristocrats that were genteel and indirect. In this interaction, Manning’s contact with slavery and its realities were as proscriptive and indirect as his regular interface with the field hands who cultivated his sugarcane. He showed off his plantation, the laborers on it, and the spaces they inhabited and worked, even though his physical interaction with the people and place was limited to a few weeks every year. Because of the plantation network, Manning spent most of the year at Millford, surrounded by his family and twenty-seven domestic enslaved workers. The hundreds of people whose labor generated the profits that built and furnished Millford,

⁷¹⁰ John L. Manning to T.W. Probyn, Point Houmas, April 24, 1859, WCM Papers, Folder 169, SCL, USC

were separate from him by approximately 750 miles, known by Manning as little more than line items in the regular reports of hired managers.

Properties, buildings, houses, and furniture – all the components of plantation networks – provide a framework to understand the built and material culture environments created by John Manning, John McMurran, and Duncan Kenner.

Historians have identified and examined the concept of multiple properties under single owners. What is new in this dissertation is a concentrated study of the ways this system of land ownership and management shaped the landscapes, built environment, and material culture of the network's hub and contributing properties. After defining three typologies of plantation networks constructed by Manning, McMurran, and Kenner, the dissertation has used the plantation network as a lens to understand buildings and how enslaved and free people lived and experienced them in the 1840s and 1850s.

On the agricultural landscape, benefitting from a growing uniformity of plantation buildings during the period, plantation networks enabled planters to share resources between properties, including enslaved people, supplies, and buildings. Within networks, planters allocated labor, distributed resources, and took advantage of improved technology and infrastructure, resulting in measurable economic, labor management, and production benefits. That enslaved people's relationships with plantation landscapes differed so drastically from planters' was one of the inherent tensions of slavery. For enslaved workers, plantation networks often created emotional and physical stress, as planters' needs for labor severed connections of family and friends for long periods.

Separation within a network was not the same as a sale, but a year's posting at another plantation was a heavy burden.⁷¹¹

Plantation networks radically changed the appearance and use of houses and the objects that filled them. They certainly generated a remarkable wealth that was most evident in the architecture and landscapes of the main family plantation residence. Mansion houses utilized a range of architectural inspirations, from the grand order, Classically inspired columns on Millford, Melrose, and Ashland, to the Gothic Revival spring house at Millford. Classical columns and Gothic fantasies appeared on buildings across the United States in the 1840s; there was very little specifically local about the forms. Planters, freed from the daily requirements of plantation management by the managers in the network, had opportunities to travel, view architectural trends across the United States and Europe, and transplant those ideas into their residences. In plantation networks, because of the separation of houses and working agricultural landscapes, mansion houses take on the characteristics of ease and relaxation associated with the suburban villa. In this way, mansion houses do inhabit the stereotypes of gracious, luxurious, white, easy-living often depicted by Hollywood. Millford or Melrose, of course, were the stuff of inspiration for Seven Oaks, the Wilkes' gracious home in *Gone with the Wind*. What Hollywood, and Millford, hide are the contributing plantations and the functional, regionally specific great houses on them. In southwestern Mississippi, this was the I-house at Riverside. Across the Mississippi River in Louisiana, it was the

⁷¹¹ John T. McMurran to John T. McMurran Jr., Natchez, March 9, 1858, McMurran-Austen Papers 1858 Correspondence 1:4, LLMVC, LSU Libraries; Mary Louisa McMurran to John T. McMurran, Jr., Melrose, March 4, 1857, McMurran-Austen Papers 1857 Correspondence 1:3, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

Creole cottage at Killarney. Not glamorous, or architecturally remarkable, great houses relied on proven, functional designs rather than aesthetic trends. Interestingly, the domestic cores, the kitchens, laundries, smokehouses, cisterns, and privies that supported mansion and great houses, do not change much across the networks. There are clear differences in material and scale, but the types of buildings and the organization of the core remain consistent. In many ways, the uniformity of domestic cores across plantation networks mirrors the uniformity of agricultural structures discussed in the Complexes chapter.

Separation of the elite family from the working landscapes of the plantation is a fundamental cause of the distinction between architectural sources for mansion and great houses. It is also a cause of the different social and spatial hierarchies at play in houses across the network. Letters and diaries allow scholars to map social gatherings in mansion houses, which take on the “party-house” characteristics associated with suburban villas. Plantation networks effectively removed agricultural work from the mansion house, leaving it open to be a place of relaxation and enjoyment. In the 1840s, Millford, Melrose, and Ashland developed systems of back hallways, secondary entrances, and bell pulls to hide the movement and work of enslaved people. The obfuscation of work was successful. Upon visiting Melrose for the first time, Alie Austen McMurran excitedly wrote to her father: “and everything in such perfect order system papa in everything - ~~nine~~ ten servants in the house and you would never know of there [sic] being there excepting that they are always ready for orders--I never saw so

perfectly arranged household.”⁷¹² Great houses, on the other hand, were built for ordinary life. Socializing was casual and limited to relatives and close neighbors. Planters and managers realized that attempts to obscure the movement and presence of enslaved people at working houses were futile. It was not a lack of money that kept working houses modest; it was that I-houses and Creole cottages functioned better on the agricultural landscape than showplaces like Millford or Melrose.

As for material culture, it is clear that wealthy planters and their families wanted the same fashionable furnishings, works of art, luxurious clothing, and high-end table wares as wealthy Americans throughout the country. Planters had resources and opportunities to buy the best available commercial goods and eagerly took them. As with architecture, plantation networks reinforced distinctions between fashionable and functional at great and working houses. These distinctions blurred, depending on who resided at the working house. Inventories and letters reveal that most of the furniture at Riverside was old, but when Alie and John McMurran, Jr. lived there, he ordered over 550 dollars of wines, luxury food items, and cigars. Riverside’s modest dining room furniture struggled under the weight of bottles of Chateau Haut-Brion, tins of truffles, and cases of lobsters.⁷¹³ In the late 1850s, John McMurran, Jr. lived in a transitional world between the working plantation at Riverside and the mansion house at Melrose. He managed Riverside, and was responsible for its cotton crop, but he also was a figure in Natchez society and the son and heir to Melrose. While at Melrose, John McMurran, Jr.

⁷¹² Alice Austen McMurran to George Austen, Riverside, November [1856] McMurran-Austen Family Papers 1856 Correspondence 1:2, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

⁷¹³ P. Tiernan & Son to John T. McMurran, Jr., Baltimore, November 27, 1858, McMurran-Austen Family Papers 1858 Correspondence 1:4, LLMVC, LSU Libraries

benefitted from the plantation network. In separating him from daily responsibilities of plantation management, the network opened opportunities to travel, experience, and purchase. McMurrin, Jr. was also responsible for the management of enslaved people and the production of a valuable crop at Riverside, a reality he attempted to mask through rich foods and wines.

Even though Millford, Melrose, and Ashland are all correctly categorized as examples of Grecian Revival architecture, this study reveals how differently each house functioned. They used different architectural sources, had different plans, and people moved through the spaces in different routes. One explanation for the variations observed in mansion houses is the question of audience. Who did the planter build to impress? With Millford, John Manning wanted to appeal to a national socio-political elite. The son and nephew of multiple South Carolina governors, Manning was already at the top of the social hierarchy in the state, and his ambitions drove him towards a larger audience. The fact that the house became widely known as “Manning’s Folly” is telling. It was not just the expense of the house that seemed outrageous to his neighbors, the architecture and furnishings did not fit the expectations of local commentators. Duncan Kenner built Ashland to appeal to a local, clannish audience, in particular the prominent French Bringier family he joined by marriage. Ashland’s open, fluid plan was understandable to a local elite, although visitors from elsewhere would have found the plan disorienting. The open plan, surrounding galleries, and peripteral columns at Ashland were features found throughout the Bringiers’ houses, including nearby L’Hermitage and Bocage. Kenner’s involvement with horseracing was another important

tie to a local, family-based elite. Horseracing was enormously popular with planters along the Mississippi River from Natchez to New Orleans. Louisiana was second only to New York in horseracing in the 1840s and 1850s. Visitors to Ashland would have instantly recognized the Troye portraits of Kenner's racing stock. At Ashland, the Troye portraits act as the rosewood furniture did at Millford – visual markers of elite consumption patterns, calibrated to appeal to the audience in question. Kenner's reaction to the misplacement of Troye's portrait of Luda shows how important these paintings were to him. Kenner placed twelve separate advertisements in the New Orleans *Daily Picayune*, searching for information about the missing painting and offering rewards for leads. For John McMurran, the audience was smaller still – it was the household itself, which included the enslaved domestic workers and his own family. Unlike Manning and Kenner, McMurran did not inherit plantations. He began his career as a lawyer. McMurran was a first-generation slave owner. These two circumstances lead McMurran to emphasize management and discipline, made clear through the plan of Melrose. The secondary passages, preparation spaces, and alternate stairways establish a system, as Alie Austen McMurran called it, of controlled, disciplined enslaved presence throughout the house. Asking questions about the audiences for Millford, Ashland, and Melrose helps explain how differently the houses functioned. John Manning, Duncan Kenner, and John McMurran made decisions about the design and use of their mansion houses to appeal to their intended audience.

This dissertation makes a number of claims: that agricultural standardization and plantation networks made it possible for planters to share resources; that plantation

networks allowed great houses to source architectural inspirations from a national scope and to utilize architectural methods of hiding work; and that networks freed planters to pursue fashionable consumption on par with social peers nationwide. The most elusive point is that Southerners consumed the same fashions as Northerners. No one ever said they wanted to consume the same objects as fashionable Northerners, even though visiting Mrs. Tolcott's claims that Millford and its grounds reminded her of places outside New York were clearly intended as compliments.⁷¹⁴ The evidence presented by architectural and material culture choices at the mansion house, and how different they were from the great houses, suggests that wealthy Americans in the 1840s and 1850s shared many of the same tastes. In this way, the popularly presumed spectacle of the Greek Revival was not a distinctively Southern aesthetic.

Jane Pease, in a 1969 article on the consumption pattern of planters in the first half of the nineteenth century, provides some intriguing generalities on the point of shared tastes nationwide. Even though her article is not recent scholarship, her point that fashion was stronger than regionalism has direct connection to the plantation network. One of her arguments complicates the perception of planters as financially dissolute. In doing so, she suggests that records of abolitionists travel to Europe and England and planters' travel would not show significant differences between the two groups. She continues, suggesting similar popularity between Massachusetts coastal towns and Southern spas as vacation spots for social elites. Pease cannot find evidence that

⁷¹⁴ Sallie Bland Clarke Manning to John L. Manning, Millford, May 23 1855, WCM Papers, Folder 149, SCL, USC

Southern planters wasted any more money on personal luxuries than Northerners.⁷¹⁵ She

closes her argument with the following:

“If one compared planters with the landholding Van Rensselears and Wadsworths or with urban Biddles, Hones, and Forbeses, how different would be their expenditures for housing, travel, or entertainment? And if one argues that in the South clothes, housing, and style of life were symbolic of the position, power, and wealth of the planter, were not the same symbols respected in the North?”⁷¹⁶

Her point is well-taken, and the evidence presented in this dissertation bears it out.

Planters certainly used housing and material culture for self-presentation and as symbols of their success – as did all wealthy Americans! Southern planters were not remarkable for their consumption of fashionable architecture, furniture, objects, and clothing. If anything, their interests were unexceptional, largely shaped by periodicals, travel, and social peers.

Unsurprisingly, plantation networks did not survive the Civil War. Duncan Kenner invested in real estate, development schemes, and rice cultivation, which was significantly less labor and technologically intensive than sugar. In doing so, he preserved much of his fortune. Kenner owned Ashland and Bowden until his death in 1887, at which point his family sold the properties.⁷¹⁷ John McMurran sold Melrose to George Malin Davis, another Natchez nabob, in 1865. He and his wife intended to move to Maryland to be closer to Alie and John McMurran, Jr. McMurran’s death in 1866 left his

⁷¹⁵ Jane Pease, “A Note on Patterns of Conspicuous Consumption Among Seaboard Planters, 1820-1860,” *The Journal of Southern History*, Volume 35, No. 3 (August 1969), 392

⁷¹⁶ Pease, “A Note on Patterns of Conspicuous Consumption Among Seaboard Planters, 1820-1860,” 393

⁷¹⁷ Craig Bauer, *A Leader Among Peers: The Life and Times of Duncan Farrar Kenner* (Lafayette: Center for Louisiana Studies, University of Southwestern Louisiana, 1993), especially Chapters 11 and 12 for Kenner’s activities after the Civil War.

wife the executrix of the plantation network, which she leased and sold off in the following years. Mary Louisa McMurran never moved north, spending the rest of her life in Natchez.⁷¹⁸ John Manning sold his sugar properties in Louisiana during the Civil War. He kept Millford, encumbered by numerous mortgages and short sales, and left the house in the late 1870s, going to live with his daughter near Camden, South Carolina for the last decade of his life.⁷¹⁹ As they developed in the American South in the 1840s and 1850s, plantation networks were indivisible from slavery. Enslaved workers were the engines that kept contributing plantations and great houses working and prospering. As close to industrialized agriculture as plantation networks were, planters never developed a labor model for the system that did not include owning the workers.

⁷¹⁸ Ann Beha Associates, Melrose Estate, Natchez National Historical Park, Historic Structures Report, Volume I (1997), 41-43. The materials associated with Mary Louisa McMurran's execution of her husband's will and the dispersal of the plantation network are in the McMurran Collection, Special Collections Library, University of Louisiana, Monroe.

⁷¹⁹ "John L. Manning," *Biographical Dictionary of the South Carolina Senate, 1776-1985*, Volume II (Hines – Singleton) (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1986), 1042. Documentary evidence for the series of mortgages and short sales involving Millford in the 1860s and 1870s can be found in Sumter County Deed Book U, 539-540; Sumter County Deed Book UU, 458-460; Sumter County Deed Book VV, 317-318; and Clarendon County Deed Book K, 179-180, all accessible at the South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia, SC.

Appendix A: Bill of Lading to John L. Manning from Duncan Phyfe and Son, New York, June 2, 1841, WCM Papers R962b, SCL, USC

We inclose you a list of the boxes already shipped to the care of your agent in Charleston from which you will be able to know the contents of each box, and they know the piece of furniture which appertain to each other. Please be particular to have the boxes opened from the marked tops, that it may not receive injury in removing it from the cases.

No. 1	couch and pillo - walnut
2	ditto
3	ditto
4	ditto
5	sideboard table
6	ditto and cellaret
7	sofa
8	4 mahog armchairs
9	4 mahog armchairs
10	4 armchairs and 4 small mahog armchairs
11	4 ditto ditto
12	4 ditto walnut
13	4 ditto ditto
14	4 swing chairs
15	1 dinner wagon
16	2 scroll bason stands
17	2 large Slabs
18	2 dinner wagons
19	Mahog sideboard table
20	Swing glass
21	box table leaves

22	corner cupboard
23	corner cupboard
24	wardrobe carcase
25	box & pillar of dining table
26	cornice, bases, and columns of wardrobe
27	wardrobe door
28	dining table top
29	sideboard top
30	2 night stands
31	Swing glass
32	wardrobe carcase
33	cornice, base, and pillars ditto
34	screen for Mrs. Hampton
35	nest tables
36	ends of French bedstead
37, 38, 39	bedding
40	sides of (French Bedstead) and knife boxes
41	ends and laths of grecian bedstead
42	ditto of single ditto
43	sides, castors, and screws of French bedstead
44	2 bason stands and 2 corner cupboard tops
45	hat stand and 2 Butlers trays
46	2 round stands and bason stand railings
47	2 tops for round stands and 2 ditto for night stands

You will please observe that the railing for bason stands is to be secured by the nuts attached thereto. We hope they will reach in good order and that they will be carefully opened. They have all been packed in the best manner. The balance of the order will be shipped in 3 to 4 weeks.

Respectfully, your obedient servt.

D. Phyfe and Son

Appendix B: Bill of Lading to John L. Manning from Phyfe and Brother, New York,
January 5, 1842, WCM Papers R962b, SCL, USC

1841

Jany 21	To 2 Curvd Chairs (antique, \$110)	220
May 26	3 linen tick hair mattresses @ \$32	96
	1 ditto	26
	3 pr Palliasters @ \$8	24
	1 ditto	7
	3 large linen tick bolsters @ 7.50	22.5
	1 ditto	5.5
	7 ditto pillows @ \$4	28
	3 boxes 18/- 26/- & 34/-	9.75

1842

Jany 5	8 large gilt cornices for drawing room curtains @ 40	320
	4 poles and rosettes for drawing room curtains @ 13	52
	18 ditto & ditto for chamber ditto @ 12	216
	4 canopies complete for bed ditto @40	160
	24 yds silk fringe for ditto @ 5/6	16.5
	16 silk cords and slides for tassels to hold drawing room curtains @ 3	48
	51 yds silk cable cord @.75	38.25
	16 rosettes for drawing room curtains	14
	8 ditto for dining ditto	6
	36 ditto for chamber ditto	18
	4 prs clasps for dining room curtains	3.5
	4 1/3 yds buff silk lining to finish drawing room curtains @ 5/6	2.98
	making additions to 8 silk tassels for dining room curtains to receive the cords	4

	590 yds seletcia for lining chamber curtains @ 37 1/2 cents	221.25
	820 yds Canton flannel for interlining all the window curtains @ 14 cents	114.8
	Amount carried over	1674.03
Jany 5	To 8 prs iron brackets for drawing room curtains @ 1	8
	22 pr iron brackets for chamber and dining room curtains @ .75	16.5
	sewing silk	5
	240 yds binding @ 2 cents	4.8
	550 tenter hooks in cornices and bars @ 4/ pr	2.75
	Making 8 suits drawing room curtains @ 10	80
	ditto 4 ditto dining ditto @10	40
	ditto 18 ditto chamber @ 8	144
	ditto 4 ditto bed ditto @12	48
	8 boxes, muslin for lining, packing, etc.	48
	To silk for backs of library chairs	1.5
	6 1/4 yds gimp for ditto 2/	1.56
	Total	2074.14

Appendix C: Inventory of Melrose furnishings sold with the house, 1865. Typescript of original in possession of Mrs. Marian Kelly Ferry. Petravage, Melrose Historic Furnishings Report, 47- 49

[page one]

Drawing room furniture original cash \$

1	Walnut Tete a Tete sofa, green & gold cover	85.
6	" chairs " " " "	180.
[100?]		
1	" large arm chair " " " "	45.
1	" Ladies low arm chair " " " "	35.
1	" revolving sofa " " " "	85.
1	" oval back chair in Moquette " "	35.
1	" high oval back chair in green & plush	15.[18?]
1	" Etigere [<i>sic</i>]	65.
1	Rosewood sofa table Brocadilla Marble top	95.
1	Bouquet table, Brocadilla Marble top	30.
	Linen covers for sofas & chairs –	25.
1	mantel Mirror	240.
1	Pier "	220.
	Curtains, cornices, &c, &c	545.13
1 pair	candelabras, bronze	35.
1 "	" , gilt	40.
1	carpet & rug velvet	199.85
1	centre china vase for Mantel	40.
1	large centre chandelier	
1	Sofa table, black & white marble top	50.
2	fancy cane seat chairs	5.
1	steel fire set	

Parlor furniture

1	Piano, stool & music stand	
	Curtains for parlor, being 2 windows	
1	carpet and rug velvet	
1	centre table, black & white marble top	
1	sofa table " " " " "	
3	Rosewood lounges, covered with Marron velvet	
1	pair arm chairs " " " "	
1	walnut rocking chair " " " "	
6	chairs rosewood " " " "	
1	Walnut ladies escritoire	
1	small walnut boquet [<i>sic</i>] table	
1	Stuffed arm chair " "	
1	steel fire set	

- 3 bronze mantel lamps, with glass pendants.

[page two]

Library furniture

- 2 Walnut book cases
 1 " Sofa green Morocco
 2 " large armchairs " "
 2 " low chairs " "
 1 old carpet & rug
 1 Library table
 3 Walnut book cases, in out room, XX
 1 Steel fire set.

Front Hall

- 1 mahogany table, folding top
 1 " hat rack
 one oil cloth

Centre or back hall, 1st story or floor

- 2 large mahogany sofas, hair cloth seats.
 2 " " arm chairs " " "
 6 common size mahogany chairs " " "
 1 walnut arm chair, green morocco
 1 Mahogany table, folding top.
 1 " pier table, black marble top
 2 bamboo arm chairs
 1 Walnut refreshment table
 2 Solar lamps
 1 gilt clock
 1 pair vases, cornucopia shape
 1 oil cloth

XX In lieu of these 3 cases, any two of the three paintings of Calhoun, Taylor & C. J. Marshall to be selected.

[page three]

Dining Room

- 1 Mahogany Sideboard
 1 Set " Dining Tables.
 1 doz. " Chairs, hair cloth seats.
 1 " Sofa, " " "
 1 " Pier Table, black marble top.
 1 " Dumb Waiter.

- 1 steel fire set.
- 2 prs. Lamps
- 1 ingrain carpet & rug, -much worn.

=

Pantry

Tables, closets, safes & oil cloth of passage

Glass & China

- 1 very full Dinner Set = blue & gold china
- 1 doz. Coffee Cups & saucers, white & gold "
- 1 " Tea " " " " " "
- 1 Tea pot - 1 Coffee pot " " " "
- 1 Slop bowl " " " "
- 2 large bowls " " " "
- 4 Shells " " " "
- 5 Fruit Stands " " " "
- 3 Cake plates v " " " "
- Lot of Dessert & Tea plates " " " "

=

- 3 large Bowls, cut glass
- 3 Sauce Dishes, " "
- 4 sweetmeat ", " "
- 4 covered ", " "
- 1½ doz Goblets, " "
- 2 " Wines, " "
- 2 " Champagnes, " "
- 2 " Hocks, green " "
- 1 " Liqueur [*sic*], " "
- 1½ " Lemonade, " "
- Decanters, " "
- 2 prs Salt Cellars, " "
- 2 Celery Stands, " "
- 1 pr water Pitchers, -wedgewood-
- 1 set plated castors -worn-
- 1 set japanned waiters -worn-
- 1 set wine covers
- 1 pr spittoons white china
- Eleven finger bowls, opaque [*sic*] blue glass

[page four]

North Front Bed room

- 1 Walnut Bedstead, Mattress, bolster & pr pillows
- 1 " Couch, " " " "

- 1 " Dressing Bureau, white marble top.
- 1 " Wash stand, white marble top
- 1 " Armoire. -
- 2 " Hair-cloth seat Chairs
- 1 " " " " Arm "
- 1 " Small Stand or table.
- 1 " close " , white marble top.
- 1 Mahogany Table, folding top.
- 1 " Hair-cloth seat rocking Chair.
- 1 Toilet Set — green & gold china
- 1 pr Silver plated candle sticks.
- 1 Steel fire set.
- 1 Ingrain carpet & rug.

=

West Front Bed room

- 1 Mahogany Bedstead, Spring Mattress, bolster & pillows
- 1 " Couch, Mattress, bolster & pillow
- 1 " Washstand, white marble top.
- 2 " Armoires,
- 1 " Table, folding top.
- 1 " Light Stand
- 1 " Hair cloth rocking chair
- 1 " " " Ladies "
- 2 walnut small stands or tables
- 1 Toilet set, purple & white china
- 1 Steel fire set.
- 1 Ingrain carpet & rug/

=

Centre hall, second story

- 1 Mahogany Table, folding top.
- 1 " Sofa, hair cloth seat.
- 2 Walnut clothes presses.

== =

- 2 Mahogany dressing Bureaus?
- 1 " washstand, white marble top
- 1 doz cane or rush bottom chairs
- 1 stained pine clothes press.

[page five]

East corner room

- 1 Mahogany Bedstead, mattress, bolster & pillows
- 1 " Dressing Bureau

- 1 " Wash stand, black marbel [*sic*] top.
- 1 Toilet Set. 1
- 1 Towel rack.
- 1 walnut small stand or table.
- 1 velvet Carpet. worn.
- =
- 1 large mahogany bed stead, not put up.
- =
- 1 " Pier galss [*sic*]. ?

Natchez, Novr 3d 1865

J. T. McMurran

Received payment in full of the above articles, set forth in the foregoing list - December 9, 1865

J. T. McMurran

Appendix D: Ashland Furniture from Inventory of Property in Ascension Parish
 belonging to Duncan Farrar Kenner, July 22, 1887, Duncan Farrar Kenner Papers,
 LLMVC, LSU Libraries

Furniture and Contents - Ashland Dwelling

Hall

3	wood settees -	\$5
1	book shelf -	\$2.50
2	wood chairs (?) -	\$3.50
1	common wood table -	\$1
1	centre table black marble top	\$7
1	hat rack -	\$1
2	armchairs, 1 rocker -	\$1
1	wood table -	\$1.50

Parlor

1	sofa -	\$6
2	high back chairs -	\$15
		Forward - \$47.50
1	etagere -	\$3
4	chairs -	\$5
1	wicker chair - rocker -	\$4
2	willow chairs -	\$6
1	Pier table, marble top -	\$10
1	book shelf -	\$3.50
1	lounge -	\$10

Front Bed Room

1	bed and Spring (??) -	\$25
1	dressing table and glass -	\$10
1	desk -	\$7.50
1	looking glass -	\$1
1	bureau without glass -	\$7
1	washstand with set -	\$6
1	towel rack -	\$1
1	polariscope and scale -	\$90

Rear Bed Room

1	small desk -	\$.50
1	small table -	\$.50

Dining Room

1	mahogany extension table -	\$25
11	chairs -	\$12

1	old side board marble top -	\$17.50
2	folding tables -	\$6
1	small walnut table -	\$2.50
2	metal candleabra -	\$5
6	large silver dinner forks, 6 large table silver spoons, 6 silver tea spoons -	\$30

Pantry

1	lot furniture -	\$5
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Downstairs - \$340.50

Upper Floor

Hall

5	chairs -	\$5
1	dressing table and glass -	\$8
2	armoires -	\$20
1	washstand marble top -	\$6
1	towel rack -	\$1
1	side board (old) -	\$2

Bedroom over Parlor

1	single bed -	\$6
1	armoire -	\$10
1	walnut table and glass -	\$25
1	small work table -	\$2.50
1	straw lounge -	\$7.50
1	dressing table marble top and glass -	\$12

Bedroom over Dining Room

1	small circular table -	\$2
1	armoire -	\$4
1	single victoria bed with mattress and spring -	\$12
1	wash stand with marble top, toilet set, towel rack -	\$6
	Pitcher and basin -	\$1.25

Bedroom over Pantry

1	small wood table -	\$1
1	wash stand marble top -	\$4
1	bed and spring -	\$12.50
1	toilet with glass -	\$8

Front Bed Room Right Hand Side

1	lounge -	\$4
8	mahogany chairs -	\$8
2	old mahogany arm chairs -	\$2
1	lot 4 old odd chairs -	\$2
1	small lamp stand -	\$.50

Rear Bed Room

1	armoire and small work table	\$6
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Small Back Bed Room

1	lot furniture of bed, armoire, wash stand, table -	\$10
---	--	------

Garrett

1	old bed and old damaged furniture -	\$3
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Kitchen

1	charter oak stove and sundry kitchen furniture, cooking utensils -	\$37.50
---	--	---------

Total Furniture - \$569.25

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Figure I-1. “Plan of Ashland--Estate of D. F. Kenner, Parish of Ascension, Copied from Survey and Map of A.J. Powell, C. E. by J. Kerr, Draughtsman.” c. 1847. Published in David W. Babson, *Pillars on the Levee: Archaeological Investigations at Ashland-Belle Helene Plantation, Geismar, Ascension Parish, Louisiana*, Second Edition (Normal, IL: Midwestern Archaeological Research Center, Illinois State University, 1989), Figure 3.



Figure I-2. Millford, Pinewood, SC, 2009. Photo by author.



Figure I-3. Long-Distance Network, showing approximate locations of the hub and contributing plantations in the Millford network. Author's adaptations to Sam Bowers Hilliard, *Atlas of Antebellum Southern Agriculture*. Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1984. Map 1.



Figure 1-4. Melrose, Natchez, MS, 2009. Photo by author.

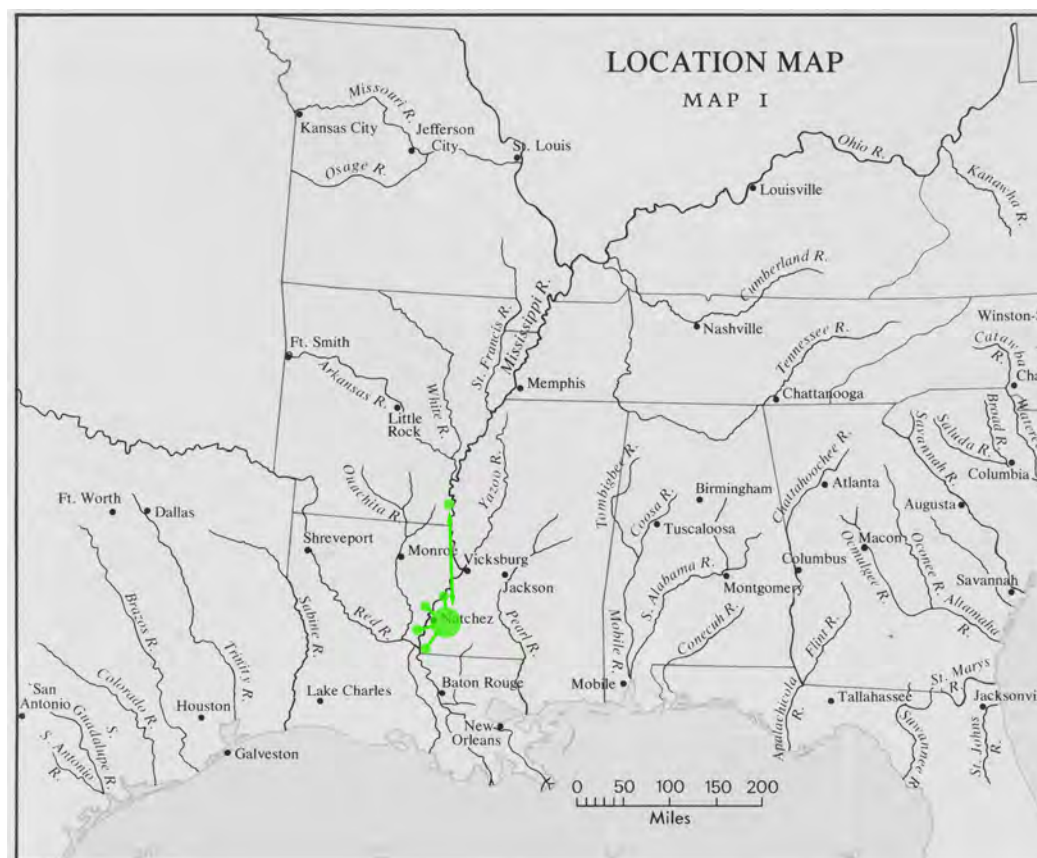


Figure I-5. Scattered Network, showing approximate locations of the hub and contributing plantations in the Melrose network. Author's adaptations to Hilliard, *Atlas of Antebellum Southern Agriculture*. Map 1.



