

Louisiana