Figure I-6. Ashland, Ascension Parish, LA, 2009. Photo by author.

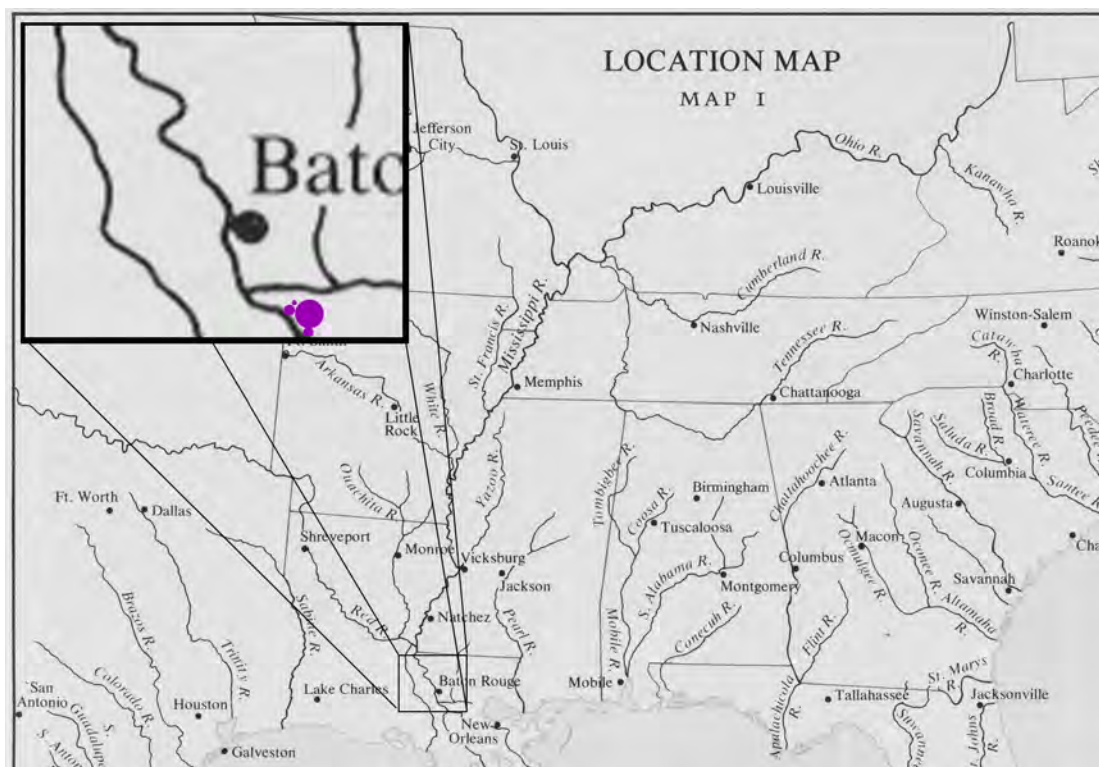


Figure I-7. Condensed Network, showing approximate locations of the hub and contributing plantations in the Ashland network. Author's adaptations to Hilliard, *Atlas of Antebellum Southern Agriculture*. Map 1.

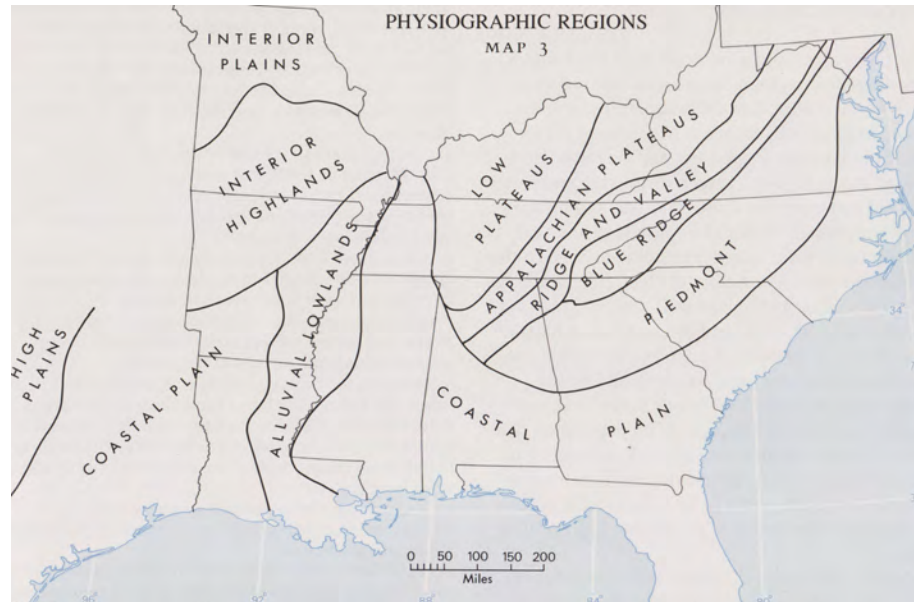


Figure 1-1. Hilliard, *Atlas of Antebellum Southern Agriculture*. Map 3.



Figure 1-2. Unidentified artist. John T. McMurren, probably 1840s. Louisiana State University, Edward Turner Collection, S-120, box 1, folder 19.



Figure 1-3. Matthew Harris Jouett (att.), *Mary Louisa Turner* (McMurrin), c. 1825-26. Reproduction at Melrose National Historical Park, Natchez, MS. Photo by author.

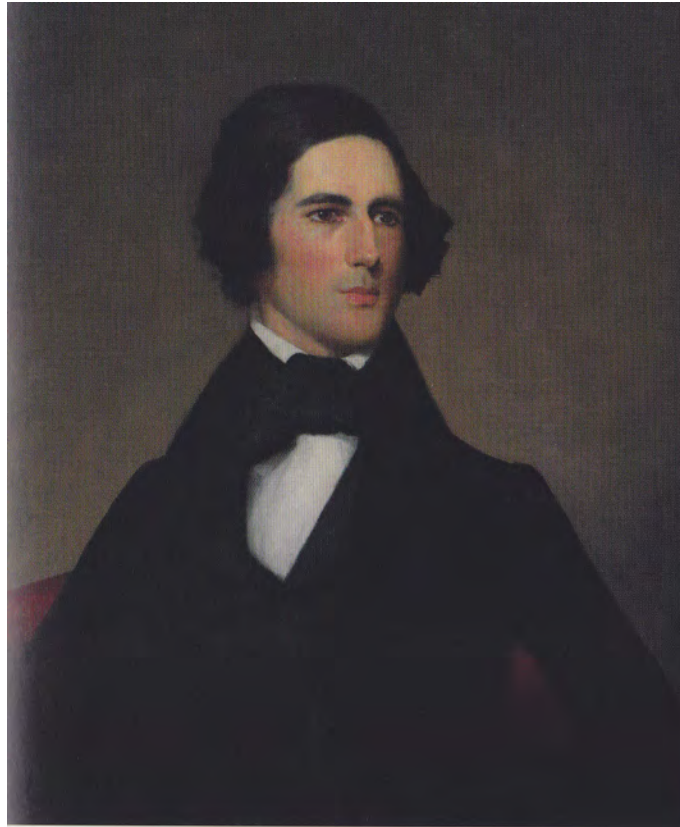


Figure 1-4. James DeVeaux, *John Laurence Manning*, 1838. Peter M. Kenny, Michael K. Brown, Frances F. Bretter, Matthew A. Thurlow. *Duncan Phyfe: Master Cabinetmaker in New York*. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art; New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2011. 145.



Figure 1-5. Manning and Richardson Properties. Crop of Sumter District, SC. Surveyed by S.H. Boykin, 1821. Author's adaptations to Robert Mills, *Atlas Of The State Of South Carolina, Made Under The Authority Of The Legislature; Prefaced With A Geographical, Statistical And Historical Map Of The State*. Baltimore: F. Lucas, Jr., 1825.



Figure 1-6. Attributed to James DeVeaux, *Susan Hampton Manning*, 1839. Kenny, Brown, Bretter, Thurlow. *Duncan Phyfe: Master Cabinetmaker in New York*, 145.

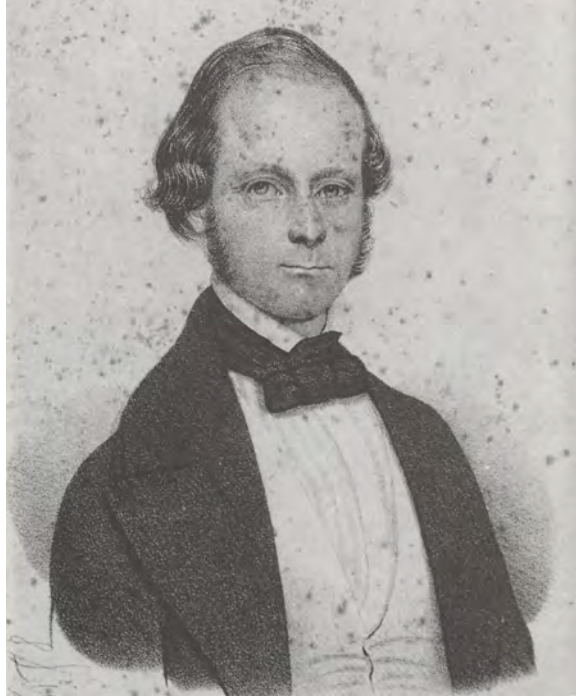


Figure 1-7. Jules Lion, *Duncan Farrar Kenner*, 1846. Craig A. Bauer. *A Leader Among Peers: The Life and Times of Duncan Farrar Kenner*. Lafayette: University of Southwestern Louisiana Press, 1993, 160.

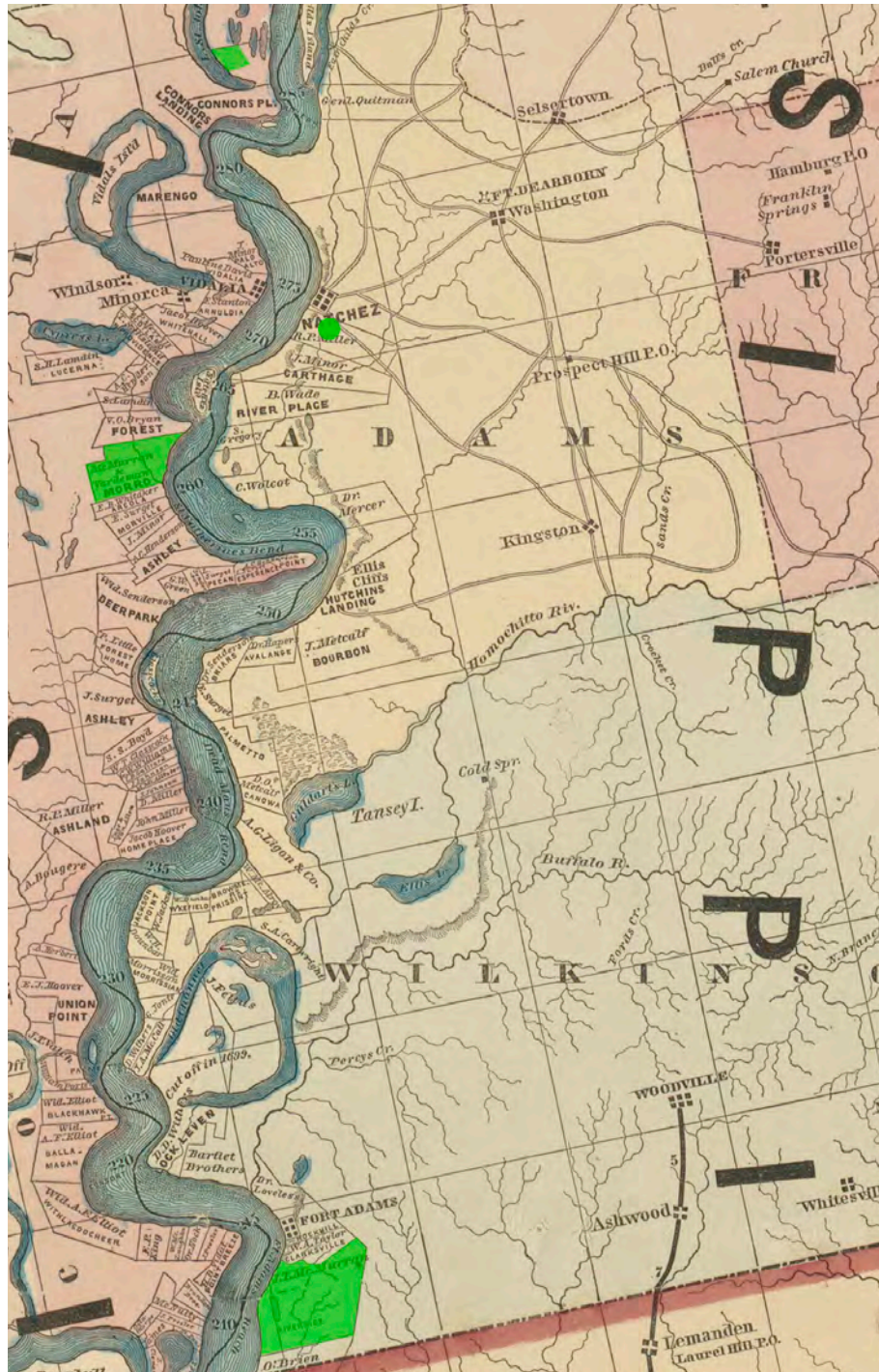


Figure 1-8. The Melrose plantation network, showing the locations of (north to south) Killarney, Melrose, Moro, and Riverside. Authors' adaptations to James T. Lloyd, *Lloyd's Map of the Mississippi River from St. Louis to the Gulf of Mexico*, 1862, Map 4, Boston Public Library, Norman B. Leventhal Map Center

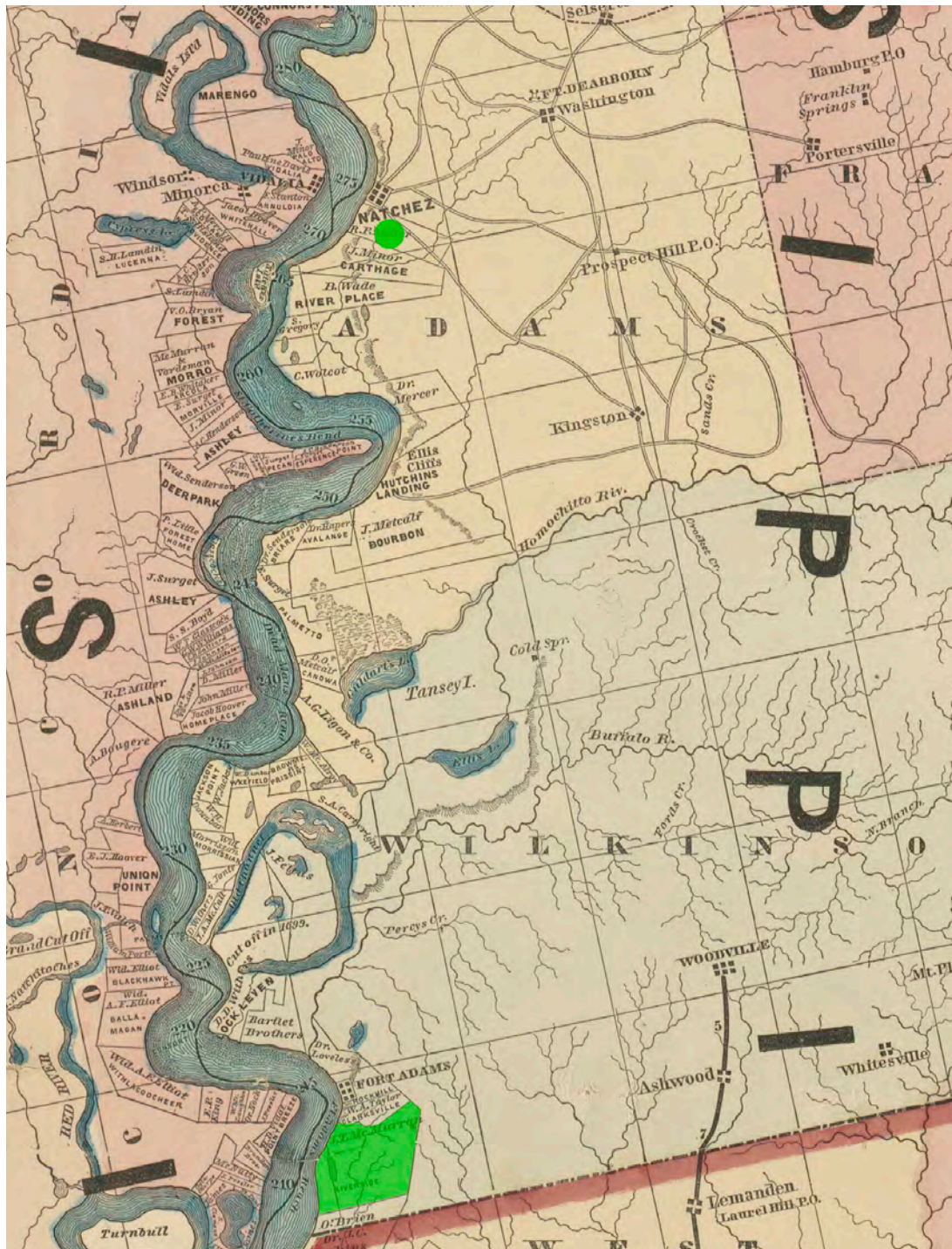


Figure 1-9. Riverside Plantation, Wilkinson County, MS. Authors' adaptations to Lloyd, Lloyd's Map of the Mississippi River from St. Louis to the Gulf of Mexico, 1862, Map 4.



Figure 1-10. Moro Plantation, Concordia Parish, LA. Authors' adaptations to Lloyd, *Lloyd's Map of the Mississippi River from St. Louis to the Gulf of Mexico*, 1862, Map 4.

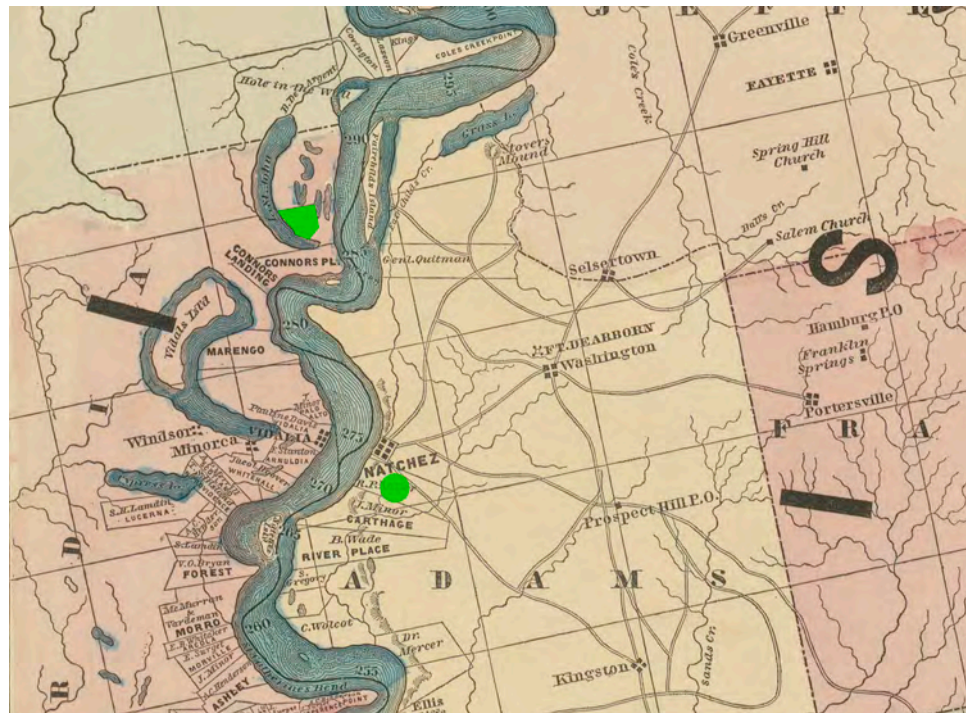


Figure 1-11. Killarney Plantation, Concordia Parish, LA. Authors' adaptations to Lloyd, *Lloyd's Map of the Mississippi River from St. Louis to the Gulf of Mexico*, 1862, Map 4.

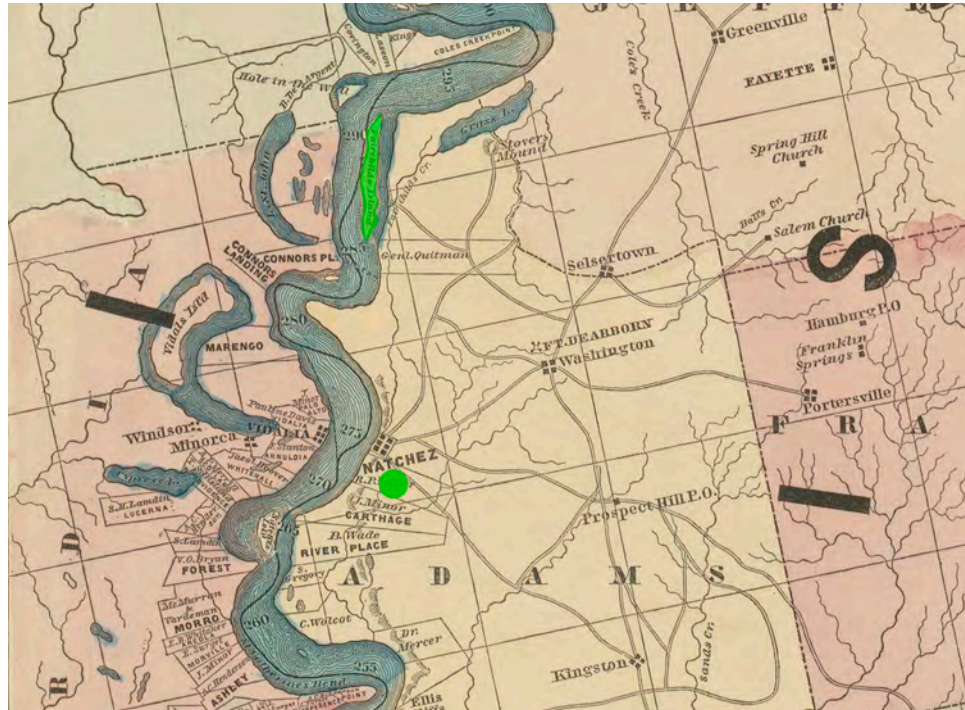


Figure 1-12. Fairchild's Island, Adams County, MS. Authors' adaptations to Lloyd, *Lloyd's Map of the Mississippi River from St. Louis to the Gulf of Mexico*, 1862, Map 4.

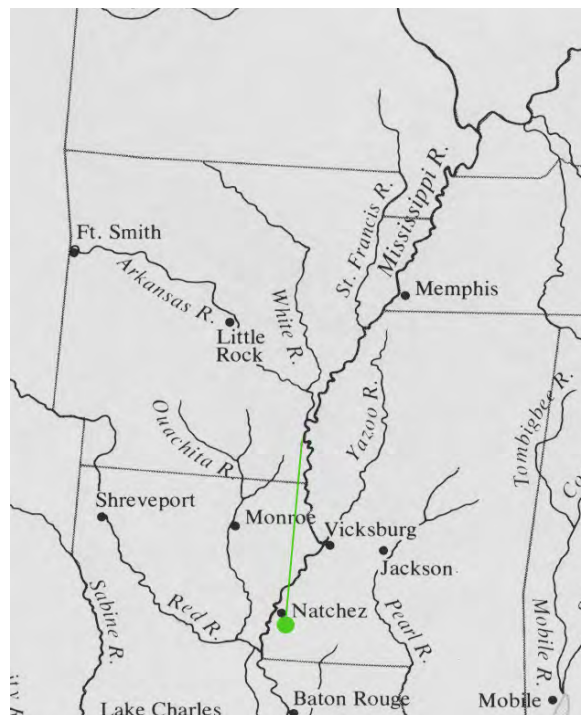


Figure 1-13. Approximate location of Wood Cottage, Phillips County, AR. Author's adaptations to Hilliard, *Atlas of Antebellum Southern Agriculture*. Map 1.

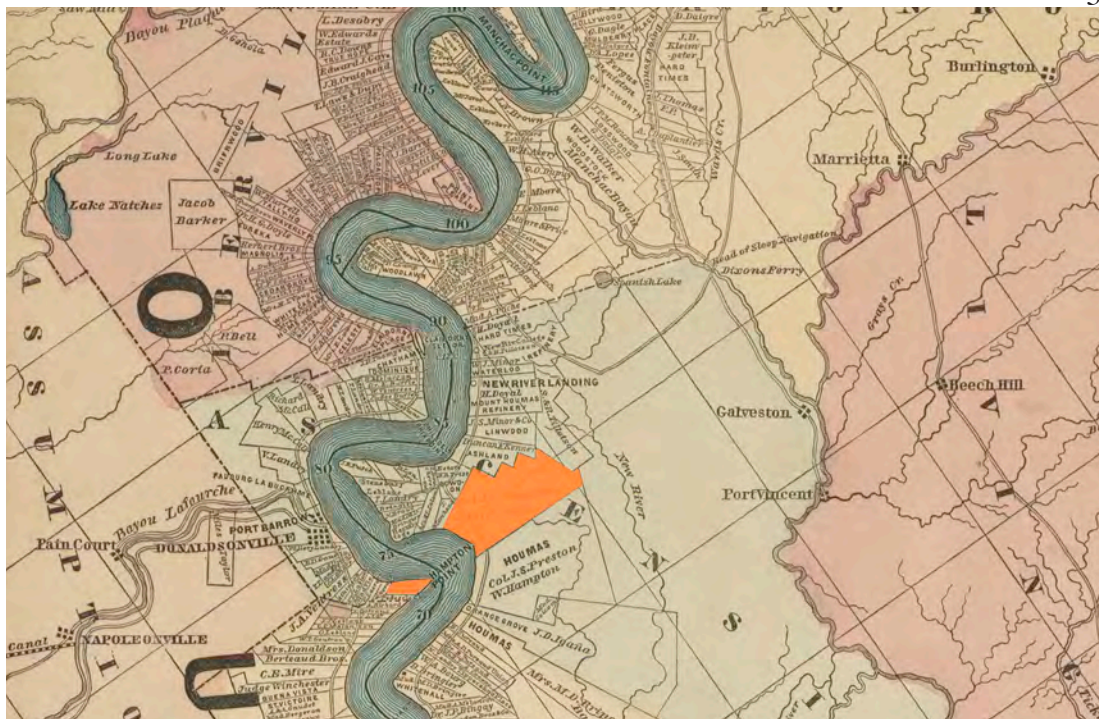


Figure 1-14. Riverton and Point Houmas Plantations, Ascension Parish, LA. Authors' adaptations to Lloyd, *Lloyd's Map of the Mississippi River from St. Louis to the Gulf of Mexico*, 1862, Map 4.

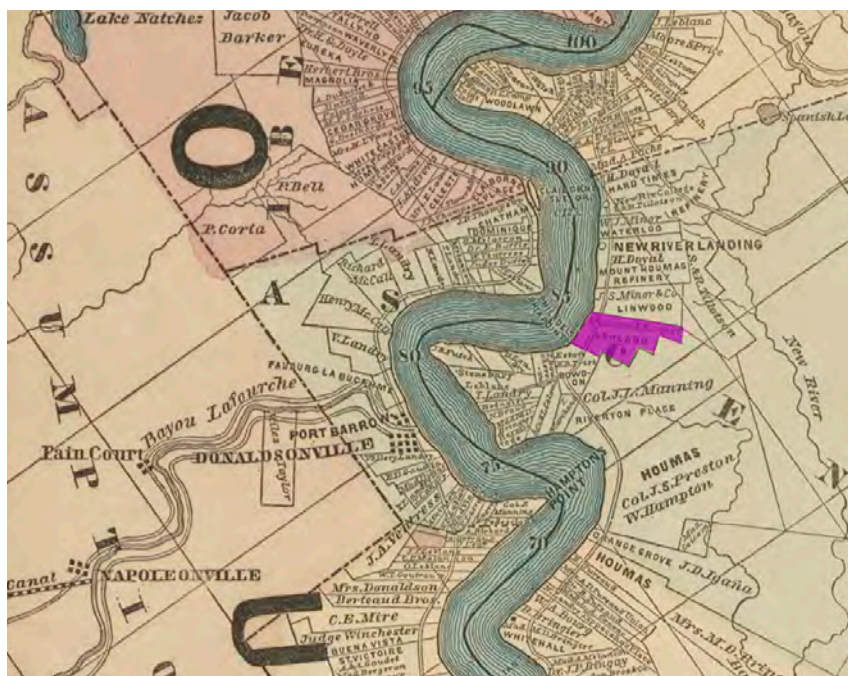


Figure 1-15. Ashland Plantation, Ascension Parish, LA. Authors' adaptations to Lloyd, *Lloyd's Map of the Mississippi River from St. Louis to the Gulf of Mexico*, 1862, Map 4.

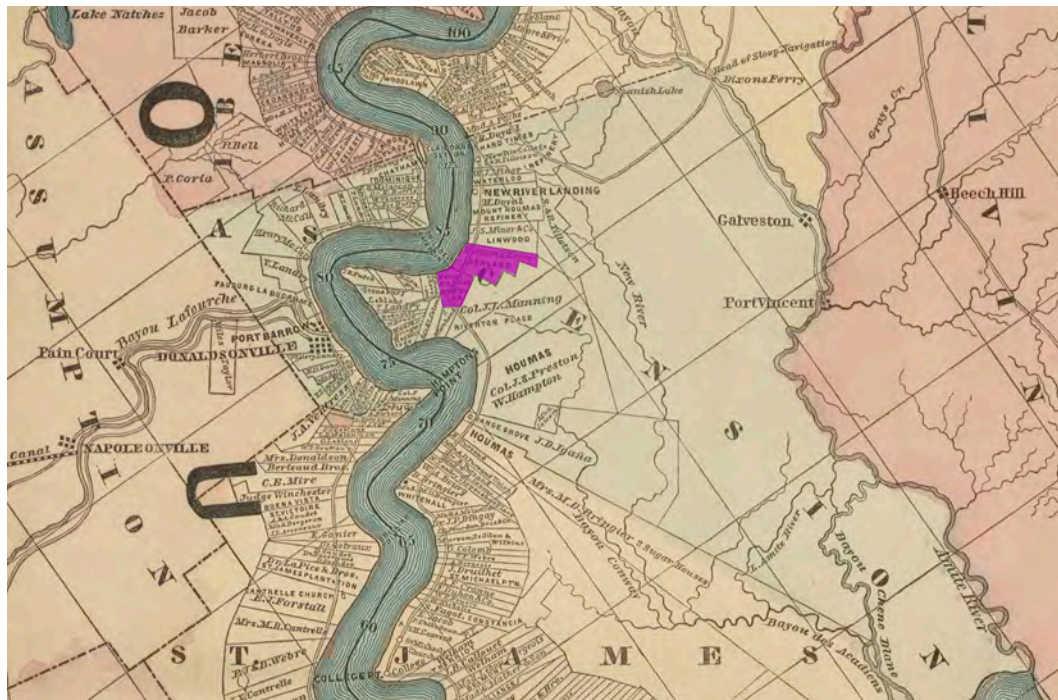


Figure 1-16. Ashland and Bowden Plantations, Ascension Parish, LA. Authors' adaptations to Lloyd, *Lloyd's Map of the Mississippi River from St. Louis to the Gulf of Mexico*, 1862, Map 4.



Figure 1-17. Forest and Moro Plantations, Concordia Parish, LA. Authors' adaptations to Lloyd, *Lloyd's Map of the Mississippi River from St. Louis to the Gulf of Mexico*, 1862, Map 4.



Figure 1-18. Brock and Richardson Properties. Crop of Sumter District, SC. Surveyed by S.H Boykin, 1821. Author's adaptations to Mills, *Atlas Of The State Of South Carolina, Made Under The Authority Of The Legislature; Prefaced With A Geographical, Statistical And Historical Map Of The State*.



Figure 2-1. Killarney, Concordia Parish, LA, 2009. Photo by author.



Figure 2-2. Mulberry Row, Phase II, c. 1791-1810. Compare the scale of Building o, constructed during the 1770s, with Buildings r, s, and t, constructed in the 1790s. Monticello Department of Archaeology, 2009.

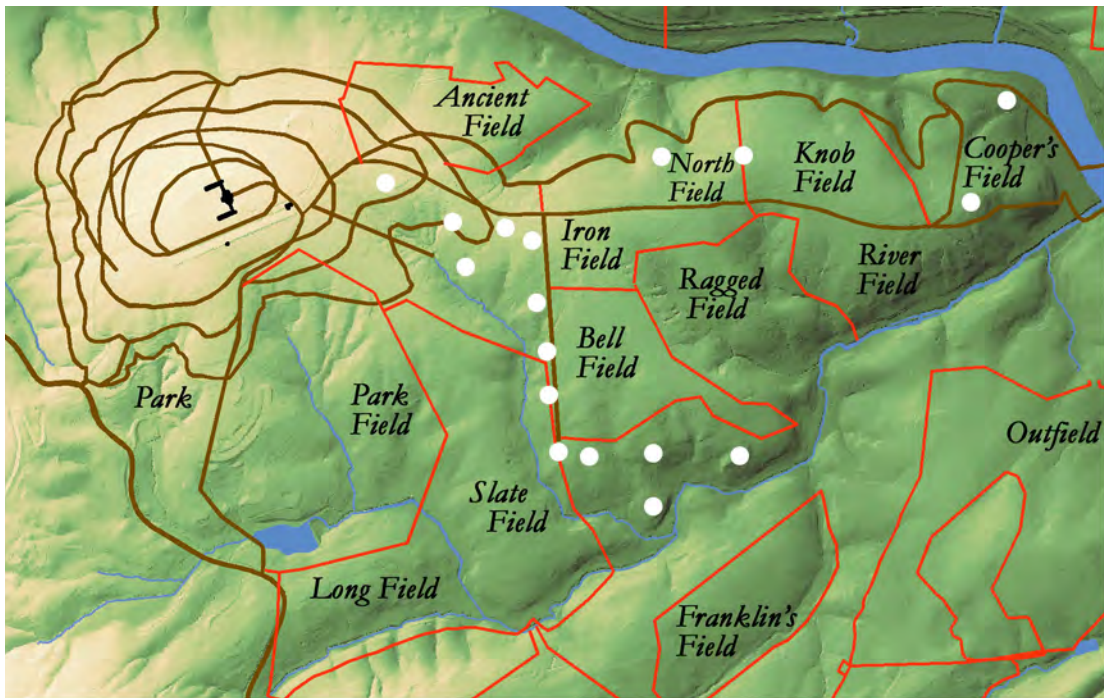


Figure 2-3. Monticello Fields and Sites, Monticello Department of Archaeology, 2009



Figure 2-4. Double-pen cabin from Welham Plantation, Louisiana State University Rural Life Museum, 2012. Photo by author.

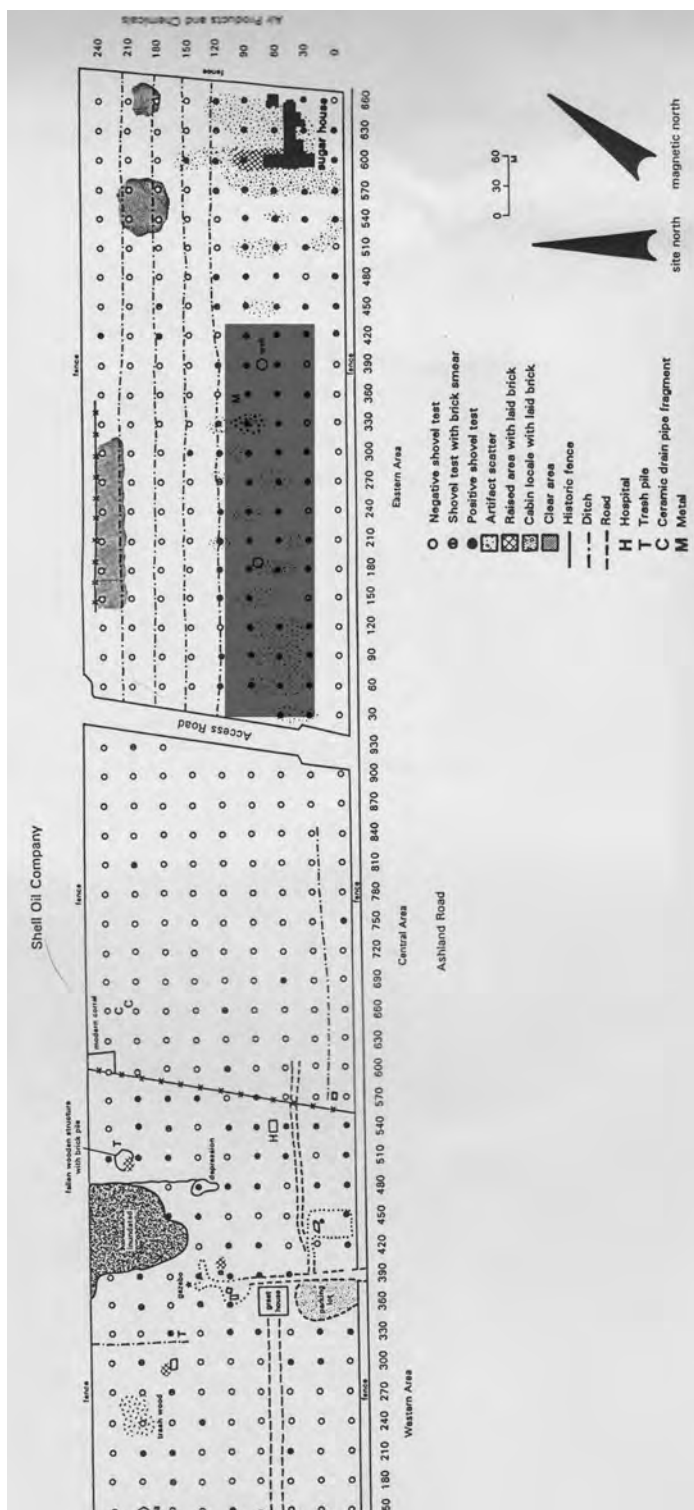
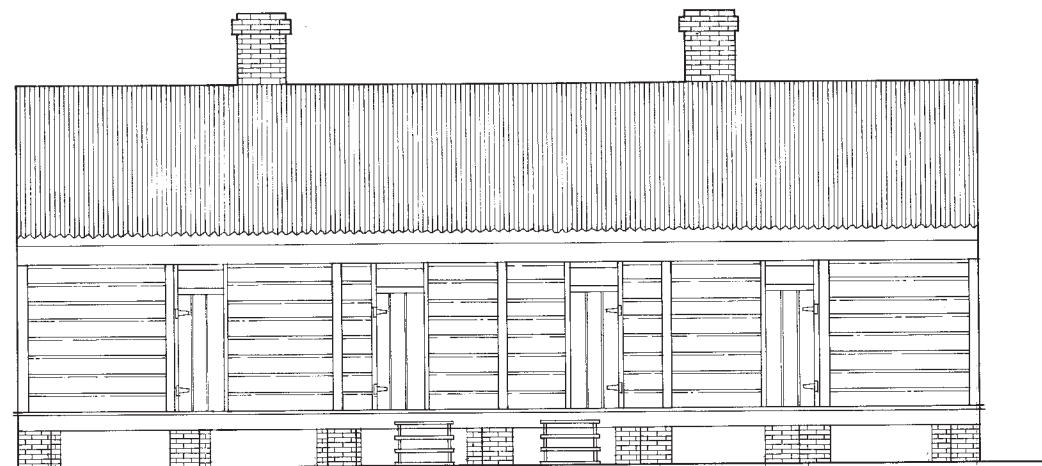
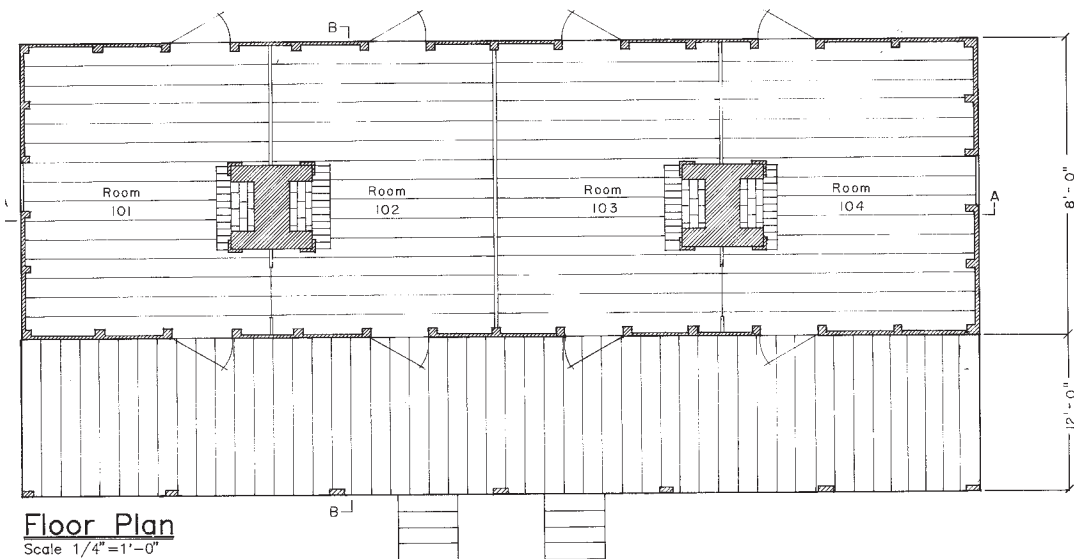


Figure 2-5. Site map of Ashland-Belle Helene Phase 1 Investigations, with enslaved quarters shaded. Author's adaptation to Jill-Karen Yakubik, et. al. *Archaeological Data Recovery at Ashland-Belle Helene Plantation (16AN26), Ascension Parish, Louisiana, Volume III: Investigations at the Sugar House*. New Orleans: Earth Search, Inc., 1994, Figure 2-1.



East Elevation

Scale 1/4" = 1'-0"



Floor Plan

Scale 1/4" = 1'-0"

Figure 2-6. Elevation and Plan, Four Door Slave Cabin, Evergreen Plantation, St. John the Baptist Parish, LA. Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) LA-1236, Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Online

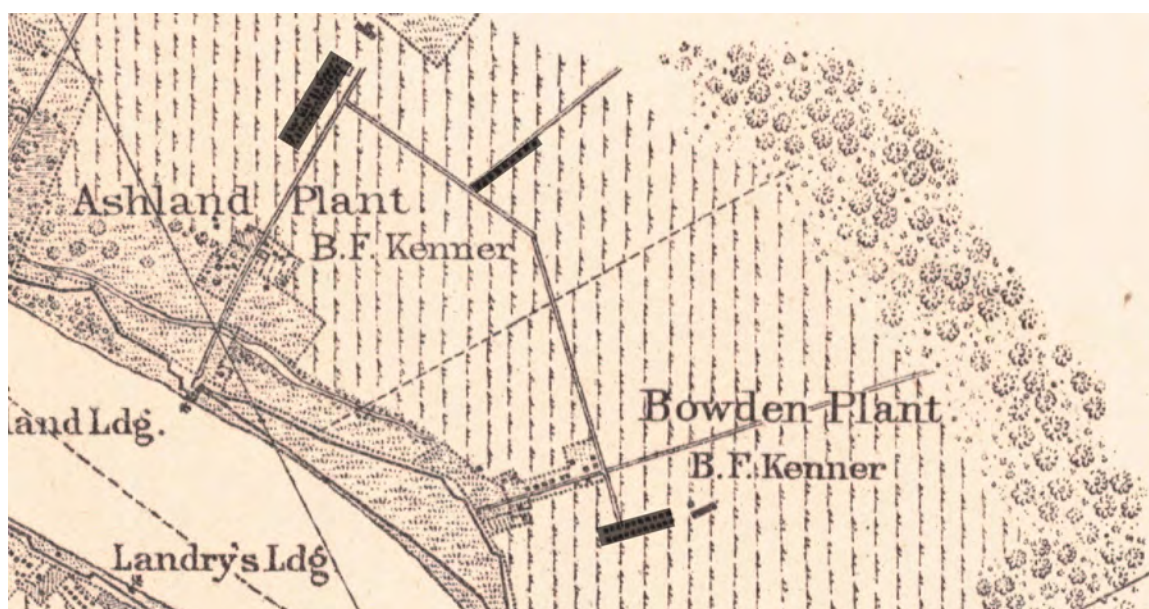


Figure 2-7. Ashland, Texas, and Bowden Quarters. Author's adaptation to *A Preliminary Map of the Lower Mississippi River from the Mouth of the Ohio River to the Head of the Passes: Donaldsonville*. Mississippi River Commission, 1884-1885, Map 26. Courtesy of Murray Hudson, Halls, TN.



Figure 2-8. Riverton and Point Houmas Quarters. Author's adaptation to *A Preliminary Map of the Lower Mississippi River from the Mouth of the Ohio River to the Head of the Passes: Donaldsonville*. Mississippi River Commission, 1884-1885, Map 26. Courtesy of Murray Hudson, Halls, TN.



Figure 2-9. Marie Adrien Persac, Detail from *Palo Alto*, c. 1860. H. Parrott Bacot, Barbara SoRelle Bacot, Sally Kittredge Reeves, John Magill, and John H. Lawrence. *Marie Adrien Persac: Louisiana Artist*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2000, 63.

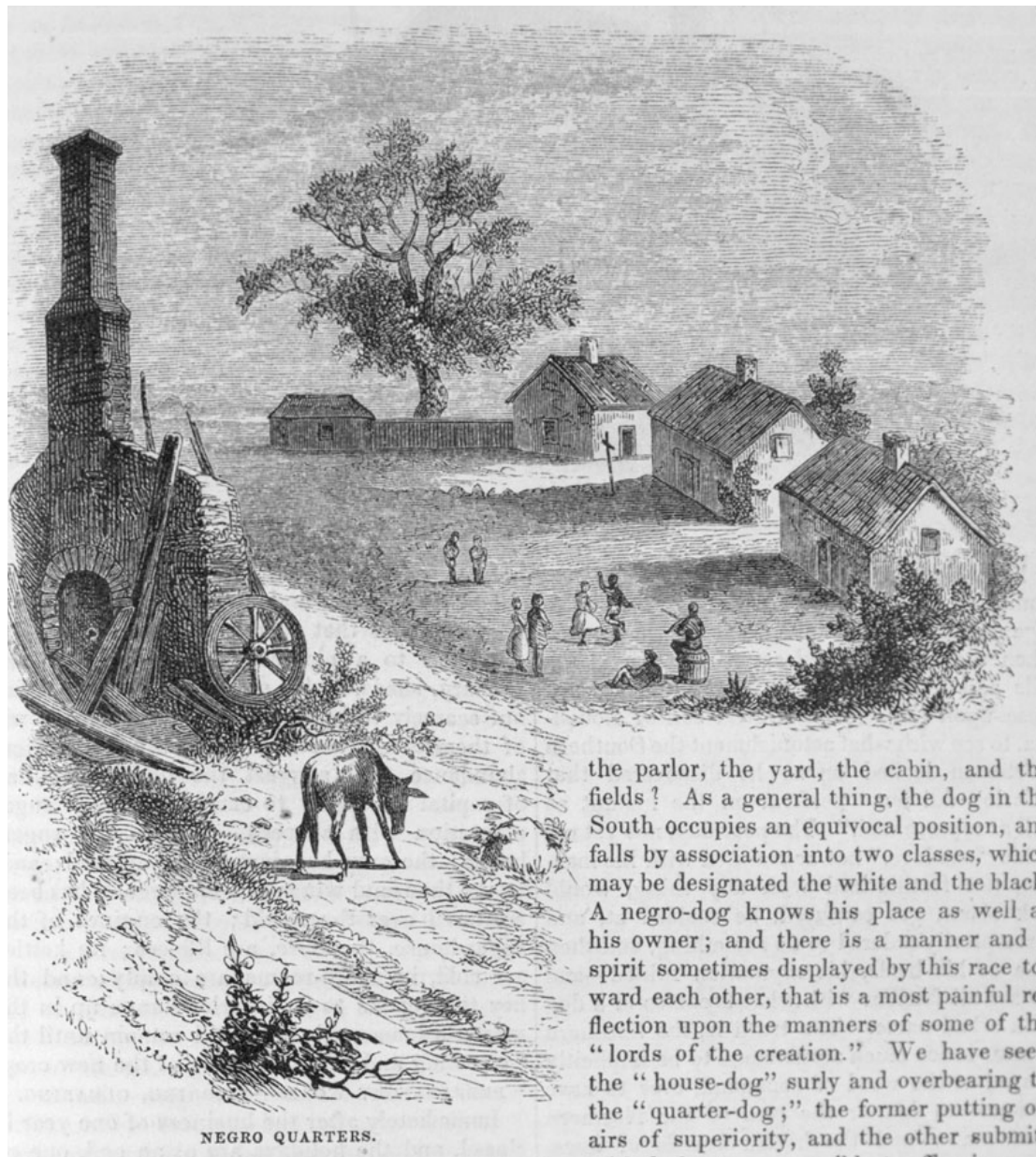


Figure 2-10. *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* (1853), vol. 9, p. 753. Image Reference HW9-753, as shown on www.slaveryimages.org, compiled by Jerome Handler and Michael Tuite, and sponsored by the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities and the University of Virginia Library.

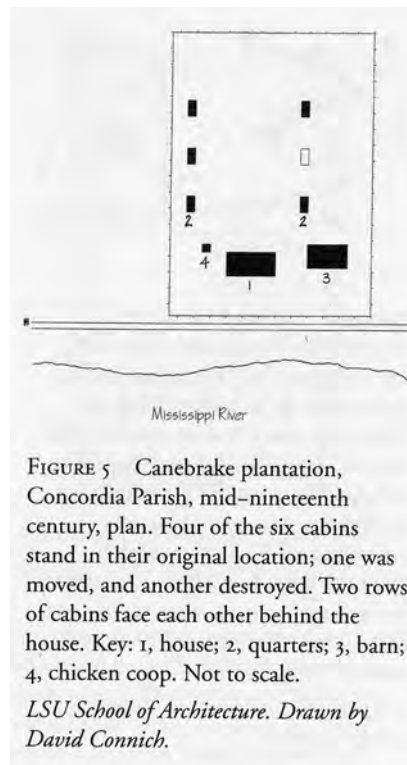


Figure 2-11. Site Plan of Canebrake Plantation, Concordia Parish, LA. Barbara Sorelle Bacot and Jessie Poesch, *Louisiana Buildings, 1720-1940: The Historic American Buildings Survey*. Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 1997, 92.

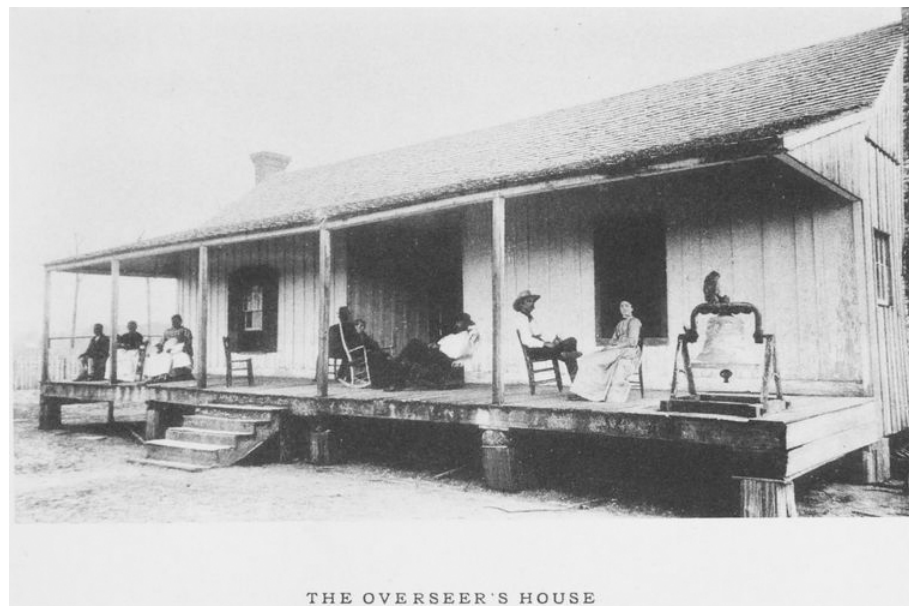


Figure 2-12. Susan Dabney Smedes. "The Overseer's House," *A Southern Planter: Social Life in the Old South*. New York: James Pott & Compay, 1900, 81. New York Public Library Digital Gallery.



Figure 2-13. Canebrake, Concordia Parish, Louisiana. Fred Daspit. *Louisiana Buildings: 1840-1860*. Lafayette: Center for Louisiana Studies, University of Louisiana at Lafayette, 2006, 119.

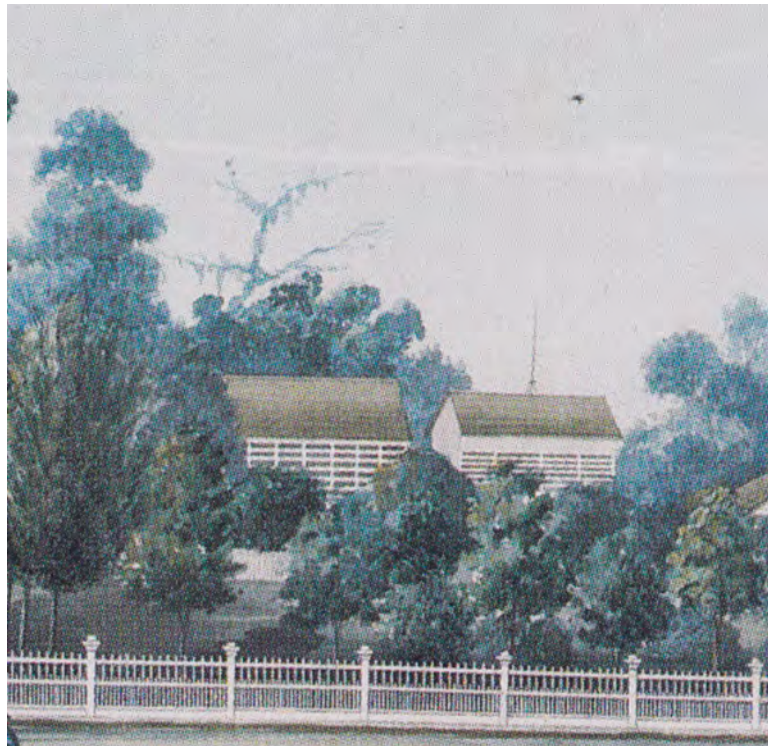


Figure 2-14. Marie Adrien Persac, Detail of Corn Cribs from *St. John*, 1861. Bacot, Bacot, Reeves, Magill, and Lawrence. *Marie Adrien Persac*, 75.



Figure 2-15. Stoker Barn, Louisiana State University Rural Life Museum, 2012.
Photo by author.

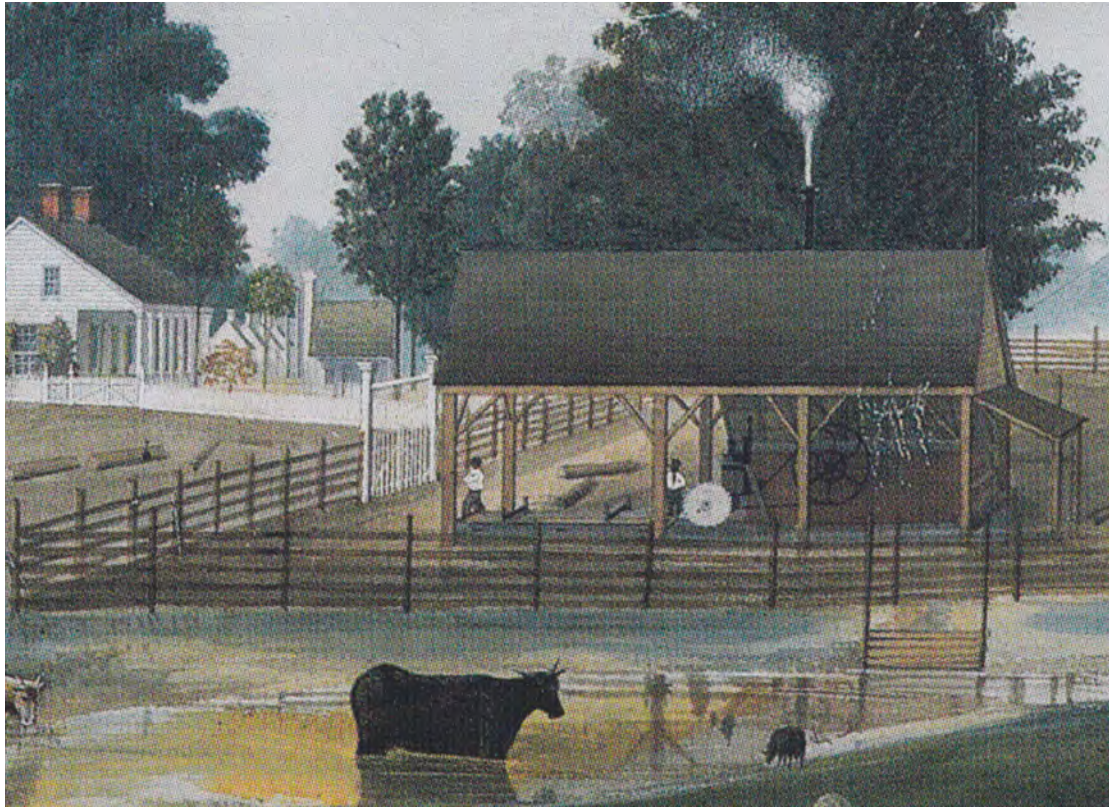


Figure 2-16. Marie Adrien Persac, Detail of a Sawmill from *Prairie Sorrell*, 1860. Bacot, Bacot, Reeves, Magill, and Lawrence. *Marie Adrien Persac*, 67.



Figure 2-17. Steam Engine for a Sawmill, c. 1861 (Restored). Louisiana State University Rural Life Museum, 2012. Photo by author.

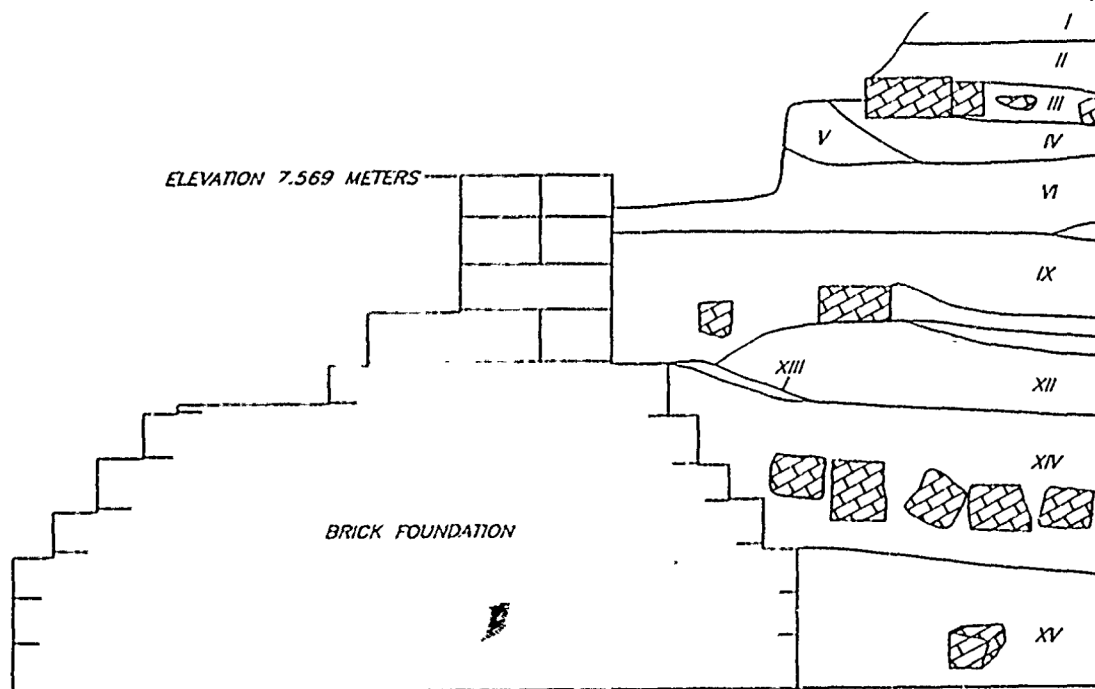


Figure 2-18. Schematic drawing of the structural footing at the Ashland warehouse. Christopher R. Goodwin. *Significance Assessment of 16AN26, New River Bend Revetment, Ascension Parish, Louisiana, Final Report*. New Orleans: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, December 1989, 46.



Figure 2-19. Marie Adrien Persac. Detail from *Norman's Chart of the Lower Mississippi River*. New Orleans: B.M. Norman, 1858. Library of Congress, American Memory, Map Collections.

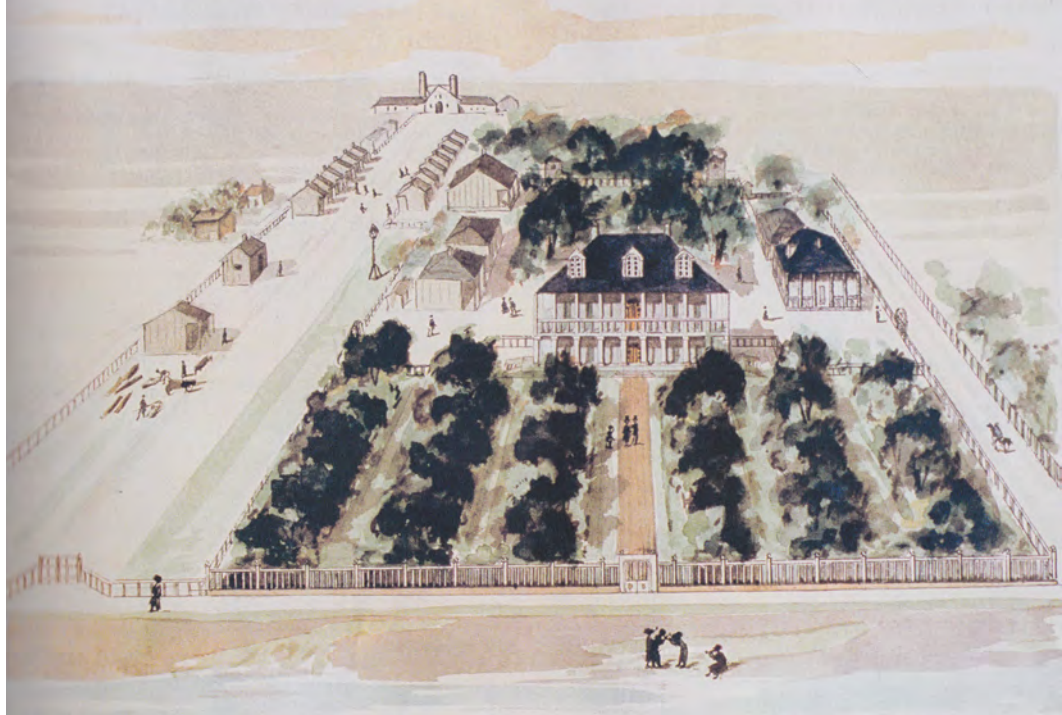


Figure 2-20. Father Joseph Paret, *Dwelling of Edg. Labranche and Widow Dame Norbert Fortier, St. Charles, Louisiana*. Marcel Boyer and Jay D. Edwards. *Plantations by the River: Watercolor Paintings from St. Charles Parish, Louisiana by Father Joseph M. Paret, 1859*. Baton Rouge: The Fred B. Kniffen Cultural Resource Laboratory Monograph Series, No. 4, 2001, Plate 10.

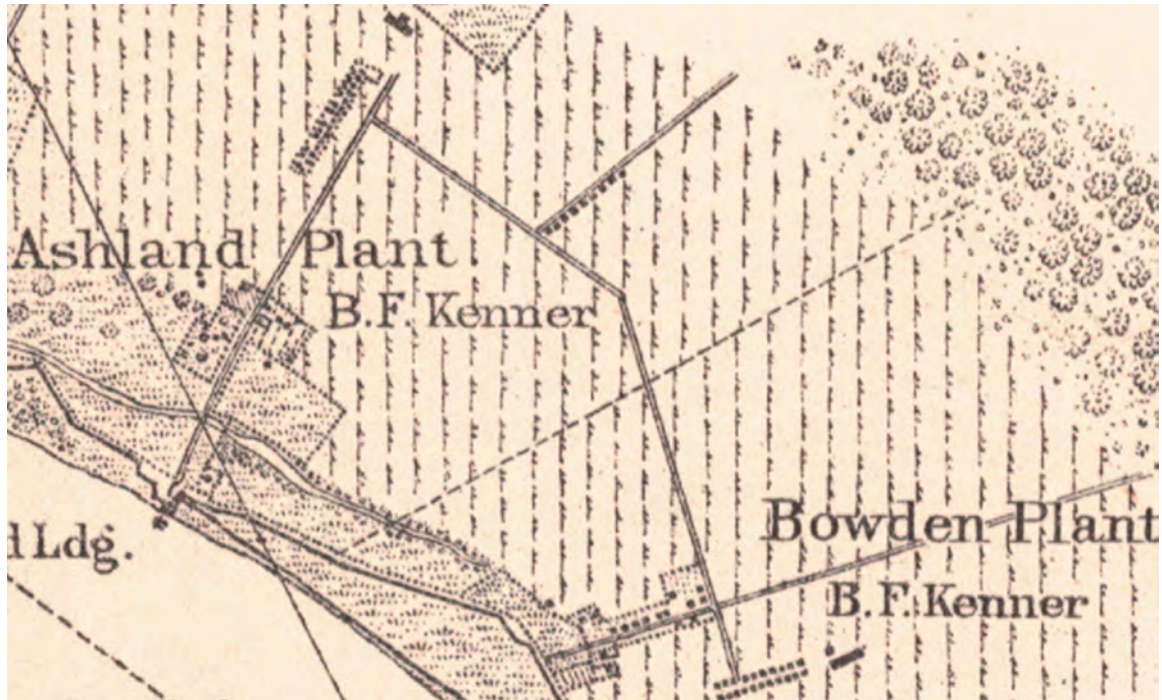


Figure 2-21. Plantation Layout: Ashland and Bowden. Author's adaptation to *A Preliminary Map of the Lower Mississippi River from the Mouth of the Ohio River to the Head of the Passes: Donaldsonville*. Mississippi River Commission, 1884-1885, Map 26. Courtesy of Murray Hudson, Halls, TN.

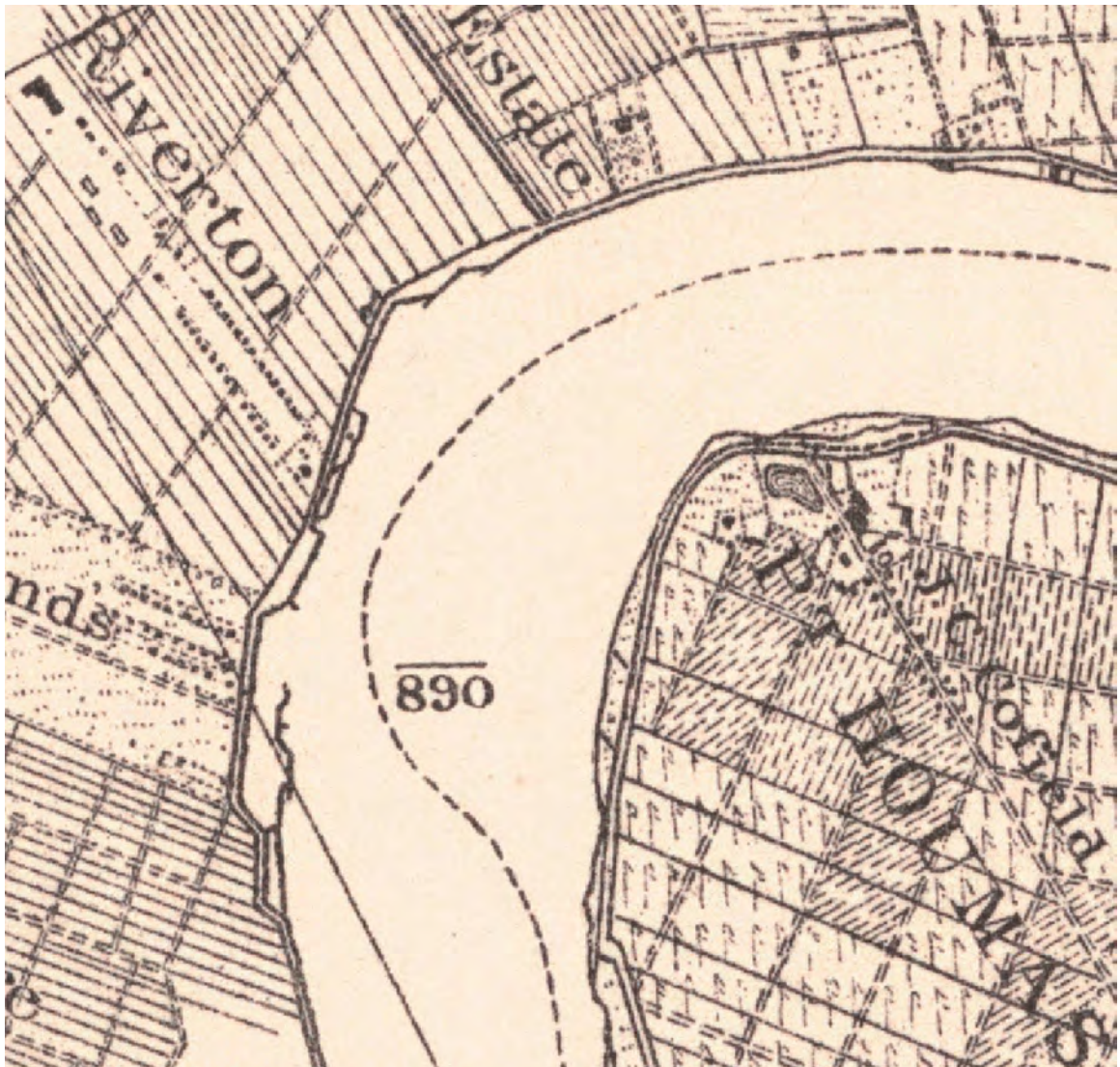


Figure 2-22. Plantation Layout: Riverton and Point Houmas. Author's adaptation to *A Preliminary Map of the Lower Mississippi River from the Mouth of the Ohio River to the Head of the Passes: Donaldsonville*. Mississippi River Commission, 1884-1885, Map 26. Courtesy of Murray Hudson, Halls, TN.

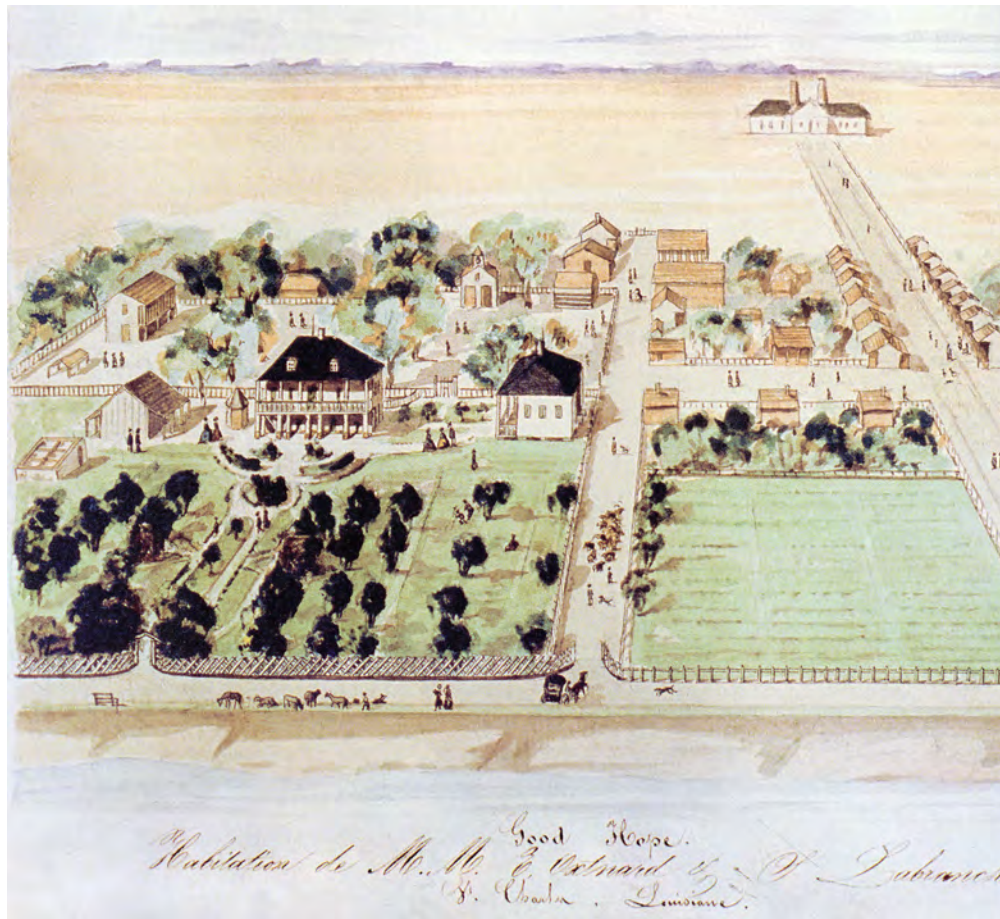


Figure 2-23. Father Joseph Paret, *Good Hope, Home of E. Oxnard and S. Labranche, St. Charles, Louisiana*. Boyer and Edwards. *Plantations by the River*. Plate 11.



Figure 2-24. Marie Adrien Persac, Detail from *Riverlake Sugarhouse*, c. 1860. Bacot, Bacot, Reeves, Magill, and Lawrence. *Marie Adrien Persac*, 71.

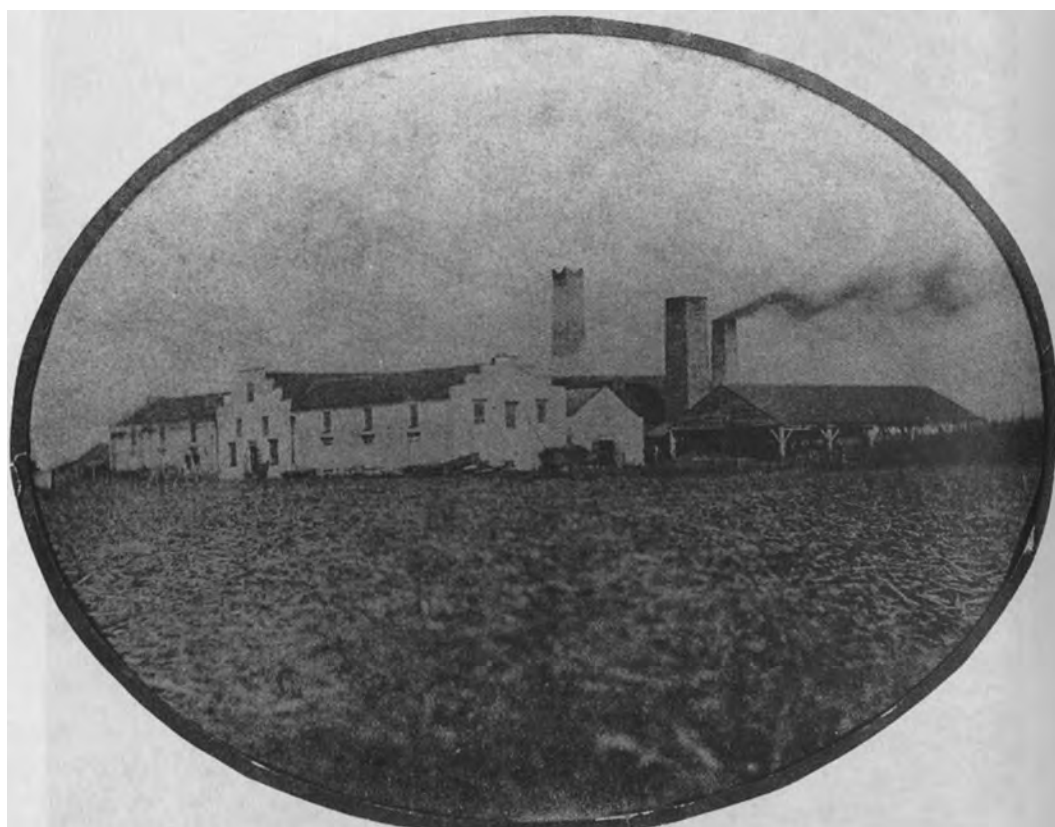


Figure 2-25. Undated photograph of the Ashland sugarhouse. Bauer. *A Leader Among Peers: The Life and Times of Duncan Farrar Kenner*, 162.

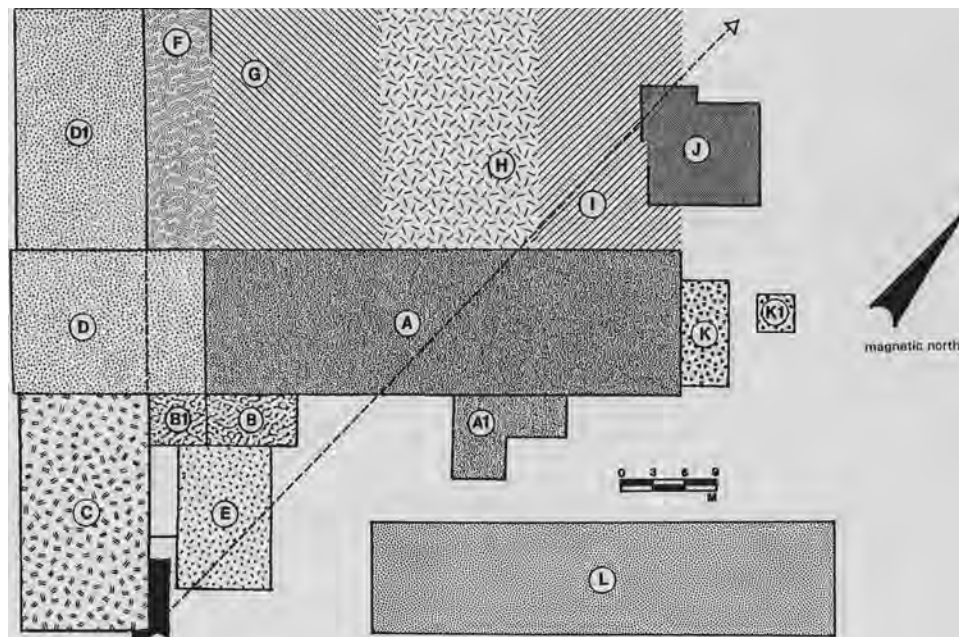


Figure 2-26. Simplified schematic drawing of Ashland Sugarhouse. Yakubik, et. al., *Archaeological Data Recovery at Ashland-Belle Helene Plantation, Volume III: Investigations at the Sugar House*, 1993, Figure 5-1.

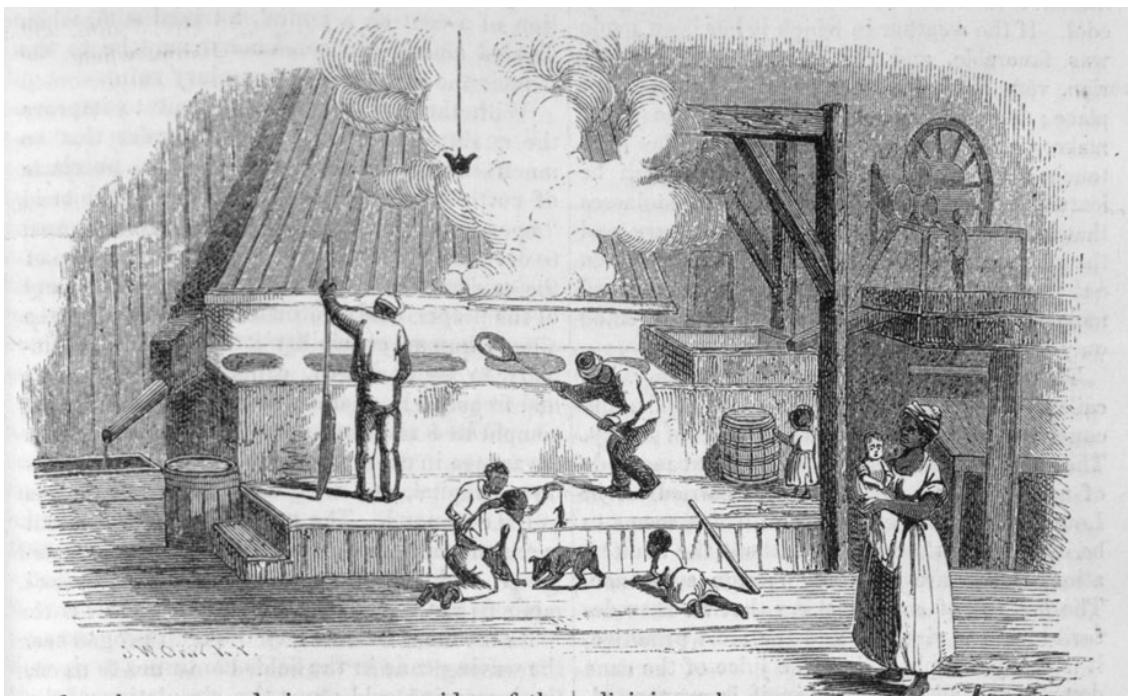


Figure 2-27. *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* (1853), vol. 9, p. 765. Image Reference HW9-675, as shown on www.slaveryimages.org, compiled by Jerome Handler and Michael Tuite, and sponsored by the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities and the University of Virginia Library.

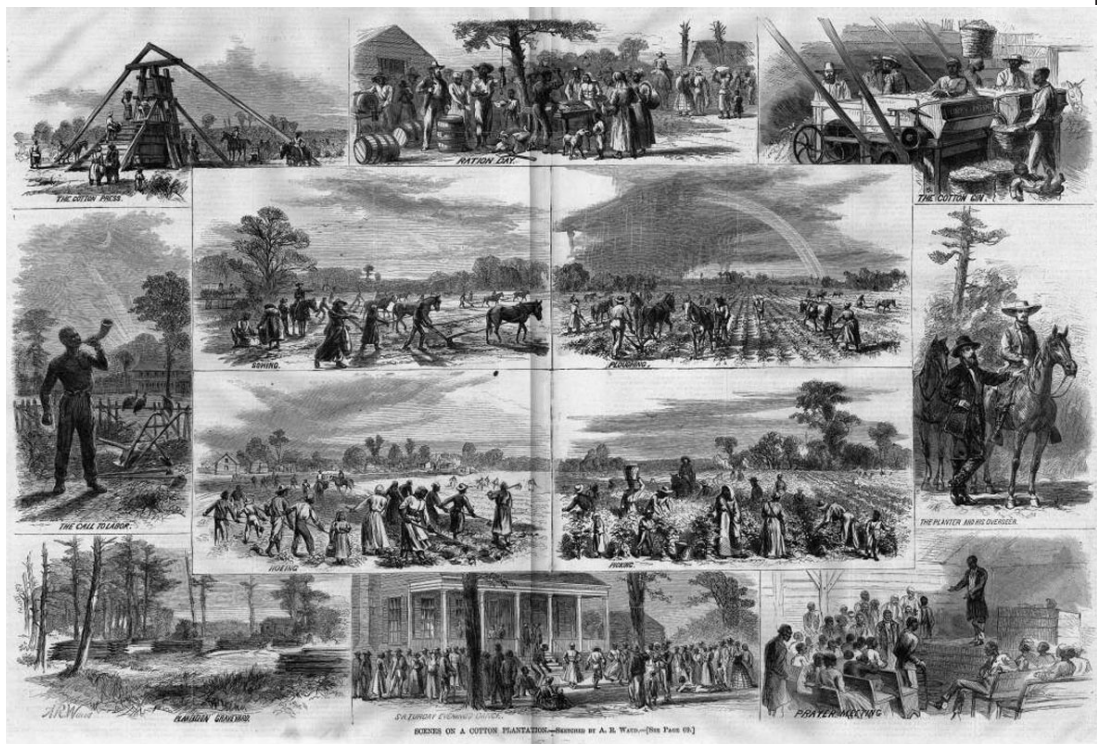


Figure 2-30. *Harper's Weekly*, February 2, 1867, pp. 72-73. Image Reference HW0053, as shown on www.slaveryimages.org, compiled by Jerome Handler and Michael Tuite, and sponsored by the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities and the University of Virginia Library.



Figure 2-31. *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* (1853-54), vol. 8, p. 456. Image Reference NW0073, as shown on www.slaveryimages.org, compiled by Jerome Handler and Michael Tuite, and sponsored by the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities and the University of Virginia Library.

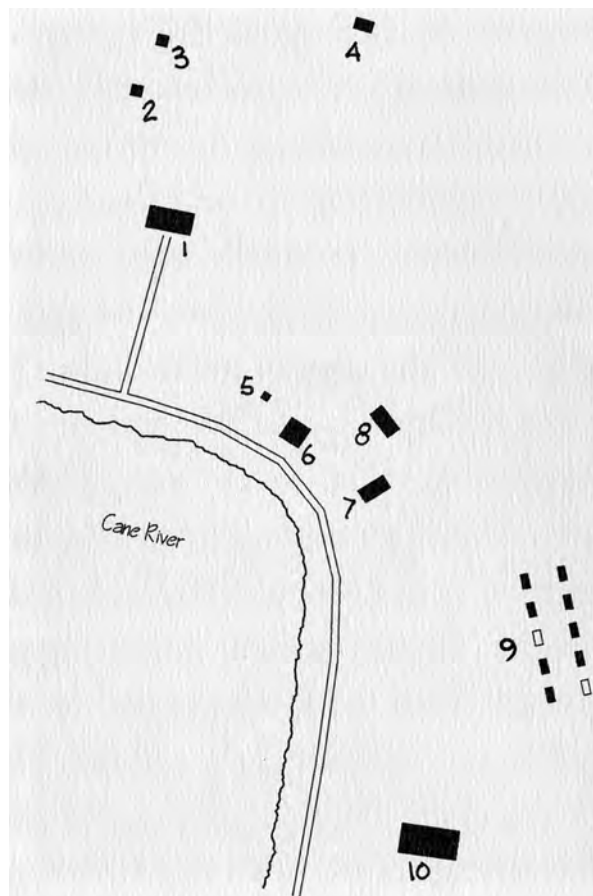


FIGURE 3 Magnolia plantation, Natchitoches Parish, mid-nineteenth century, plan. A double row of cabins, with both rows facing the Cane River, parallels the waterway in the lateral plan. Most of the buildings, including eight of the ten cabins, remain. Key: 1, house; 2, fattening pen; 3, privy; 4, corncrib; 5, *pigeonnier*; 6, small barn (blacksmith shop); 7, store; 8, hospital; 9, quarters; 10, cotton gin. Not to scale.

Figure 2-32. Lateral Plan: Magnolia Plantation, Natchitoches Parish, Louisiana. Bascot and Poesch, *Louisiana Buildings*, 91.

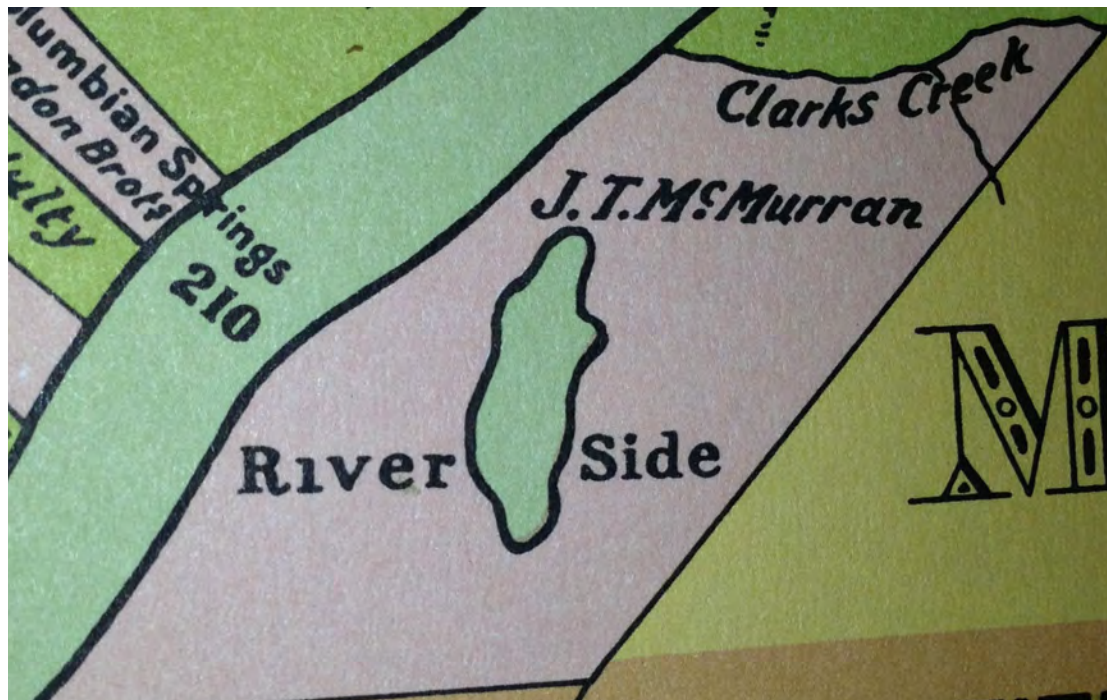


Figure 2-33. Marie Adrien Persac. Detail from *Norman's Chart of the Lower Mississippi River*. Library of Congress, American Memory, Map Collections.



Figure 2-34. *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* (1853-54), vol. 8, p. 457. Image Reference NW0074, as shown on www.slaveryimages.org, compiled by Jerome Handler and Michael Tuite, and sponsored by the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities and the University of Virginia Library.



Figure 2-35. *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* (1853-54), vol. 8, p. 459. Image Reference NW0075, as shown on www.slaveryimages.org, compiled by Jerome Handler and Michael Tuite, and sponsored by the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities and the University of Virginia Library.

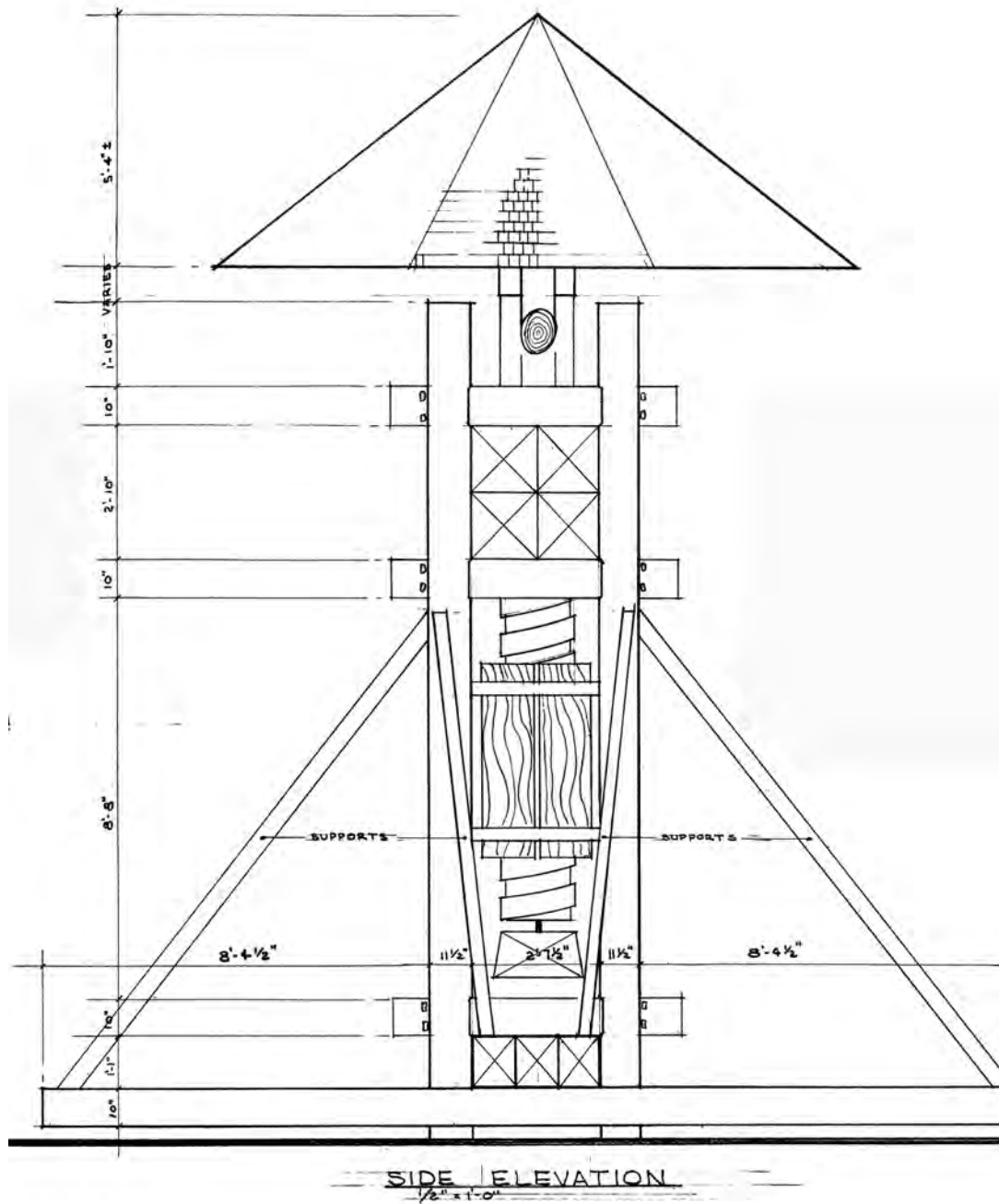


Figure 2-36. Side Elevation, Norfleet Plantation Cotton Press, Tarboro, Edgecombe County, NC. Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) NC 33-Tarb-2 (sheet 3 of 3) Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Online



Figure 2-37. *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* (1853-54), vol. 8, p. 460. Image Reference NW0076, as shown on www.slaveryimages.org, compiled by Jerome Handler and Michael Tuite, and sponsored by the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities and the University of Virginia Library.



Figure 2-38. Cotton Gin and Press Building, North and West Elevations, Magnolia Plantation, Natchitoches Parish, LA. Historic American Engineering Record (HAER) LA 35 NATCH.V 3-1, Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Online

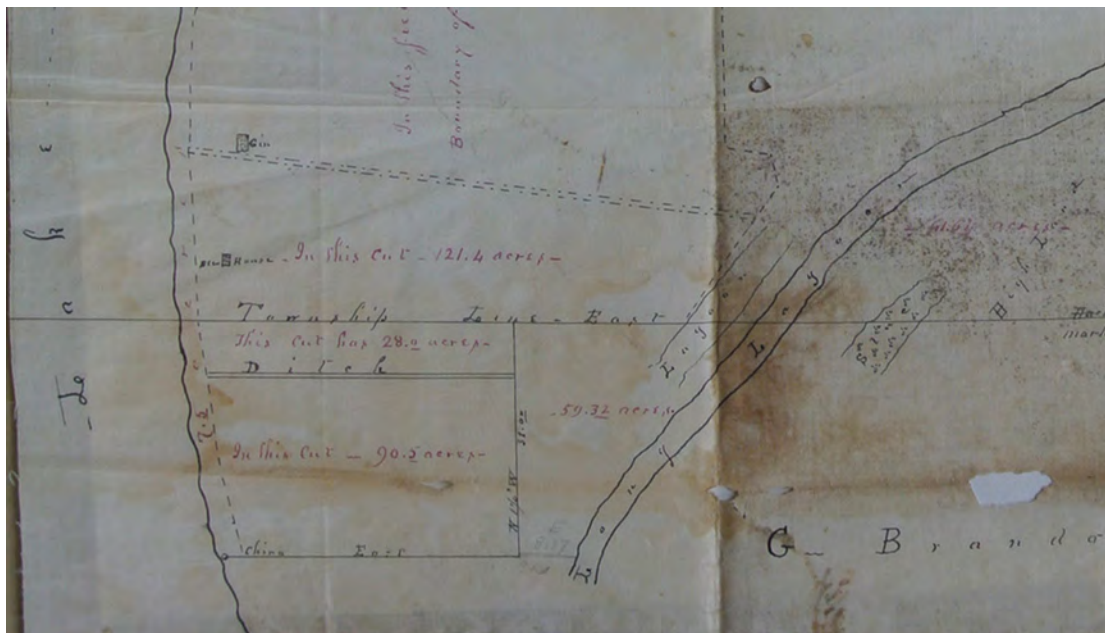


Figure 2-39. New House and Gin on Killarney Plantation, Concordia Parish, LA. Lemuel Parker Conner and Family Papers, OS C Folder 3-4, Louisiana Lower Mississippi Valley Collection, Louisiana State University Libraries



Figure 2-40. John Antrobus. *Plantation Burial*, 1860. Artstor.org.



Figure 2-41. "An old-time brush arbor." Maude Reid Scrapbook 12 (MR12 275) Department of Archives and Special Collections, McNeese State University. Accessed from louisdl.louisianalibraries.org.

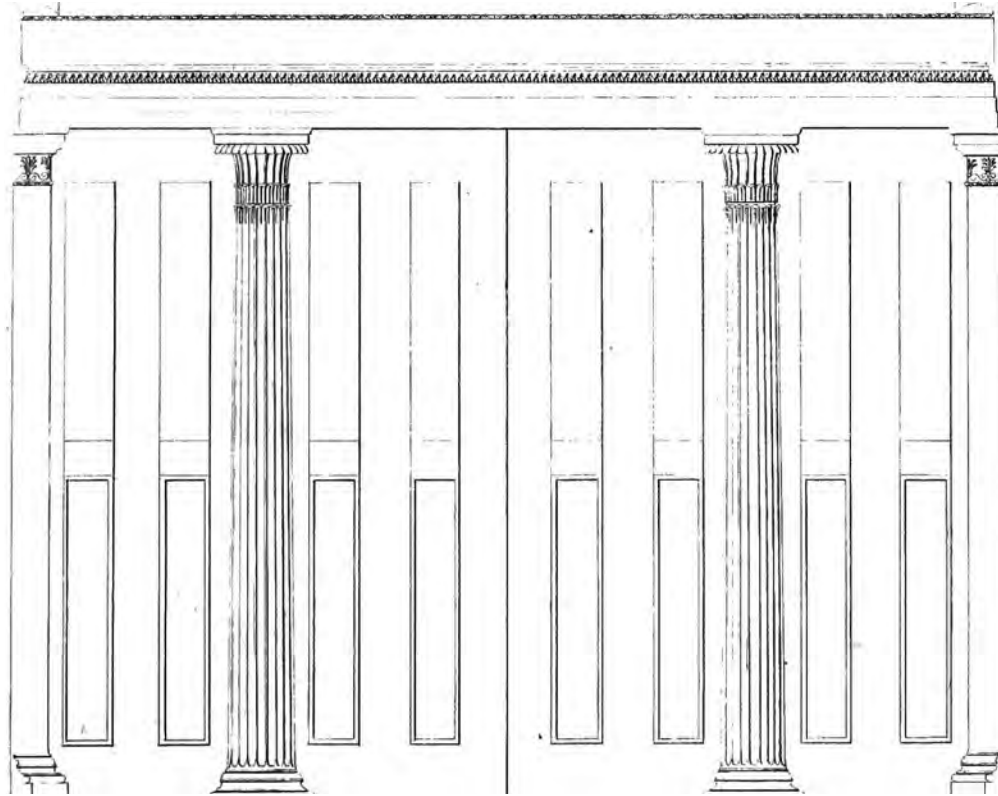


Figure 3-1. Minard Lafever. Plate Thirteen: Sliding Doors. *The Beauties of Modern Architecture*. New York: D. Appleton, 1849 edition.

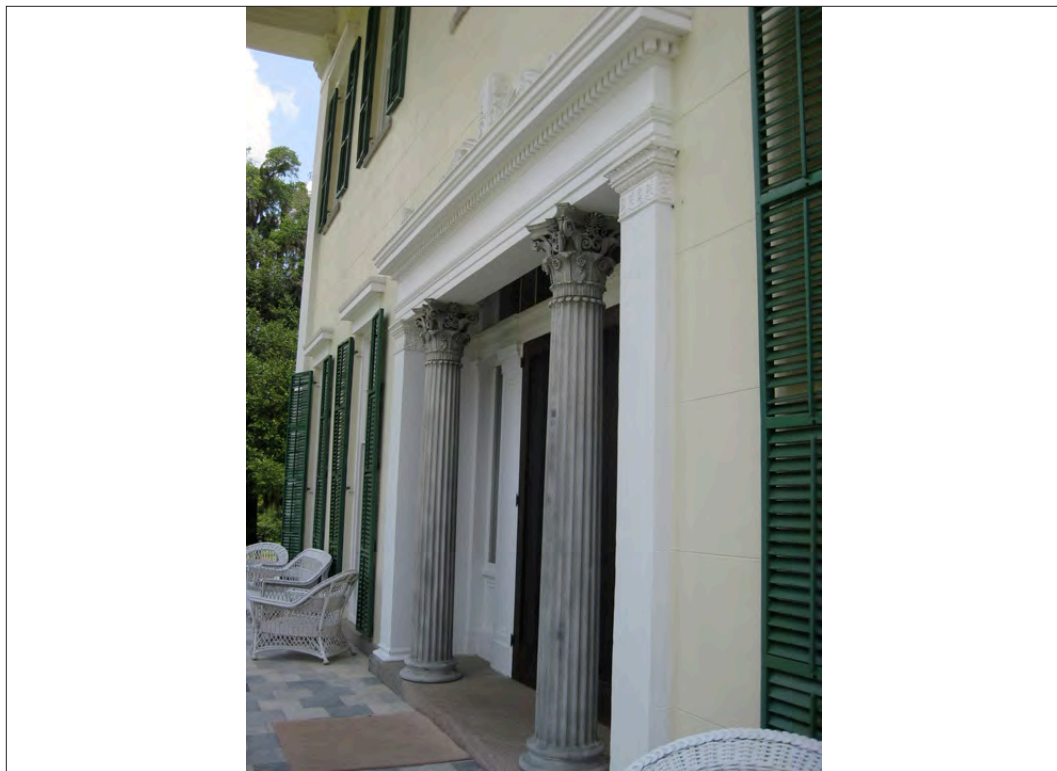


Figure 3-2. Detail of Front Door. Millford, Pinewood, SC, 2009. Photo by author.



Figure 3-3. Double Parlor. Millford, Pinewood, SC, 2009. Photo by author.

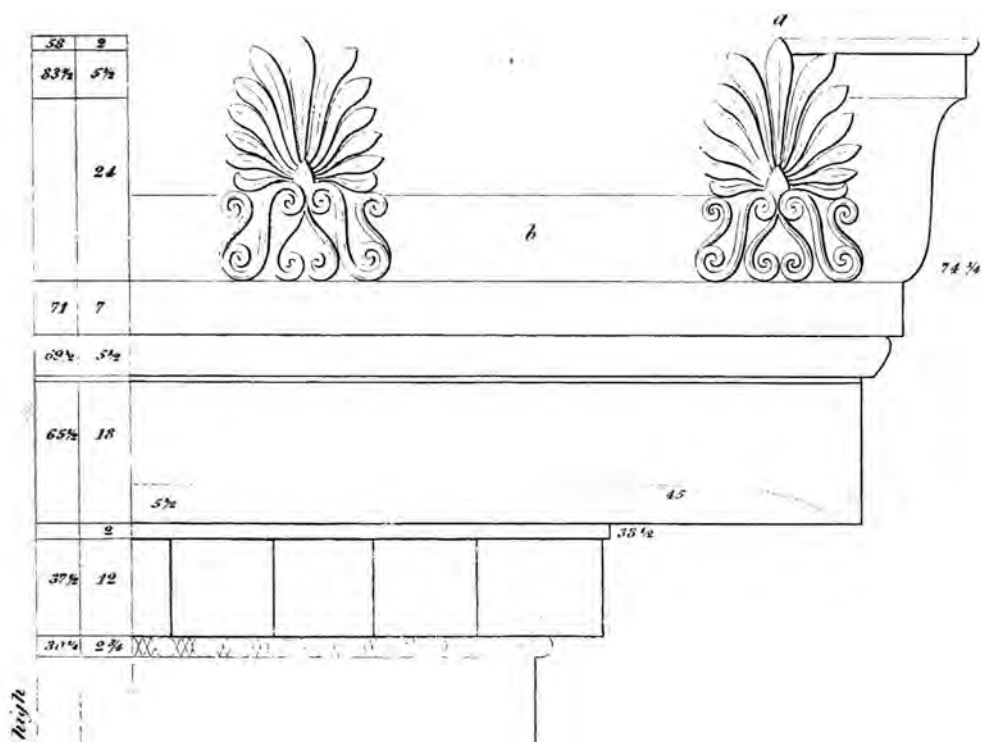


Figure 3-4. Minard Lafever. Plate Twelve: Entablature. *The Beauties of Modern Architecture*.

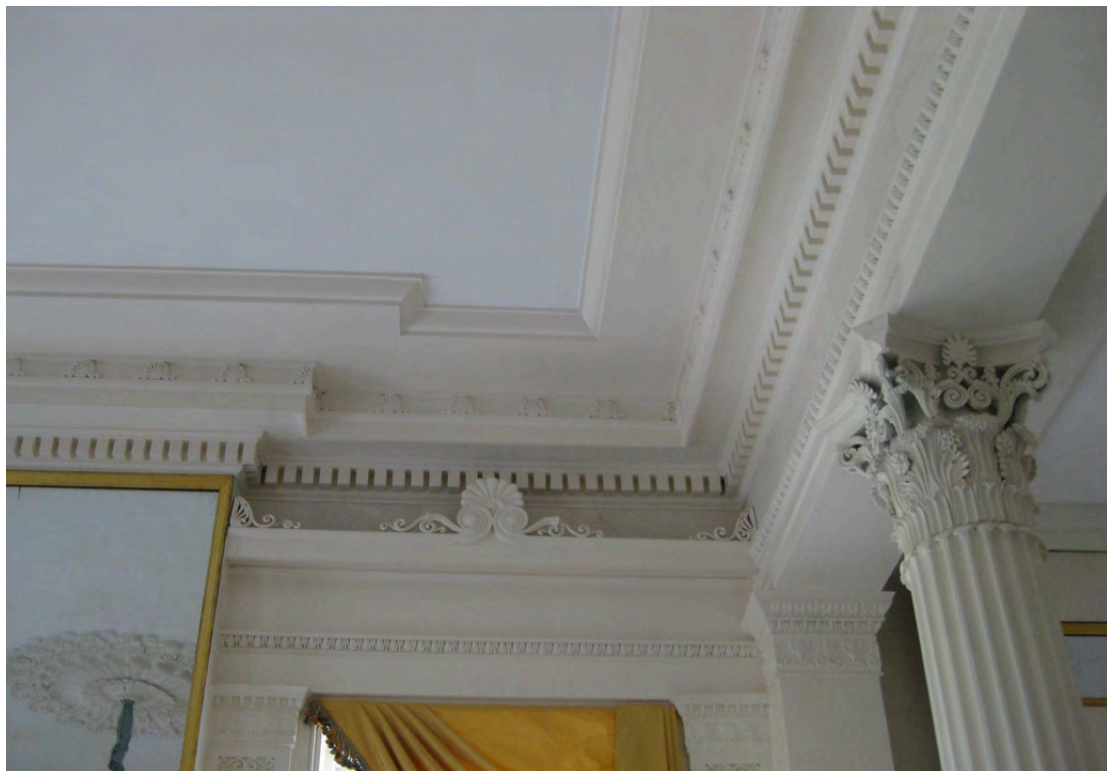


Figure 3-5. Double Parlor Cornice. Millford, Pinewood, SC, 2009. Photo by author.

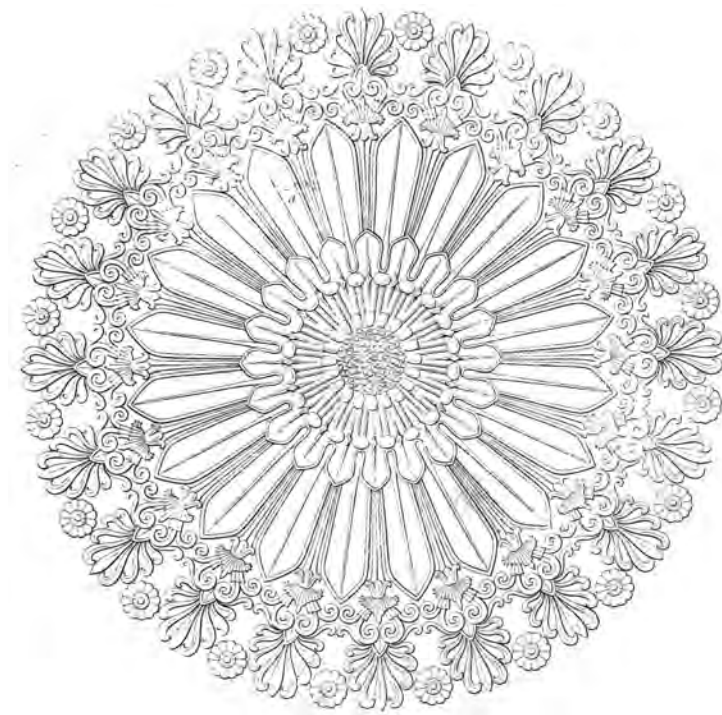


Figure 3-6. Minard Lafever. Plate Twenty-One: Design for a Centre Flower. *The Beauties of Modern Architecture*.



Figure 3-7. Double Parlor Ceiling Rosette. Millford, Pinewood, SC, 2009. Photo by author.

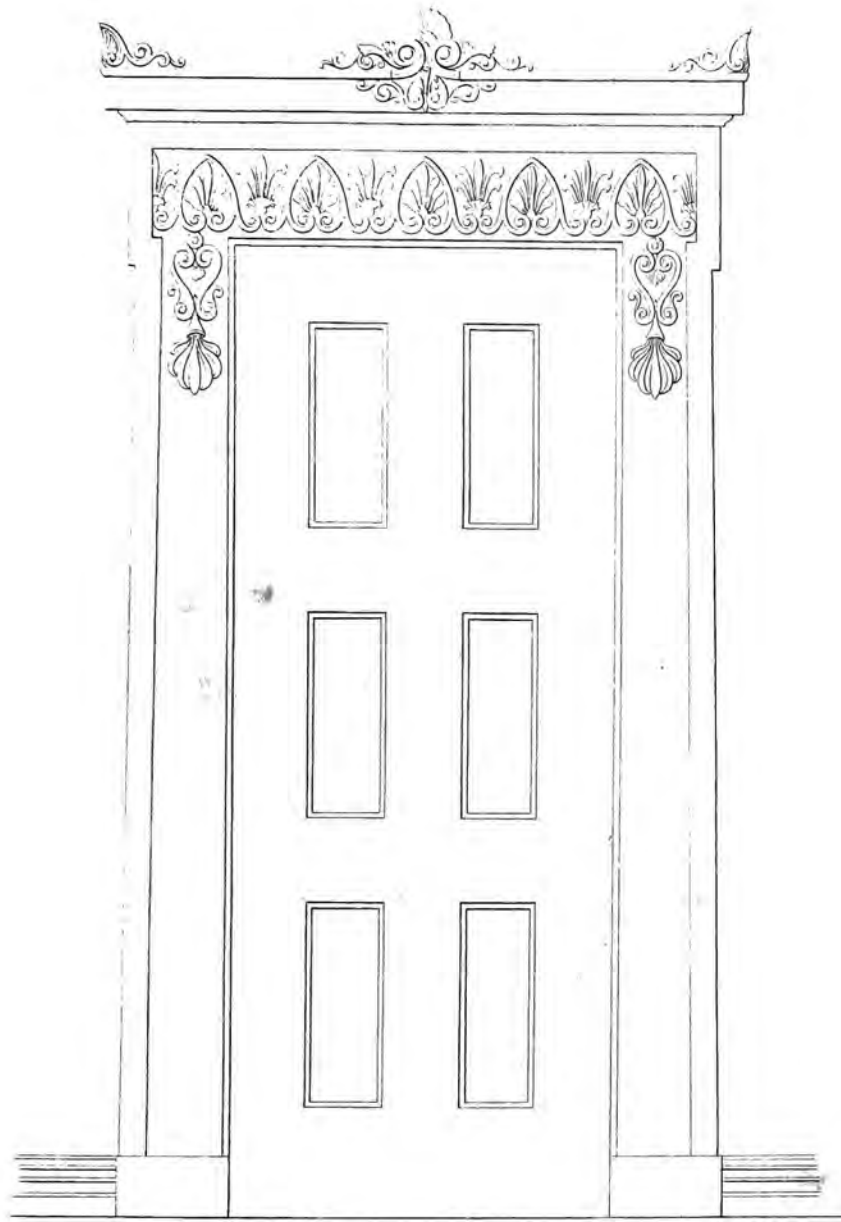


Figure 3-8. Minard Lafever. Plate Nineteen: Parlour Door. *The Beauties of Modern Architecture*.



Figure 3-9. Hall Doorway. Millford, Pinewood, SC, 2009. Photo by author.



Figure 3-10. Melrose. Author's adaptation to Charles W. Babbitt, Map of the City of Natchez and Suburbs, Adams County, Mississippi, 1891. Randolph Delehanty. *Classic Natchez*. Savannah and New Orleans: Martin-St. Martin, 1996, 51.

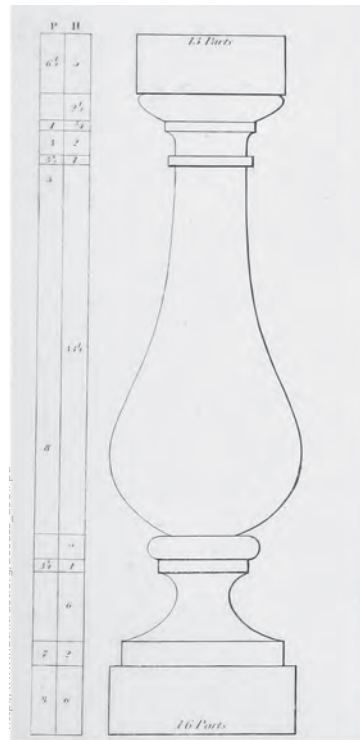


Figure 3-11. Asher Benjamin. Example from Plate Twenty-Five: Balusters. *The Architect: or Practical House Carpenter*. Boston: B.B. Mussy, 1841.



Figure 3-12. Monitor with Asher Benjamin-inspired balusters. Melrose, Natchez, MS, 2009. Photo by author.

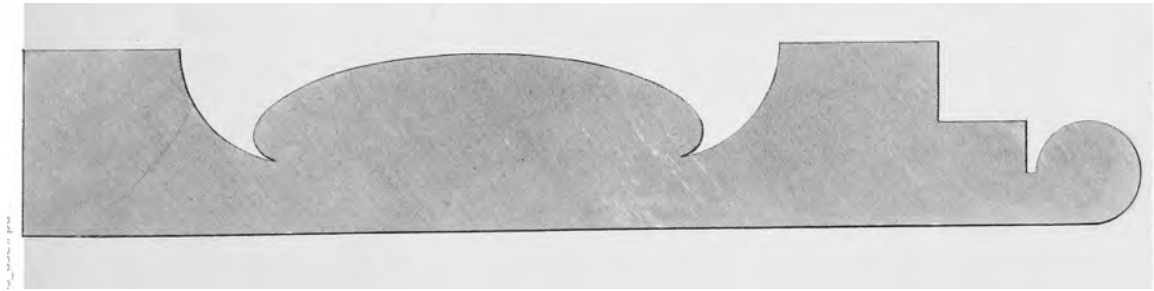


Figure 3-13. Asher Benjamin. Example from Plate Forty-Seven: Architraves. *The Architect: or Practical House Carpenter*.



Figure 3-14. Detail of Dining Room Window. Melrose, Natchez, MS, 2009. Photo by author.



Figure 3-15. General View of Drawing Room through Parlor to Library. Melrose, Natchez, MS. Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) MS-61-A-33, Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Online

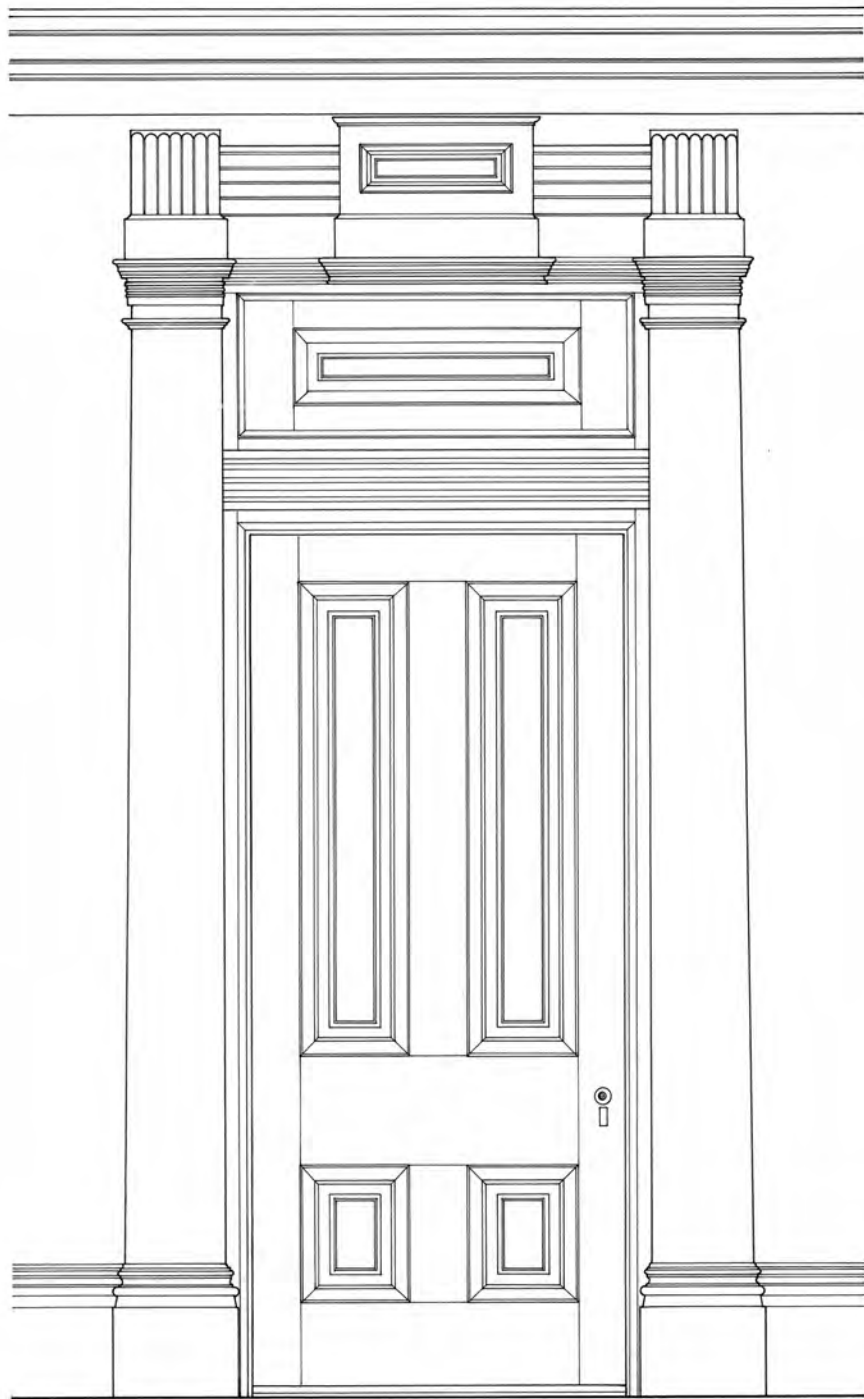


Figure 3-16. Door from Central Hall into Dining Room and Drawing Room. Melrose, Natchez, MS. Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) MISS 1 NATCH.V, 12A- (sheet 20 of 22), Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Online

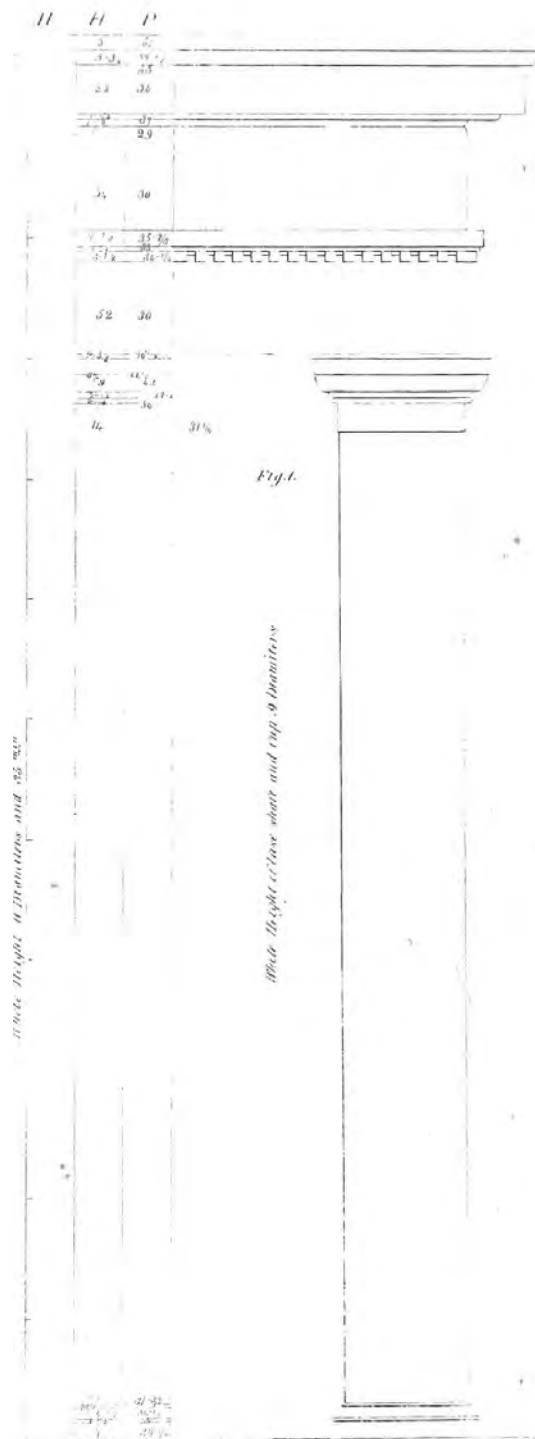


Figure 3-17. Minard Lafever. Plate Twenty-Two: Anta and Entablature. *The Beauties of Modern Architecture*.



Figure 3-18. Front Door. Ashland, Ascension Parish, LA, 2009. Photo by author.



Figure 3-19. Window Surround. Ashland, Ascension Parish, LA, 2009. Photo by author.



Figure 3-20. Detail of Corinthian Column at Millford, Pinewood, SC, 2009. Photo by author.

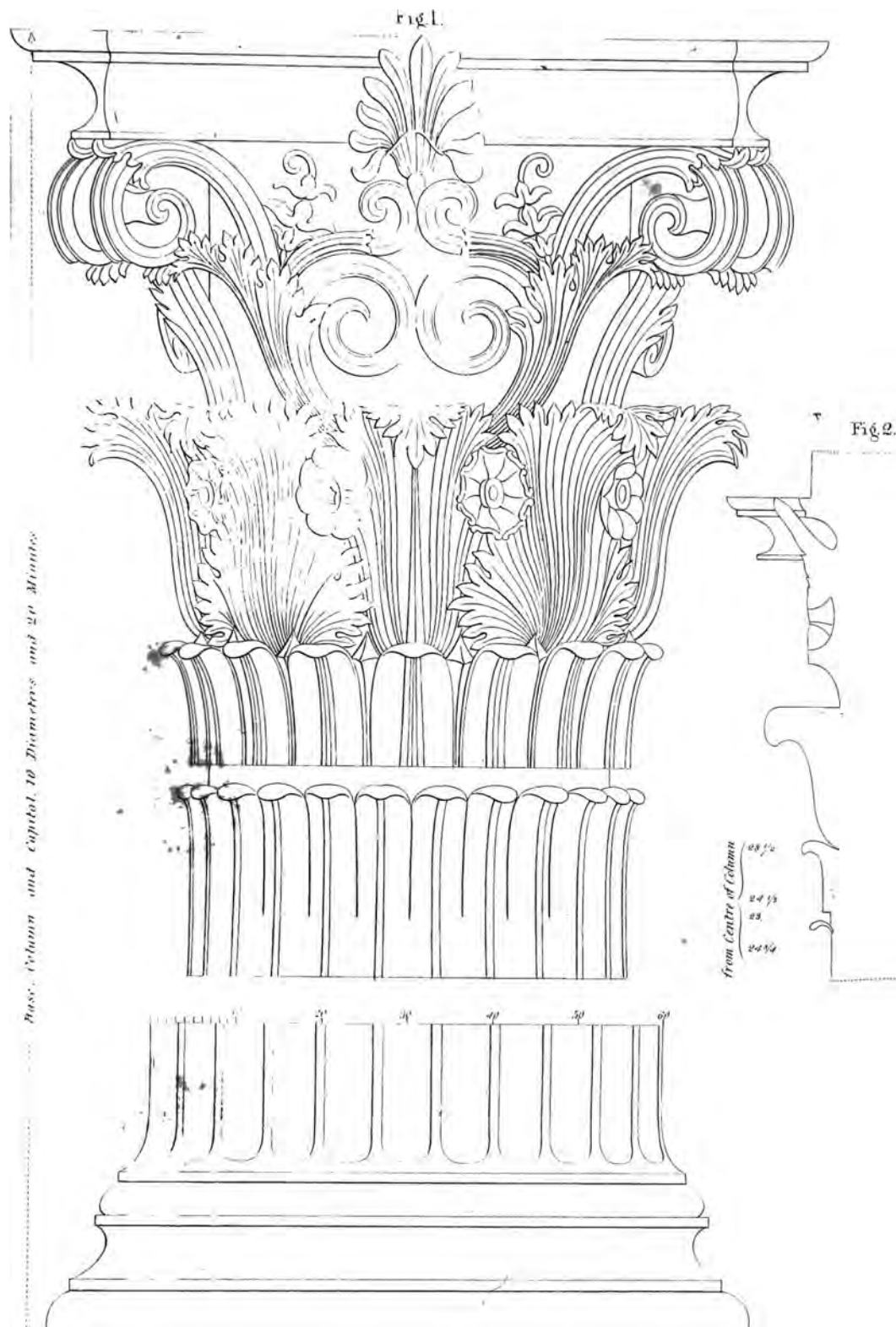


Figure 3-21. Minard Lafever. Plate Forty-Three: Corinthian Order. *The Beauties of Modern Architecture*.



Figure 3-22. Front Portico. Melrose, Natchez, MS, 2009. Photo by author.



Figure 3-23. Peripteral Gallery. Ashland, Ascension Parish, LA, 2009. Photo by author.



Figure 3-24. Founders' Hall, Girard College, Philadelphia, PA, 1838. Wainwright 155, Library Company of Philadelphia.

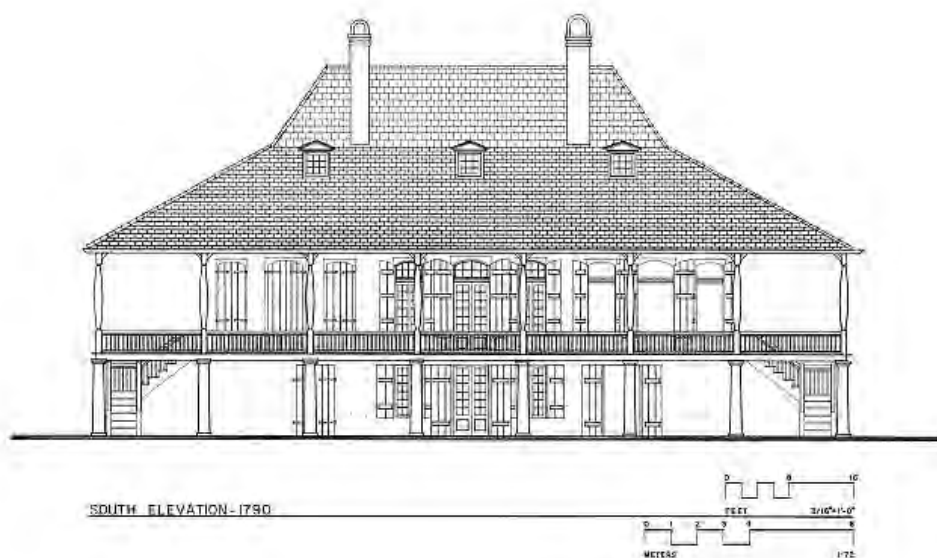


Figure 3-25. South Elevation, 1790. Destrehan, St. Charles Parish, LA. Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) LA 45 Dest 1 (sheet 6 of 37), Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Online

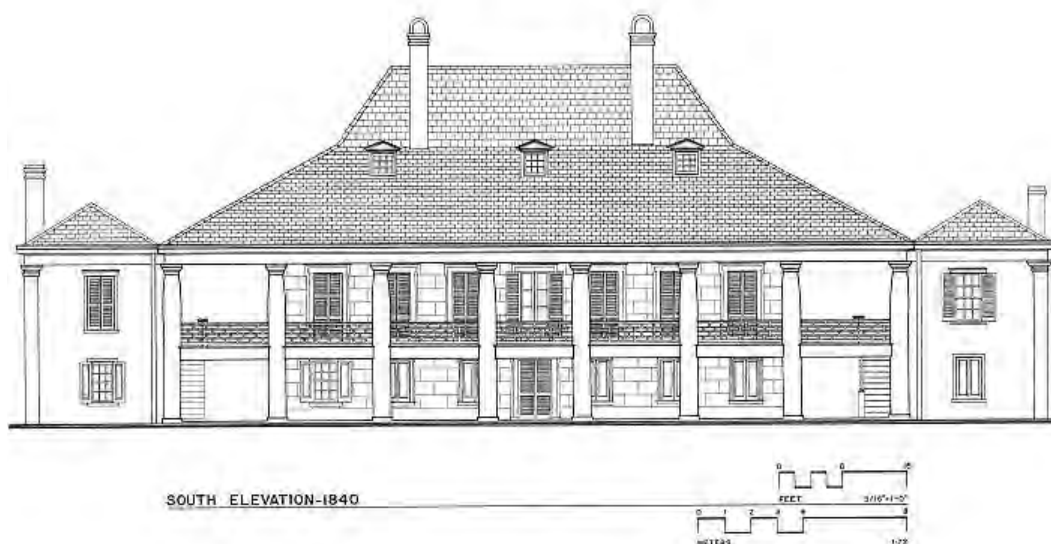


Figure 3-26. South Elevation, 1840. Destrehan, St. Charles Parish, LA. Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) LA 45 Dest 1 (sheet 15 of 37), Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Online



Figure 3-27. Front Elevation. Uncle Sam Plantation, St. James Parish, LA, 1937. Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) LA 47 CONV V 1--2, Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Online



Figure 3-28. Oak Alley Plantation, St. James Parish, LA. Flickr.

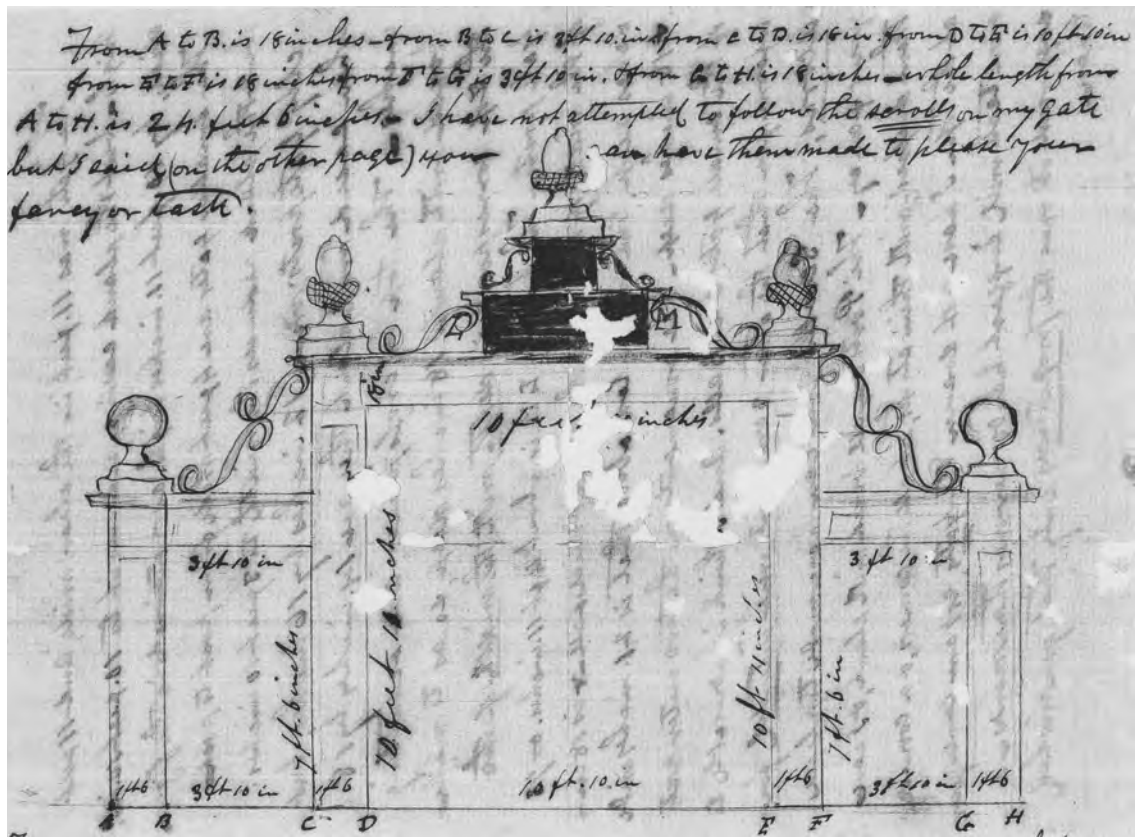


Figure 3-29. Nathaniel Potter. Sketch of Millford Gate. Williams Chesnut Manning Papers Legal, Folder 19, South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina



Figure 3-30. Millford Gate, Pinewood, SC, 2009. Photo by author.



Figure 3-31. Porter's Lodge. Millford, Pinewood, SC, 2009. Photo by author.



Figure 3-32. Spring House. Millford, Pinewood, SC, 2009. Photo by author.

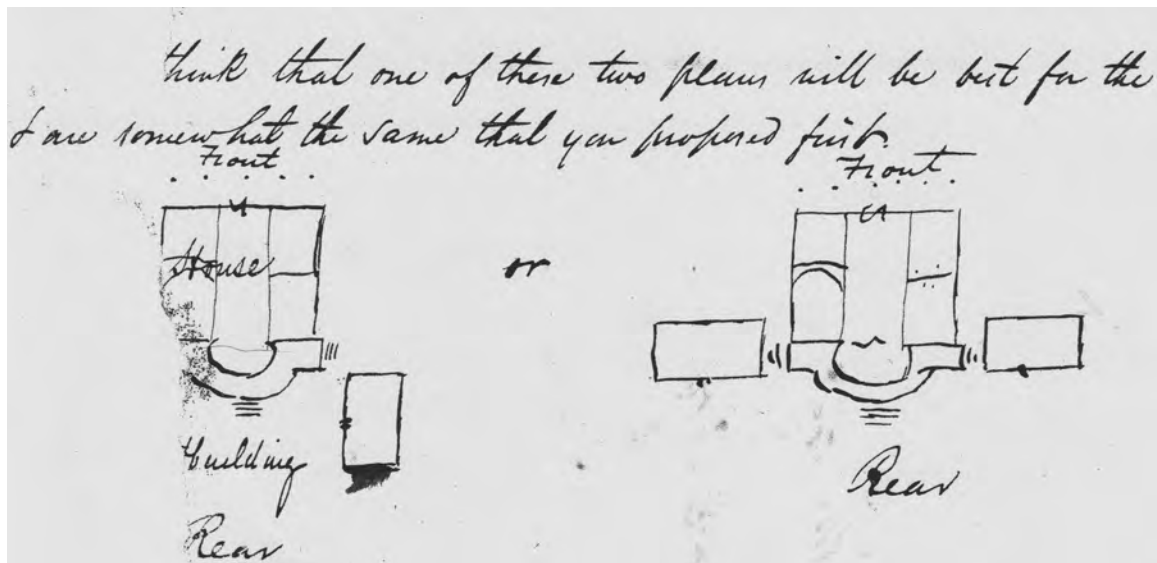


Figure 3-33. John L. Manning. Sketches of Millford Outbuildings. Williams Chesnut Manning Papers, Folder 89, South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina



Figure 3-34. Flanking Outbuilding. Millford, Pinewood, SC, 2009. Photo by author.

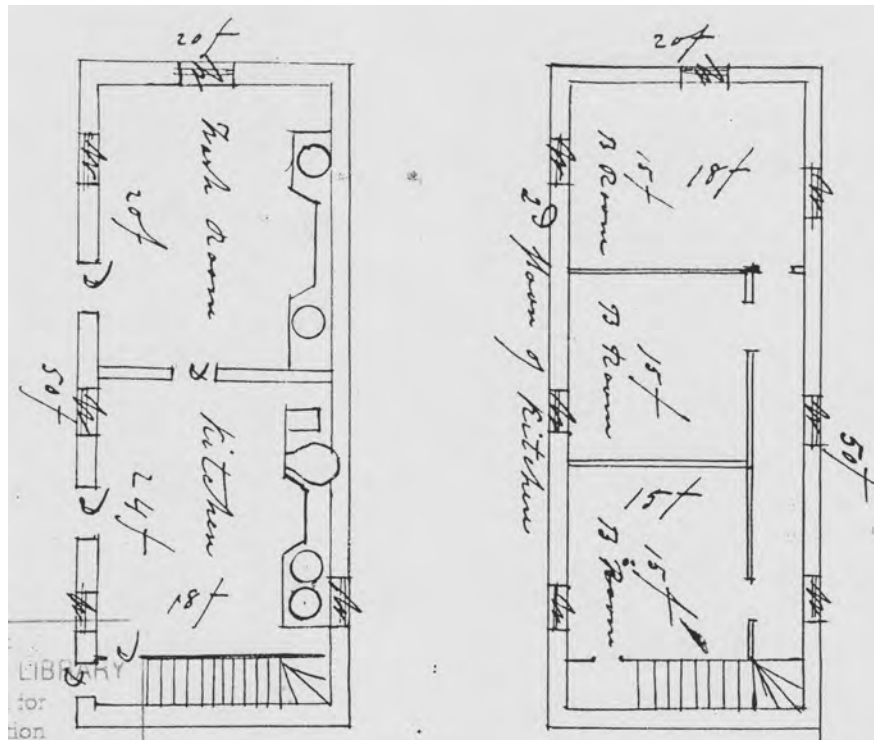


Figure 3-35. Nathaniel Potter. Plan for Millford Outbuilding. Williams Chesnut Manning Papers, Folder 86, South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina



Figure 3-36. Accessory Building/Ben Pleasant's House. Millford, Pinewood, SC. Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) SC 43 PINWO.V 1A-, Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Online



Figure 3-37. Stable. Millford, Pinewood, SC, 2009. Photo by author.



Figure 3-38. Kitchen, Cistern, and Smokehouse. Melrose, Natchez, MS, 2009. Photo by author.



Figure 3-39. Dairy. Melrose, Natchez, MS, 2009. Photo by author.



Figure 3-40. Cistern. Melrose, Natchez, MS, 2009. Photo by author.



Figure 3-41. Smokehouse. Melrose, Natchez, MS, 2009. Photo by author.



Figure 3-42. Courtyard Privy. Melrose, Natchez, MS, 2009. Photo by author.

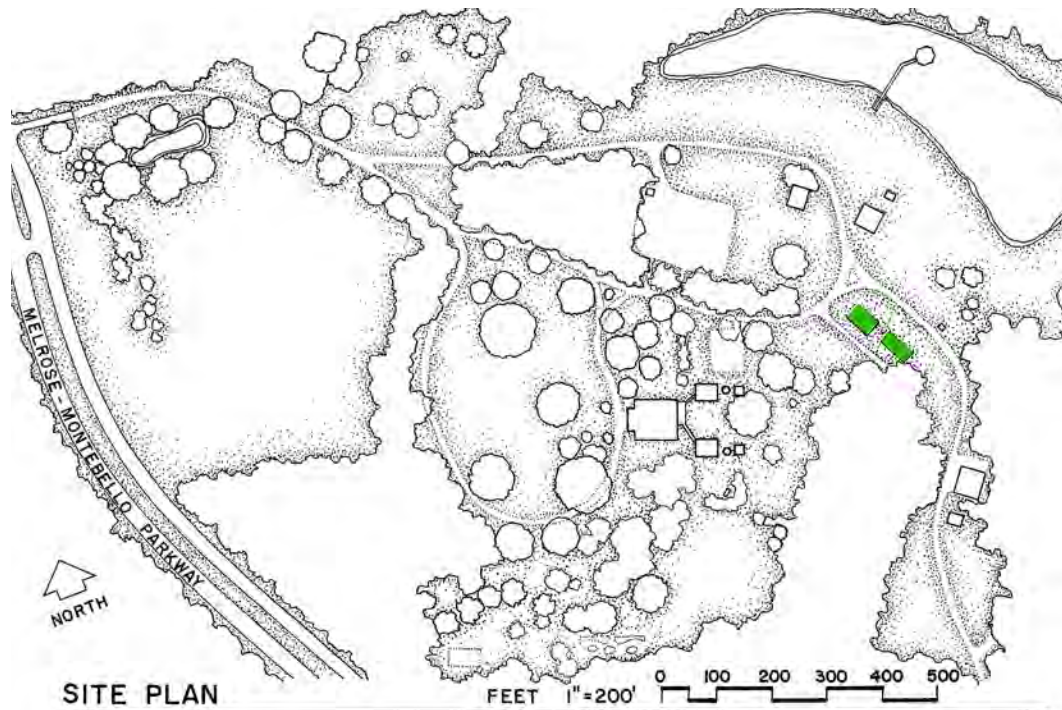


Figure 3-43. Author's adaptation to Melrose site plan, highlighting the location of the houses for enslaved people. Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) MISS 1-NATCH V 12 (sheet 2 of 2), Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Online



Figure 3-44. North and South Houses for Enslaved Domestic Workers. Melrose, Natchez, MS, 2009. Photo by author.



Figure 3-45. South House for Enslaved Domestic Workers. Melrose, Natchez, MS, 2009. Photo by author.



Figure 3-46. Privy for Enslaved People. Melrose, Natchez, MS, 2009. Photo by author.



Figure 3-47. Carriage House. Melrose, Natchez, MS, 2009. Photo by author.



Figure 3-48. Barn. Melrose, Natchez, MS, 2009. Photo by author.

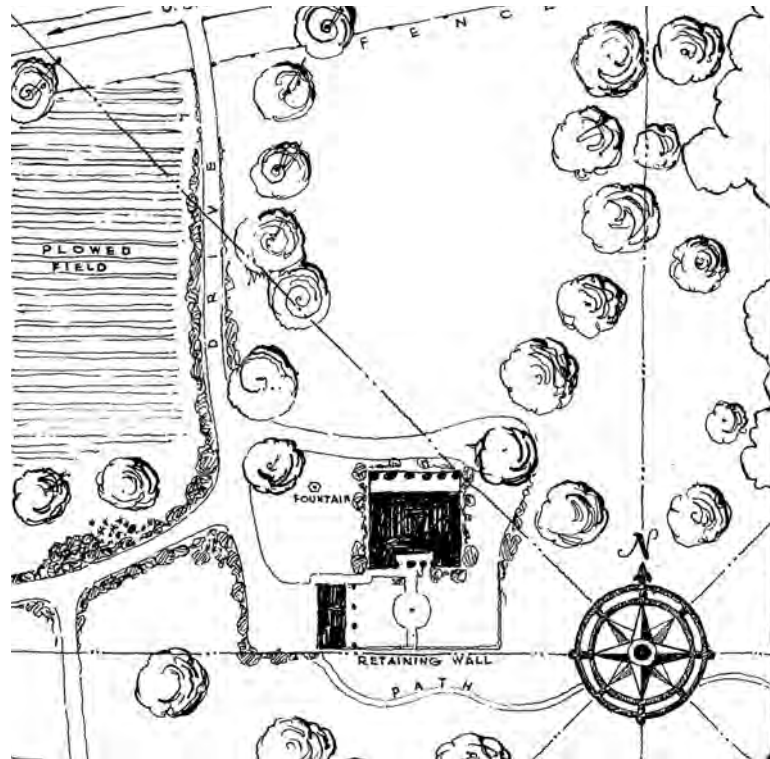


Figure 3-49. Site Plan. D'Evereux, Natchez, MS. Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) MISS 1 NATCH.V, 2- (sheet 0 of 7), Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Online

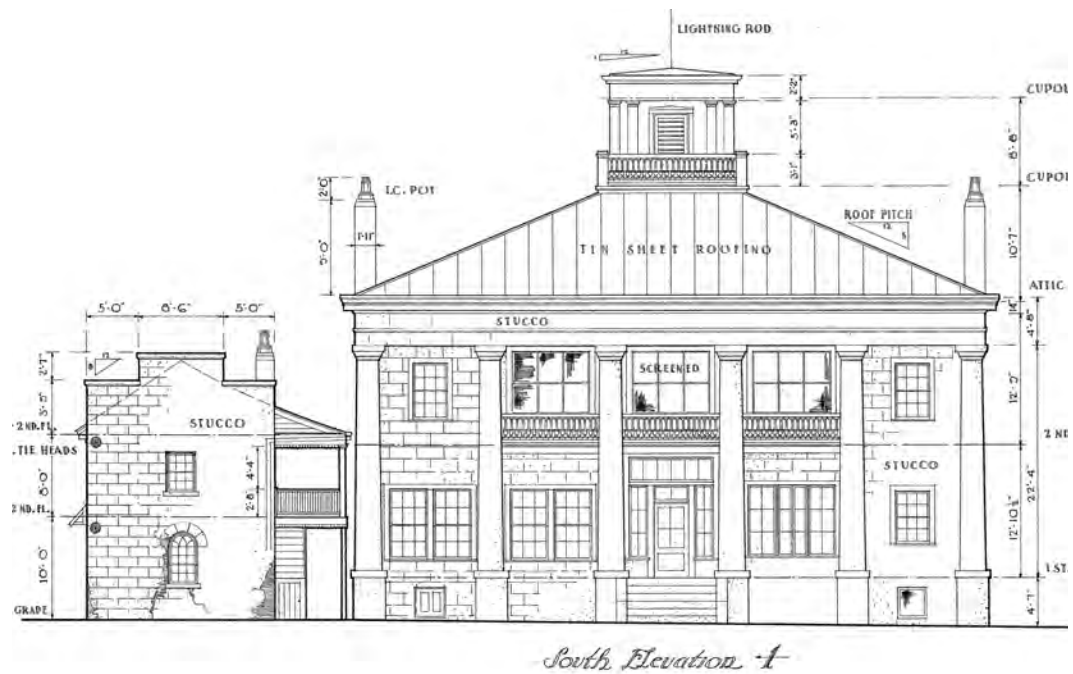


Figure 3-50. South Elevation. D'Evereux, Natchez, MS. Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) MISS 1 NATCH.V, 2- (sheet 5 of 7), Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Online



Figure 3-51. Cistern. Ashland, Ascension Parish, LA. Louisiana State Museum, louisdl.louisianalibraries.org.



Figure 3-52. Ashland and North Flanking Building. Ascension Parish, LA. Richard Koch, late 1920s. Babson, *Pillars on the Levee*, Figure 10.



Figure 3-53. North Flanking Building. Ashland, Ascension Parish, LA. Richard Koch, late 1920s. Babson, *Pillars on the Levee*, Figure 11.



Figure 3-54. Pigeonnier. Ashland, Ascension Parish, LA. Koch Collection. Williams Research Center, Historic New Orleans Collection.



Figure 3-55. Stable. Uncle Sam Plantation, St. James Parish, LA, 1940. Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) LA 47 CONV V 1--28, Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Online

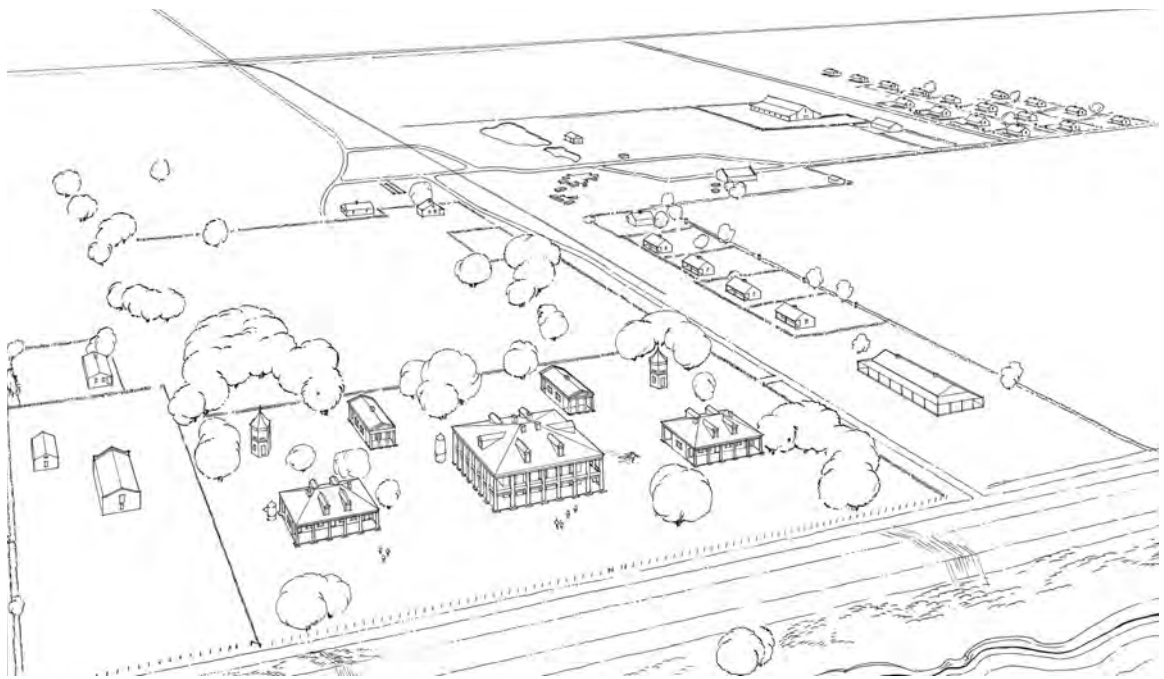


Figure 3-56. Site Plan. Uncle Sam Plantation, St. James Parish, LA. Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) LA 47 CONV V 1 (sheet 2 of 17), Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Online



Figure 3-57. South Garconniere. Uncle Sam Plantation, St. James Parish, LA. Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) LA 47 CONV V 1--14, Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Online



Figure 3-58. Hilliard House, Lawrence County, MS, c. 1840. Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Historic Sites Survey.



Figure 3-59. Hilliard House Smokehouse, Lawrence County, MS, c. 1840. Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Historic Sites Survey.



Figure 3-60. Houmas House, Ascension Parish, LA. wikipedia.org



Figure 3-61. C.J. Laughlin. *Cajun Girls*. Williams Research Center, Historic New Orleans Collection, 1983.47.4-695.



Figure 3-62. James Gallier, Sr., St. Charles Hotel, New Orleans, LA, 1837-1851. old-new-orleans.com



Figure 4-1. D. Phyfe and Son. Wardrobe, 1841. Mahogany, mahogany veneer. Kenny, Brown, Bretter, Thurlow. *Duncan Phyfe: Master Cabinetmaker in New York*, Appendix 2.8.



Figure 4-2. Gay, Lussac, and Noël Mirror. Drawing Room, Millford, Pinewood, SC, 2009. Photo by author.

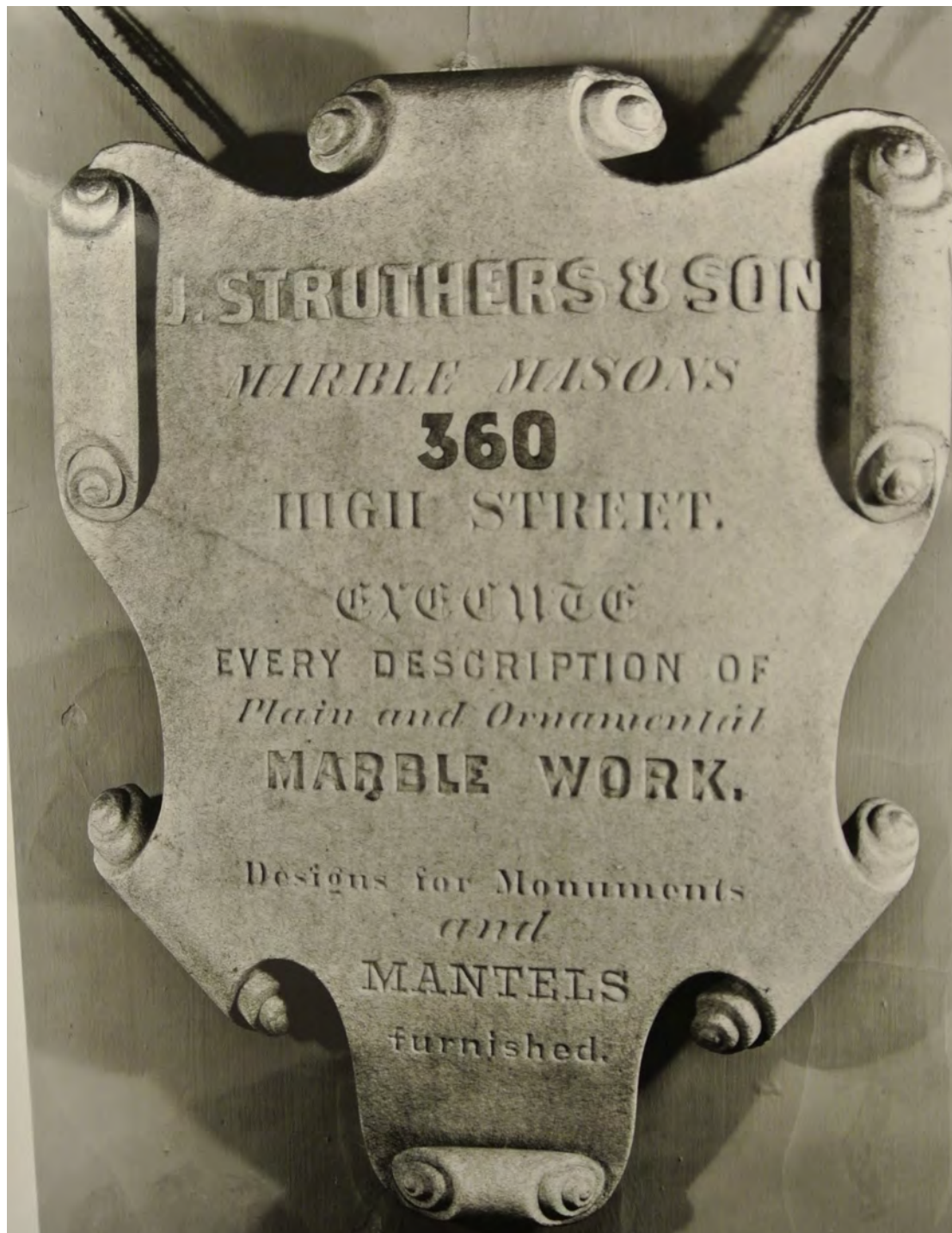


Figure 4-3. Advertising Plaque, J. Struthers and Sons, Marble Masons. Winterthur Library, Decorative Arts Photographic Collection, Index of American Sculptors

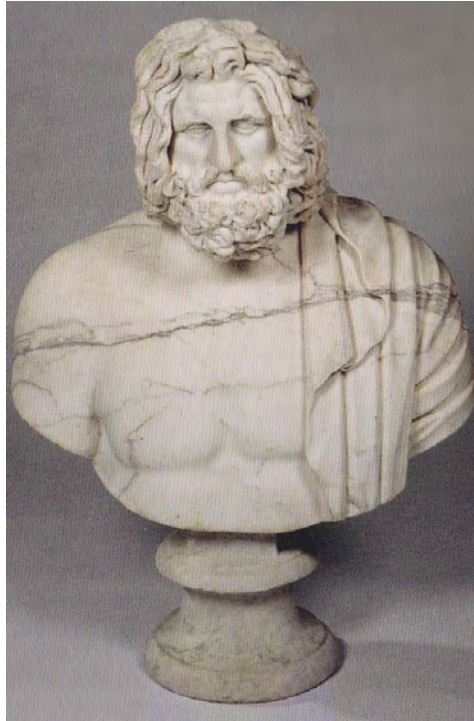


Figure 4-4. Unidentified artist. *Jupiter*. Roman head, 1st-3rd century; body, 18th century. Marble. Kenny, Brown, Bretter, Thurlow. *Duncan Phyfe: Master Cabinetmaker in New York*, 146.



Figure 4-5. Hayden and Gregg. Seven-Arm Candelabra. Drawing Room, Millford, Pinewood, SC, 2009. Photo by author.



Figure 4-6. Joseph Meeks and Sons. Center table. Mahogany. Melrose, Natchez, MS, 2009. Photo by author.

JOSEPH MECKE & SONS.
Manufacturers of Cabinet and Upholstery Articles
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No. 1—A Cherry Bedstead, with iron and brass, 10	No. 11—A Mahogany Chair, with seat and back, 21	No. 21—A Mahogany Bedstead, with iron and brass, 31	No. 31—A Mahogany Bedstead, with iron and brass, 41	No. 41—A Mahogany Bedstead, with iron and brass, 51	No. 51—A Mahogany Bedstead, with iron and brass, 61
No. 2—A Cherry Bedstead, with iron and brass, 11	No. 12—A Mahogany Chair, with seat and back, 22	No. 22—A Mahogany Bedstead, with iron and brass, 32	No. 32—A Mahogany Bedstead, with iron and brass, 42	No. 42—A Mahogany Bedstead, with iron and brass, 52	No. 52—A Mahogany Bedstead, with iron and brass, 62
No. 3—A Cherry Bedstead, with iron and brass, 12	No. 13—A Mahogany Chair, with seat and back, 23	No. 23—A Mahogany Bedstead, with iron and brass, 33	No. 33—A Mahogany Bedstead, with iron and brass, 43	No. 43—A Mahogany Bedstead, with iron and brass, 53	No. 53—A Mahogany Bedstead, with iron and brass, 63
No. 4—A Cherry Bedstead, with iron and brass, 13	No. 14—A Mahogany Chair, with seat and back, 24	No. 24—A Mahogany Bedstead, with iron and brass, 34	No. 34—A Mahogany Bedstead, with iron and brass, 44	No. 44—A Mahogany Bedstead, with iron and brass, 54	No. 54—A Mahogany Bedstead, with iron and brass, 64
No. 5—A Cherry Bedstead, with iron and brass, 14	No. 15—A Mahogany Chair, with seat and back, 25	No. 25—A Mahogany Bedstead, with iron and brass, 35	No. 35—A Mahogany Bedstead, with iron and brass, 45	No. 45—A Mahogany Bedstead, with iron and brass, 55	No. 55—A Mahogany Bedstead, with iron and brass, 65
No. 6—A Cherry Bedstead, with iron and brass, 15	No. 16—A Mahogany Chair, with seat and back, 26	No. 26—A Mahogany Bedstead, with iron and brass, 36	No. 36—A Mahogany Bedstead, with iron and brass, 46	No. 46—A Mahogany Bedstead, with iron and brass, 56	No. 56—A Mahogany Bedstead, with iron and brass, 66
No. 7—A Cherry Bedstead, with iron and brass, 16	No. 17—A Mahogany Chair, with seat and back, 27	No. 27—A Mahogany Bedstead, with iron and brass, 37	No. 37—A Mahogany Bedstead, with iron and brass, 47	No. 47—A Mahogany Bedstead, with iron and brass, 57	No. 57—A Mahogany Bedstead, with iron and brass, 67
No. 8—A Cherry Bedstead, with iron and brass, 17	No. 18—A Mahogany Chair, with seat and back, 28	No. 28—A Mahogany Bedstead, with iron and brass, 38	No. 38—A Mahogany Bedstead, with iron and brass, 48	No. 48—A Mahogany Bedstead, with iron and brass, 58	No. 58—A Mahogany Bedstead, with iron and brass, 68
No. 9—A Cherry Bedstead, with iron and brass, 18	No. 19—A Mahogany Chair, with seat and back, 29	No. 29—A Mahogany Bedstead, with iron and brass, 39	No. 39—A Mahogany Bedstead, with iron and brass, 49	No. 49—A Mahogany Bedstead, with iron and brass, 59	No. 59—A Mahogany Bedstead, with iron and brass, 69
No. 10—A Cherry Bedstead, with iron and brass, 19	No. 20—A Mahogany Chair, with seat and back, 30	No. 30—A Mahogany Bedstead, with iron and brass, 40	No. 40—A Mahogany Bedstead, with iron and brass, 50	No. 50—A Mahogany Bedstead, with iron and brass, 60	No. 60—A Mahogany Bedstead, with iron and brass, 70

7—We would observe, that when any Furniture is wanted of the above patterns, by referring to the above table or card, and giving the number of the same, or by giving a description of any other piece of Furniture in our line, to the Proprietors of the above establishment, the orders will be punctually attended to.

JOSEPH MECKE & SONS.

Figure 4-7. Joseph Meeks and Sons. Broadside Advertisement, 1833. Kenny, Brown, Bretter, Thurlow. *Duncan Phyfe: Master Cabinetmaker in New York*, 91.



Figure 4-8. C. Flint & Jones. Hat Stand. Mahogany. Front Hall, Melrose, Natchez, MS, 2009. Photo by author.



Figure 4-9. Robert Stewart. Wardrobe. Walnut. Melrose, Natchez, MS. Jason T. Busch. "Handsomely Furnished in the Most Fashionable Style: Art and Decoration along the Mississippi River." *Currents of Change: Art and Life Along the Mississippi River, 1850-1860*. Minneapolis: The Minneapolis Institute of Arts, 2004, 90.



Figure 4-10. Charles Lee. Bed. Mahogany and walnut. Melrose, Natchez, MS. Busch, "Handsomely Furnished in the Most Fashionable Style: Art and Decoration along the Mississippi River." *Currents of Change*, 88-89.

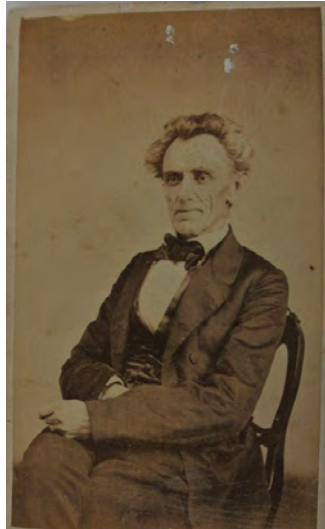


Figure 4-11. Unidentified photographer. *John T. McMurran*, late 1850s. Daguerre-type. Edward Turner and Family Papers, Folder 19. Louisiana Lower Mississippi Valley Collection, Louisiana State University Libraries.



Figure 4-12. Unidentified photographer. *Mary Louisa McMurran*, late 1850s. Carol Petravage. *Melrose Historic Furnishings Report, Natchez National Historical Park*. Harpers Ferry Center, National Park Service: Media Development Group, 2004, 199.

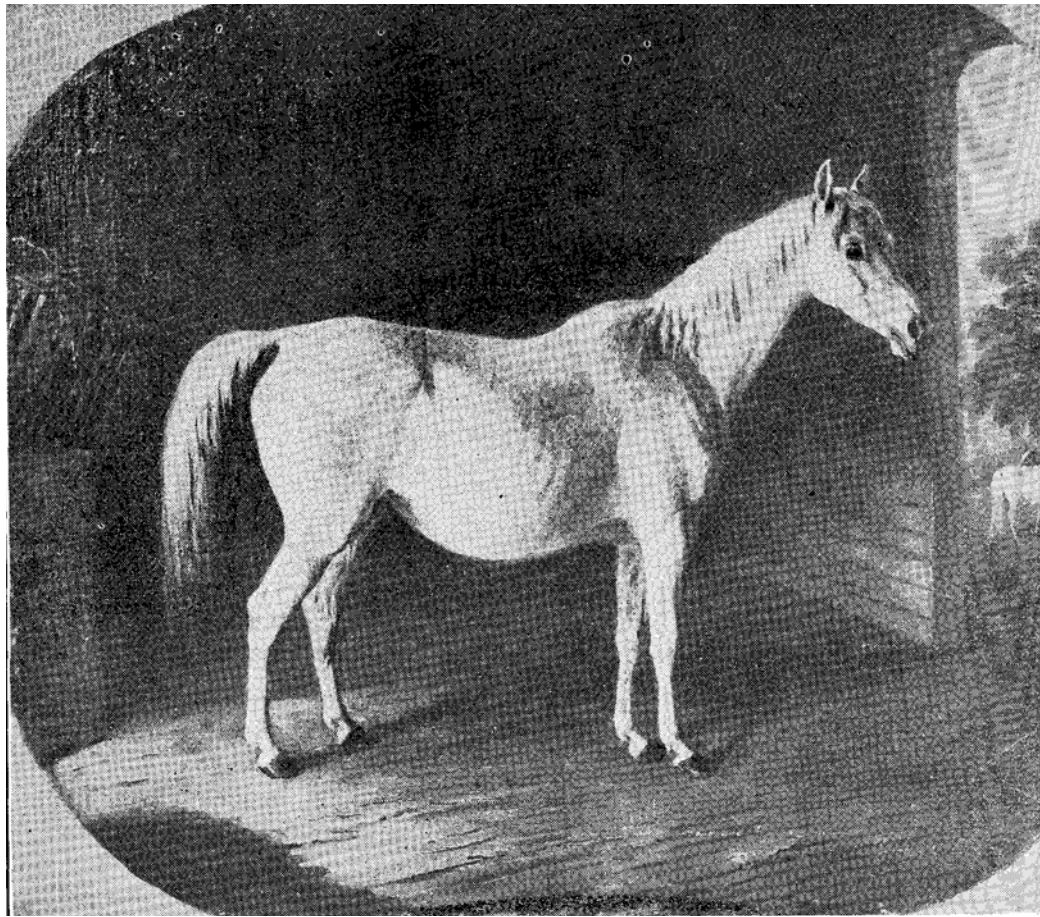


Figure 4-13. Edward Troye. *Grey Fanny*. 1845. Harry Worcester Smith, "Duncan Kenner, Grey Fanny, and Ashland Plantation," *The Thoroughbred Record*, August 8, 1925, 66



Figure 4-14. Victor Pierson and Theodore Moise. *Life on the Métairie-The Métairie Race Course*. Oil on canvas, 1867. Courtesy Fair Grounds Corporation.



Figure 4-15. Stars and Bars Evening Bag. The Historic New Orleans Collection, Gift of Mr. W. Page Dame III, 2007.0390.

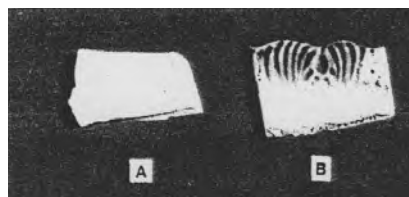


Figure 4-16. Examples of A) pearlware; B) blue shell-edged pearlware. Jill-Karen Yakubik, et. al. *Archaeological Data Recovery at Ashland-Belle Helene Plantation (16AN26), Ascension Parish, Louisiana, Volume I: Investigations in the Quarters and Archaeological Monitoring*. New Orleans: Earth Search, Inc., 1994, Plate 8-5.



Figure 4-17. Bringier Tobacco Seal from Ashland. Yakubik, et. al. *Archaeological Data Recovery at Ashland-Belle Helene Plantation. Volume I: Investigations in the Quarters and Archaeological Monitoring*. Plate 10-23.



Figure 4-18. Marble and limestone marbles from Ashland. On loan from the State of Louisiana, Division of Archaeology, Office of Cultural Development, Department of Culture, Recreation, and Tourism, part of a donation made by the Shell Chemical Company. Photo courtesy of Jillian Becquet, Collections Manager, Corpus Christi Museum of Science and History.

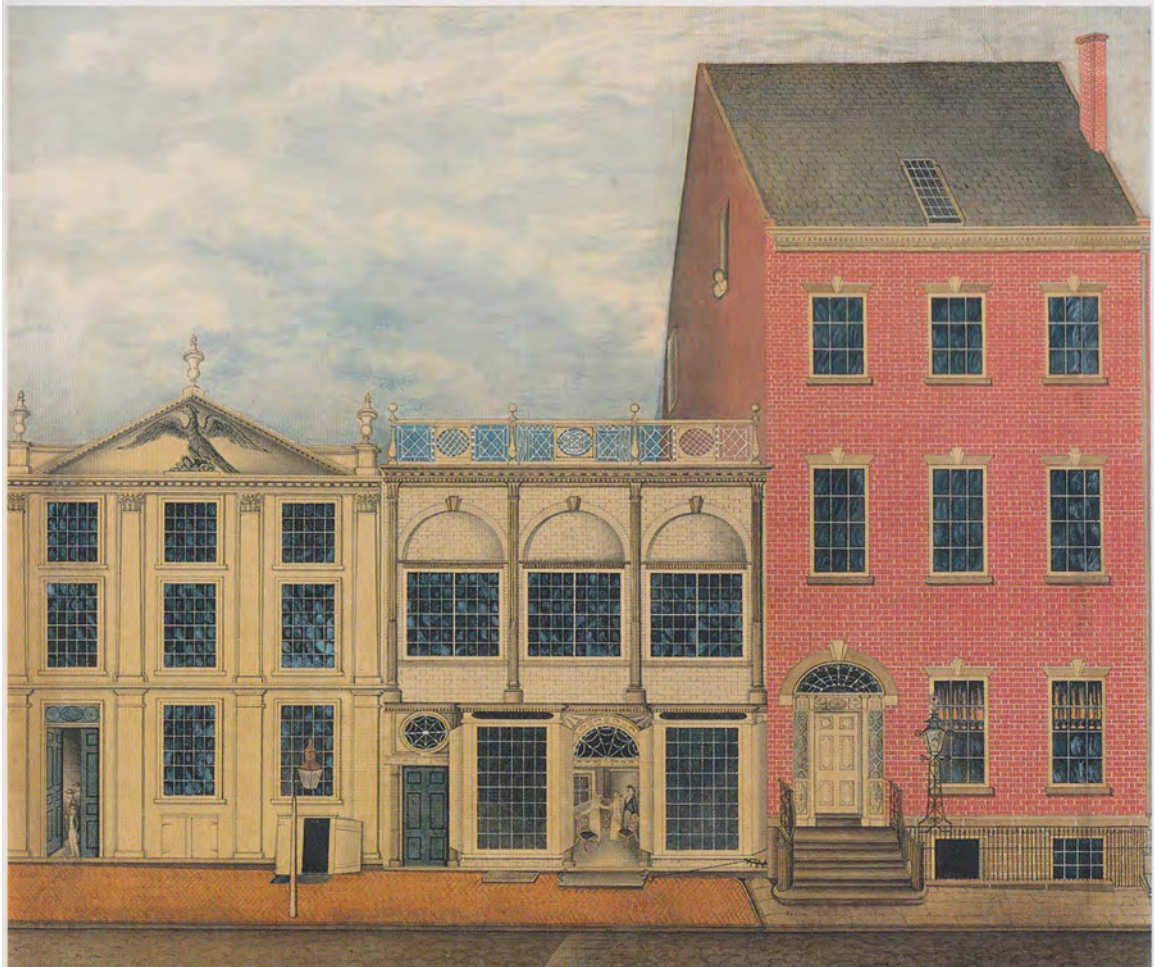


Figure 4-19. Unidentified artist. *Shop and Warehouse of Duncan Phyfe, 168-172 Fulton Street, New York City.* Watercolor, ink, and gouache. 1817-20. Kenny, Brown, Bretter, Thurlow. *Duncan Phyfe: Master Cabinetmaker in New York*, 41.



Figure 4-20. James Archer after Alexander J. Davis. “Broad Street.” from Theodore S. Fay’s *Views in New-York and its Environs*. Etching, 1831-1834. Kenny, Brown, Bretter, Thurlow. *Duncan Phyfe: Master Cabinetmaker in New York*, 43.

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Figure 4-21. Advertisement from the *New-York Commercial Advertiser*, April 28, 1843. Kenny, Brown, Bretter, Thurlow. *Duncan Phyfe: Master Cabinetmaker in New York*, 53.



Figure 4-22. Armchair. Philadelphia, early 1840s. Mahogany. Dining Room, Melrose, Natchez, MS, 2009. Photo by author.



Figure 5-1. Agatized ceramic doorknob and silver doorknob. Melrose, Natchez, MS, 2009. Photo by author.

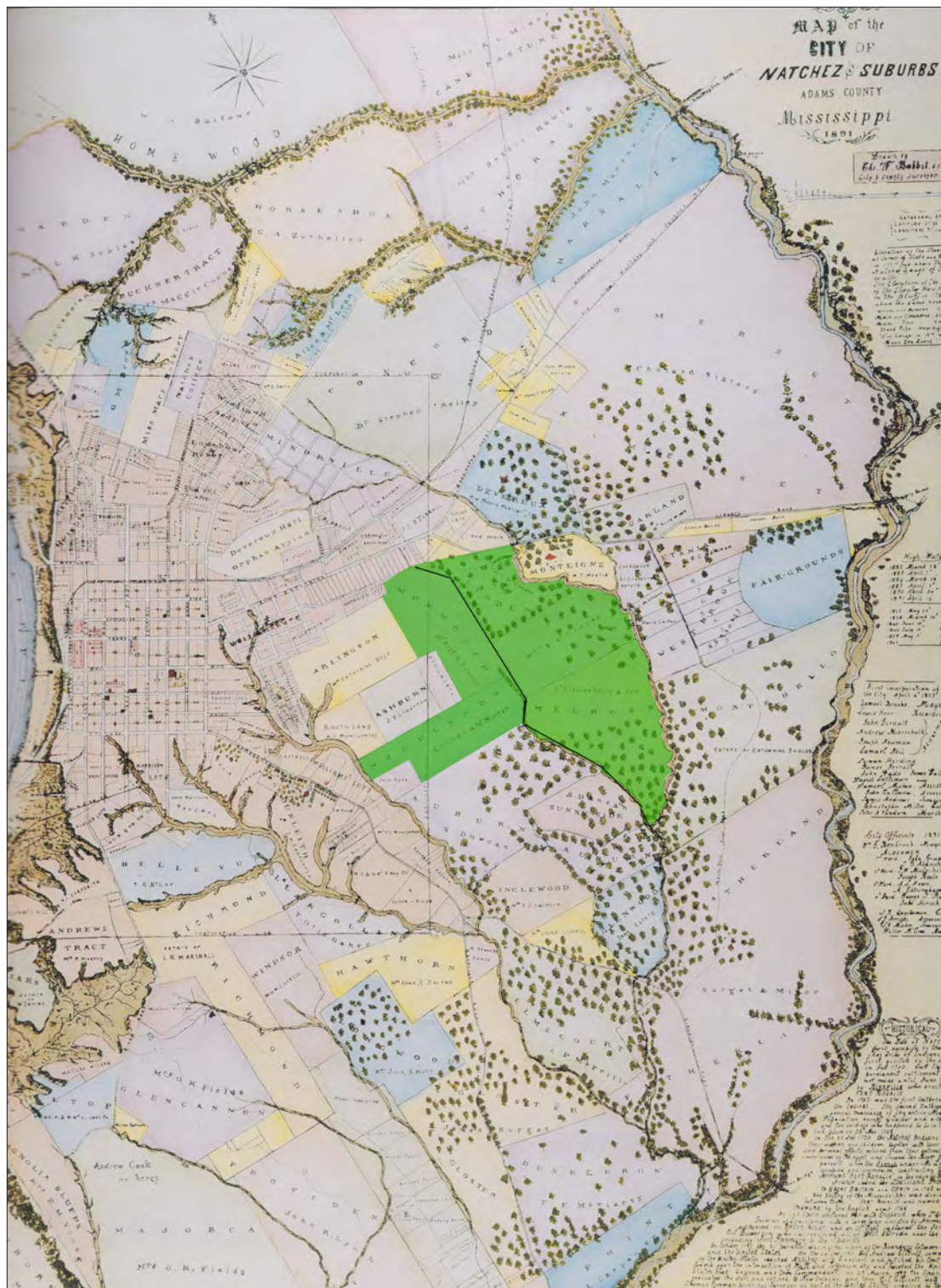


Figure 5-2. Monmouth, Linden, Sedge Hill/Roselawn, Woodlands, and Melrose. Author's adaptation to Charles W. Babbitt, Map of the City of Natchez and Suburbs, Adams County, Mississippi, 1891. Delehanty. *Classic Natchez*, 51.

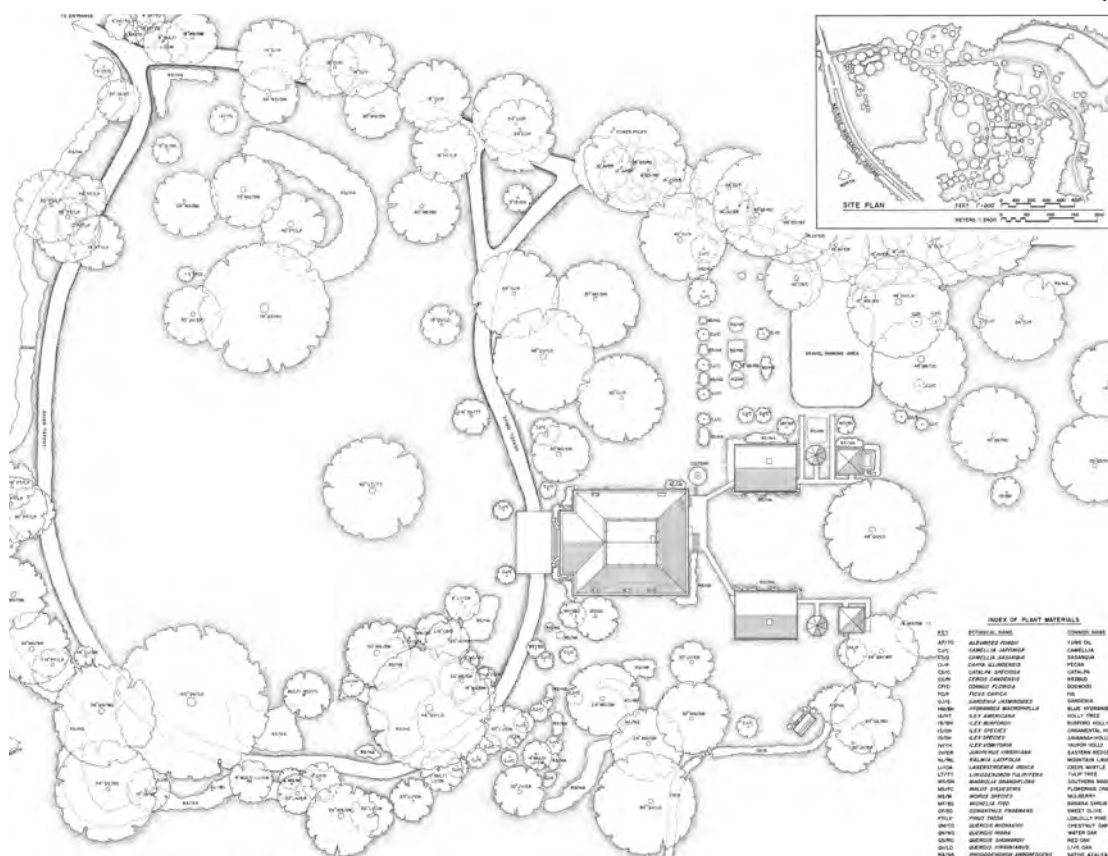


Figure 5-3. Site Plan. Melrose, Natchez, MS. Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) MISS 1-NATCH V 12 (sheet 2 of 2), Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Online

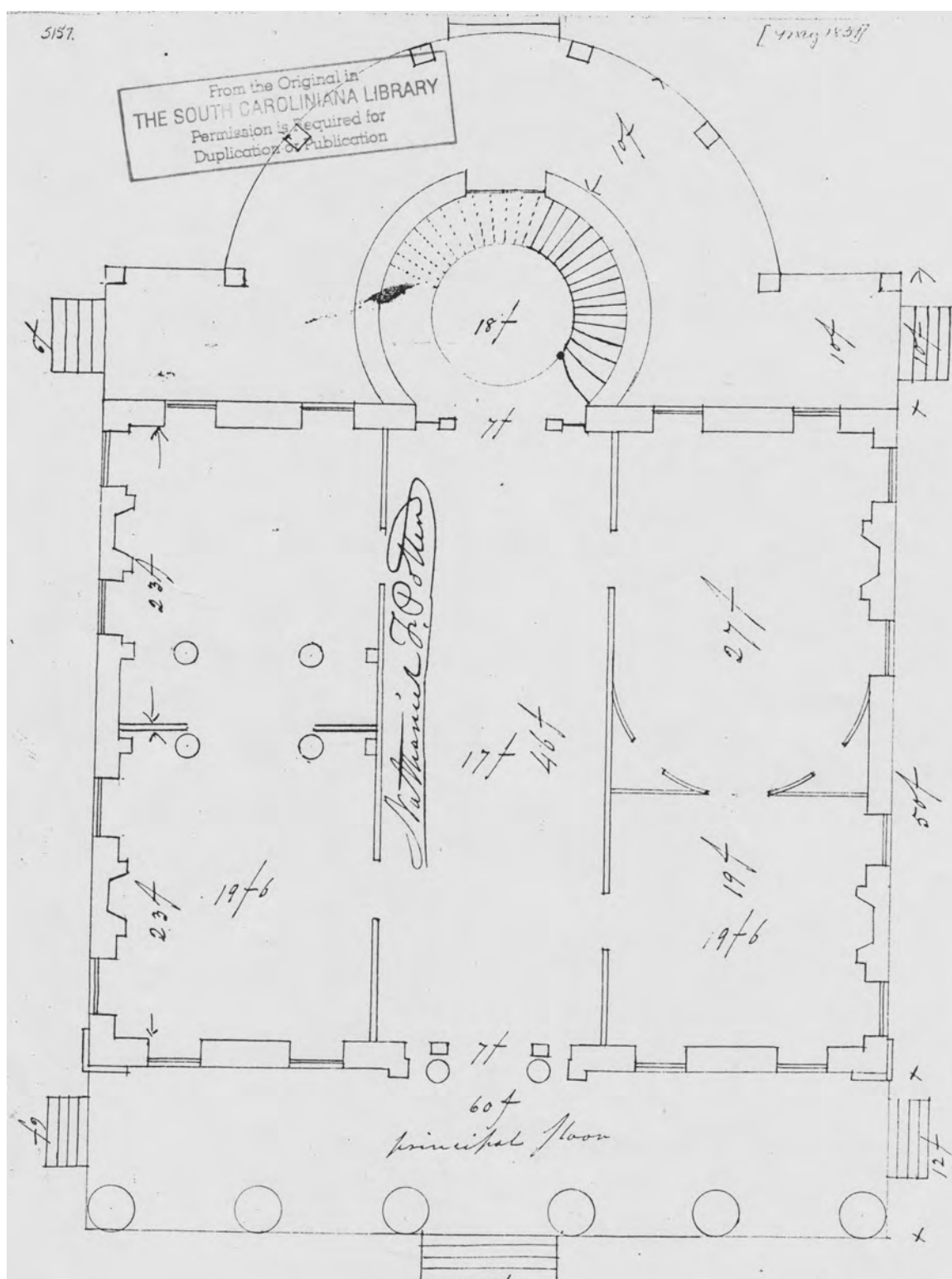


Figure 5-4. Nathaniel Potter. Plan of Principal Floor. May 1839. Millford, Pinewood, SC. Williams Chesnut Manning Papers, Folder 86, South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina.



Figure 5-5. Rear Elevation. Millford, Pinewood, SC, 2009. Photograph by author.



Figure 5-6. Rear Elevation. South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC. www.library.sc.edu/develop/images/SoCarGarden



Figure 5-7. Stair Hall. Salisbury House, Worcester, MA. Talbot Hamlin, *Greek Revival Architecture in America*. New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1964, reprint of 1944 edition.



Figure 5-8. Potter's Rotunda. Millford, Pinewood, SC, 2009. Photo by author.



Figure 5-9. D. Phyfe and Son. Couch, 1841. Rosewood veneer, rosewood-grained in imitation of mahogany. Kenny, Brown, Bretter, Thurlow. *Duncan Phyfe: Master Cabinetmaker in New York*. Figure 197.



Figure 5-10. D. Phyfe and Son. Sofa, 1841. Rosewood veneer, rosewood, rosewood-grained mahogany. Kenny, Brown, Bretter, Thurlow. *Duncan Phyfe: Master Cabinetmaker in New York*, Plate 63.



Figure 5-11. D. Phyfe and Son. Window Seat, 1841. Rosewood veneer. Kenny, Brown, Bretter, Thurlow. *Duncan Phyfe: Master Cabinetmaker in New York*, Plate 61.



Figure 5-12. D. Phyfe and Son. Grecian Bedstead, 1841. Rosewood veneer. Kenny, Brown, Bretter, Thurlow. *Duncan Phyfe: Master Cabinetmaker in New York*, Plate 55.



Figure 5-13. D. Phyfe and Son. Celleret, 1841. Mahogany veneer. Kenny, Brown, Bretter, Thurlow. *Duncan Phyfe: Master Cabinetmaker in New York*, Plate 60.



Figure 5-14. D. Phyfe and Son. Couch, 1841. Walnut veneer, walnut, rosewood banding. Kenny, Brown, Bretter, Thurlow. *Duncan Phyfe: Master Cabinetmaker in New York*, Figure 193.



Figure 5-15. D. Phyfe and Son. Armchair, 1841. Mahogany, originally grain-painted in imitation of rosewood. Kenny, Brown, Bretter, Thurlow. *Duncan Phyfe: Master Cabinetmaker in New York*, Figure 118.



Figure 5-16. Mantelpiece. Library. Millford, Pinewood, SC, 2009. Photo by author.



Figure 5-17. First Floor Plan. Melrose, Natchez, MS. Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) MISS 1 NATCH V 12A (sheet 3 of 22). Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Online Catalog

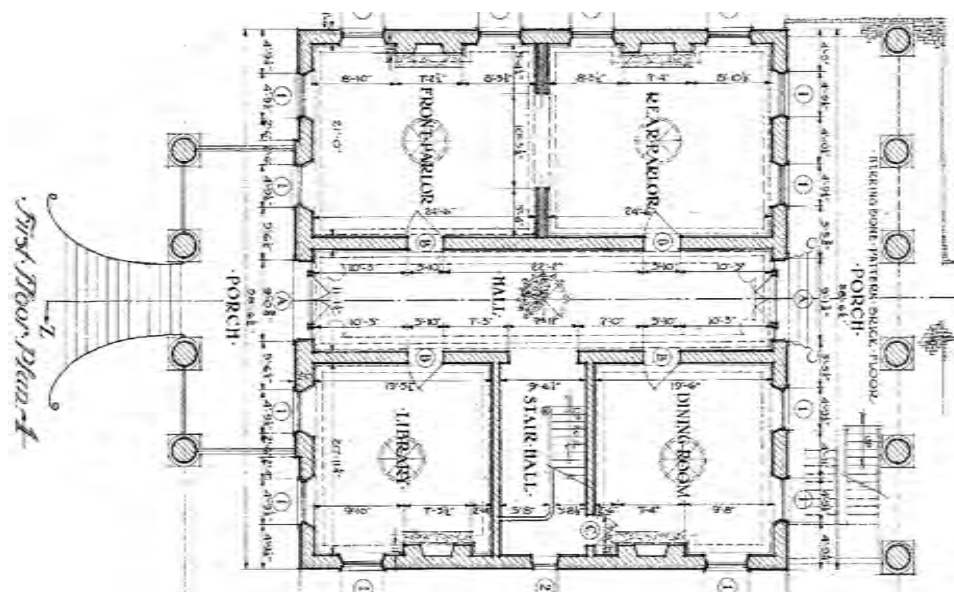


Figure 5-18. First Floor Plan. Rosalie, Natchez, MS. Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) MISS 1 NATCH 1 (sheet 2 of 9). Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Online Catalog

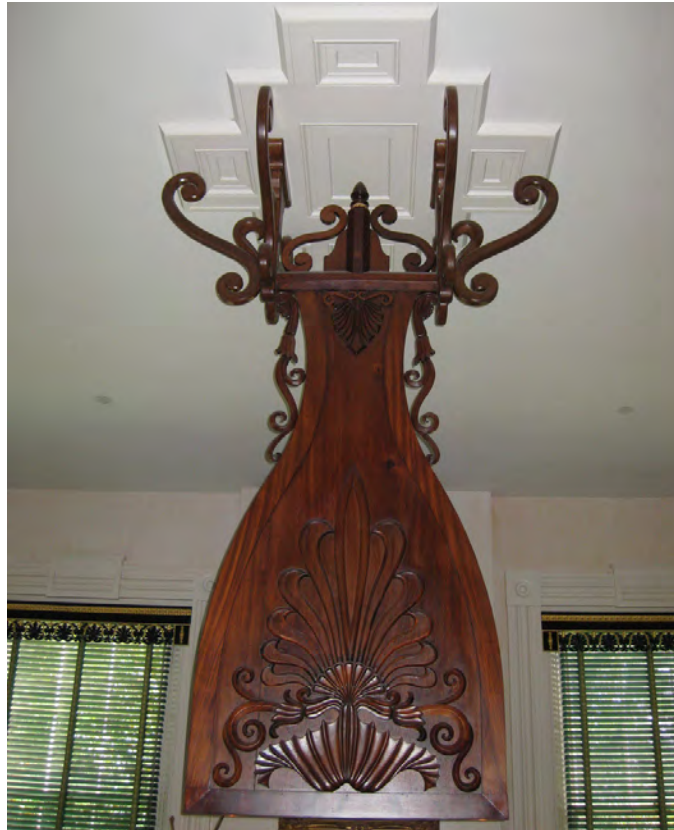
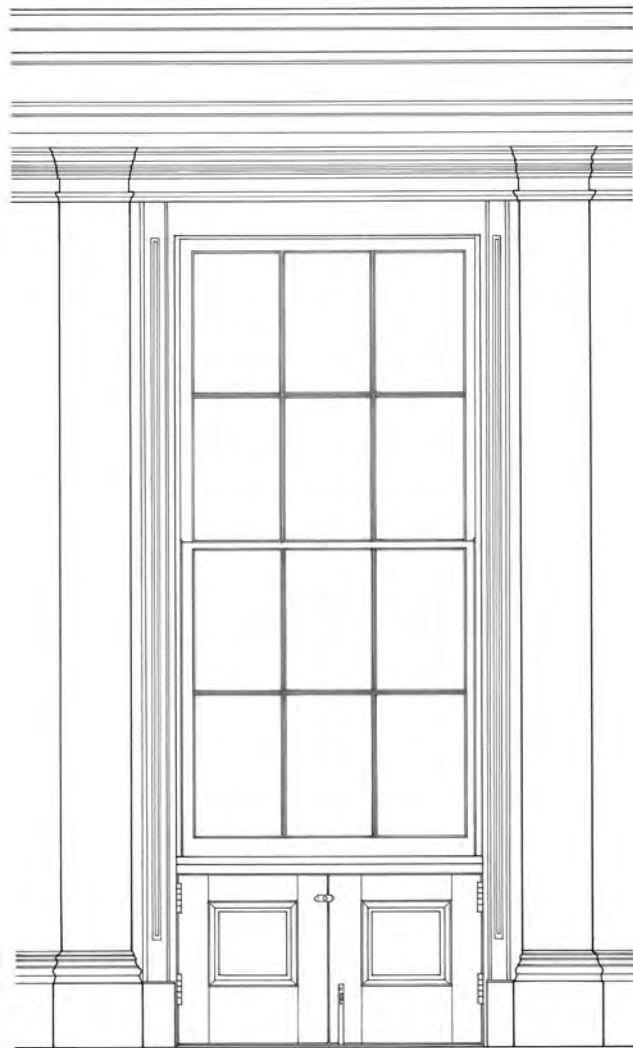


Figure 5-19. Punkah. Dining Room. Melrose, Natchez, MS, 2009. Photo by author.



Figure 5-20. Lewis Miller. *The Party at Supper and Breakfast, Chapman Springs*, 1853. Charlene Boyer-Lewis. *Ladies and Gentlemen on Display: Planter Society at the Virginia Springs, 1790-1860*. Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 2001, 161



ELEVATION

Figure 5-21. Jib Door. Library. Melrose, Natchez, MS. Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) MISS 1 NATCH V 12A (sheet 21 of 22), Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Online



Figure 5-22. Charles H. White. Revolving Sofa, early 1850s. Walnut. Drawing Room. Melrose, Natchez, MS, 2009. Photo by author.



Figure 5-23. Chairs, early 1850s. Walnut. Drawing Room. Melrose, Natchez, MS, 2009. Photo by author.



Figure 5-24. Charles H. White. Sideboard, early 1830s. Mahogany. Dining Room. Melrose, Natchez, MS, 2009. Photo by author.



Figure 5-25. Charles H. White. Drop-leaf Table, early 1830s. Mahogany. Central Hall. Melrose, Natchez, MS, 2009. Photo by author.

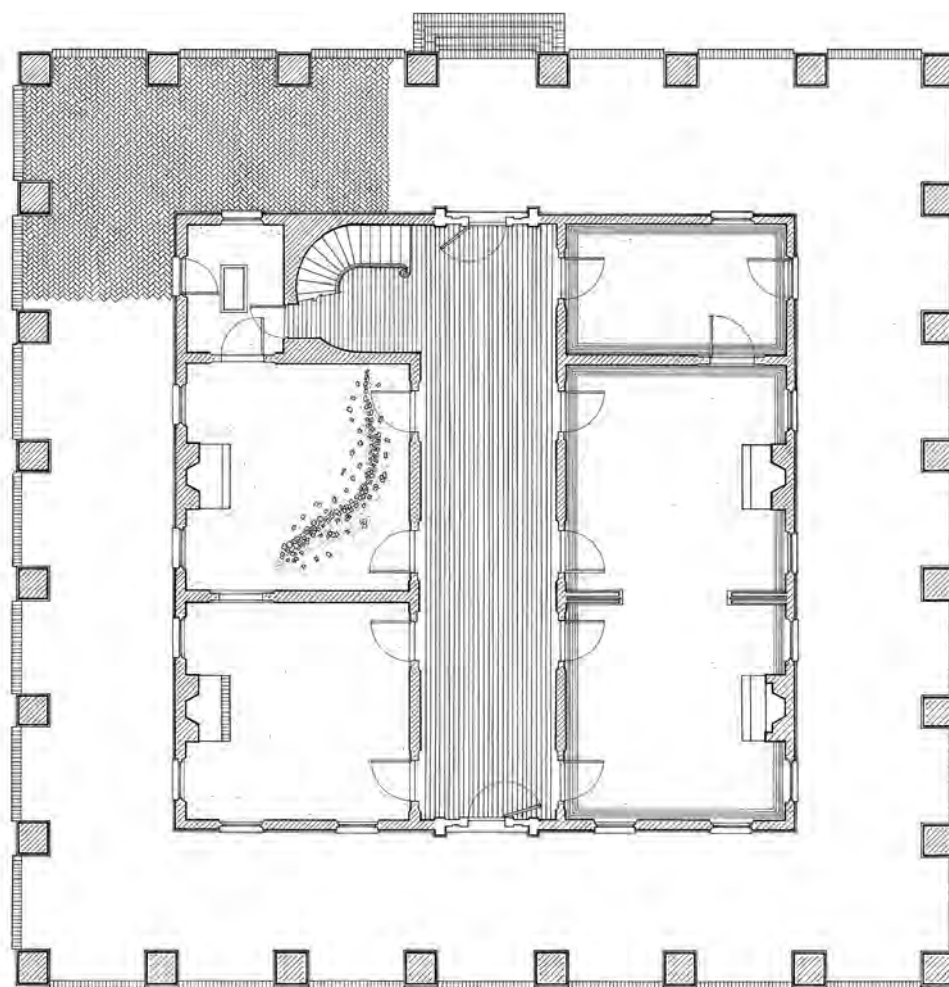


Figure 5-26. First Floor Plan. Ashland, Ascension Parish, LA. Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) LA 3 GEIM V-1 (sheet 3 of 9). Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Online



Figure 5-27. Richard Koch. Stairs and Stair Hall, October 1936. Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) LA 3-GEIM V 1--8. Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Online

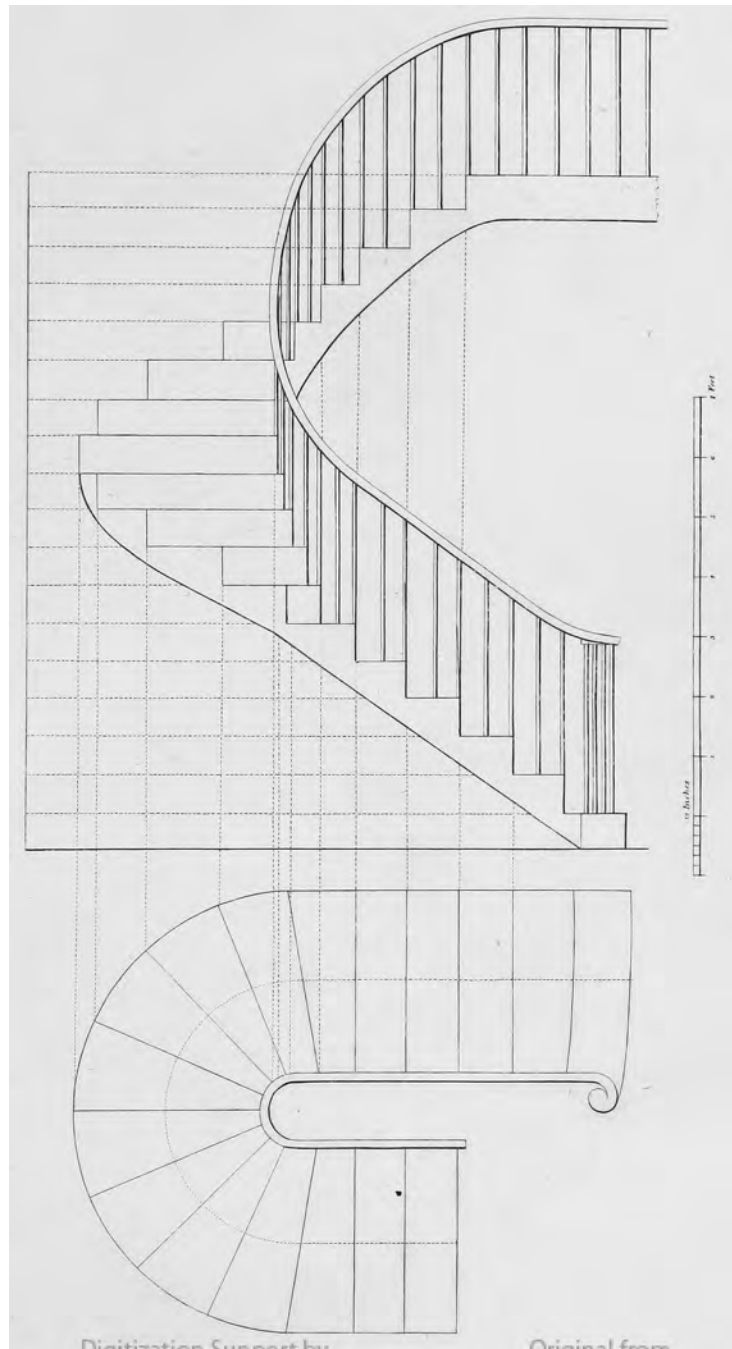


Figure 5-28. Asher Benjamin. Plate Sixty-Two: Stairs. *The Architect: or Practical House Carpenter*.



Figure 5-29. Arnold Moses. Stair Hall - Second Floor, November 17, 1936. Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) NY 3-BRONX 6--13. Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Online

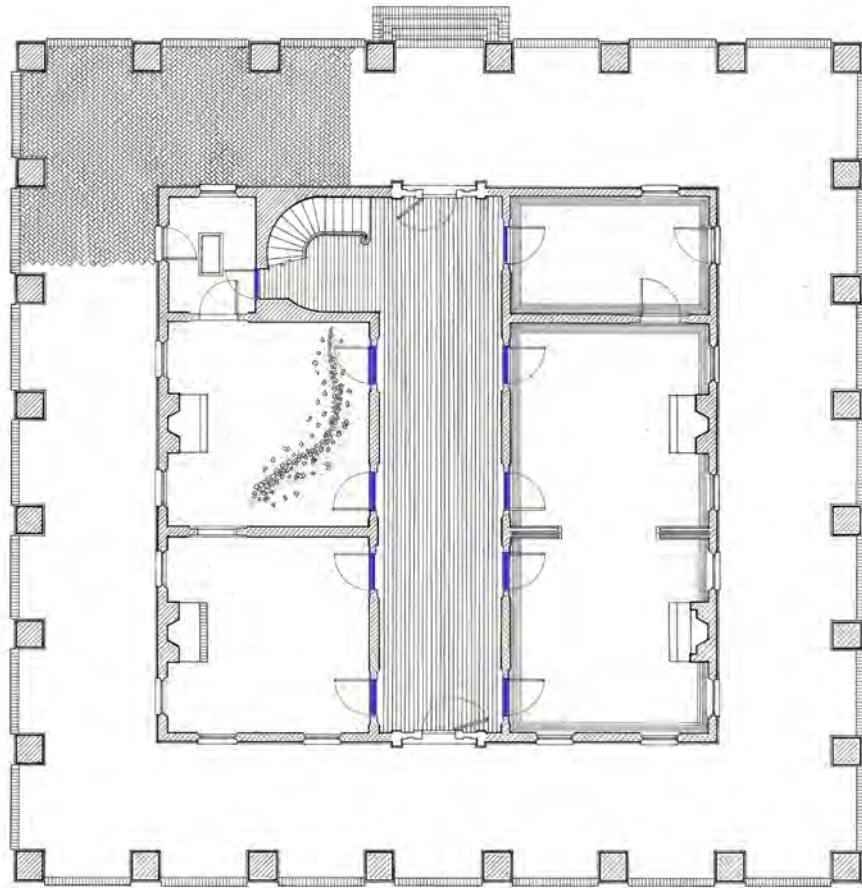


Figure 5-30. Author's adaptations to first floor plan. Ashland, Ascension Parish, LA. Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) LA 3 GEIM V-1 (sheet 3 of 9). Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Online



Figure 5-31. Half-Teaster Bed with “D. Kenner, Ashland Landing” inscribed on the teaser. Ashland, Ascension Parish, LA, 2009. Photo by author.



Figure 5-32. Pharsalia Plate. Won by Col. A.L. Bingaman's Sarah Bladen. Pharsalia Course, Natchez, MS, November 13, 1840. John Hervey, *Racing in America: 1665-1865*. New York: Privately printed for the Jockey Club, volume 2.



Figure 5-33. Author's adaptations to first floor plan, showing secondary spaces. Melrose, Natchez, MS. Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) MISS 1 NATCH V 12A (sheet 3 of 22). Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Online Catalog

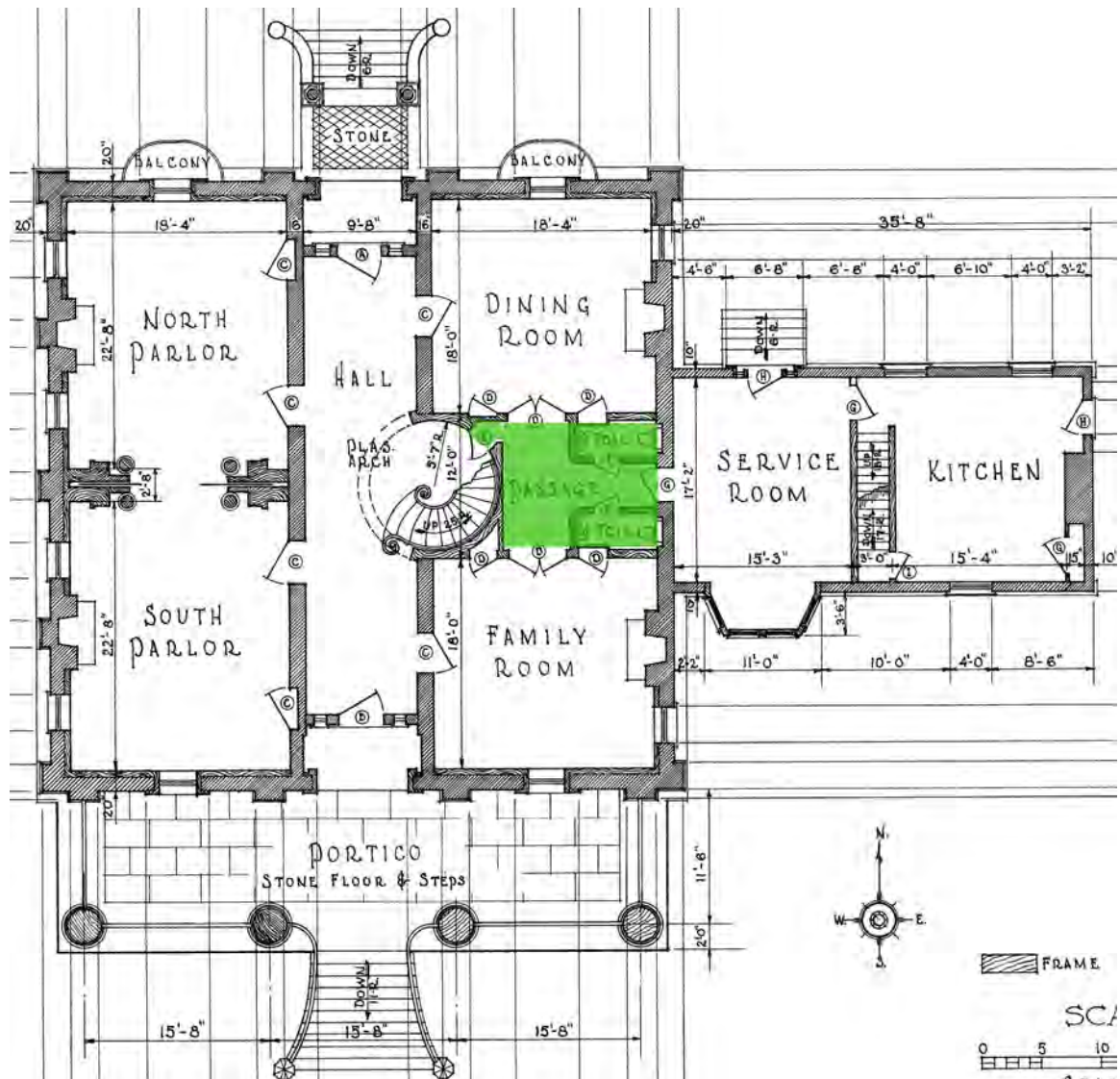


Figure 5-34. Author's adaptations to first floor plan, showing secondary spaces. Lannier House, Madison, IN, Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) IND 39 MAD 4 (sheet 2 of 15). Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Online Catalog



Figure 5-35. Christian Friedrich Mayr. *Kitchen Ball at White Sulphur Springs, Virginia*, 1838. Artstor.org.



Figure 5-36. Front Door. Killarney, Concordia Parish, LA. National Historic Register Nomination Form, 1999. Louisiana Office of Cultural Development, Division of Historic Preservation, National Register of Historic Places Database: www.crt.state.la.us/hp/nationalregister/historicplacesdatabase.aspx



Figure 5-37. Mantelpiece. Killarney, Concordia Parish, LA. National Historic Register Nomination Form, 1999. Louisiana Office of Cultural Development, Division of Historic Preservation, National Register of Historic Places Database: www.crt.state.la.us/hp/nationalregister/historicplacesdatabase.aspx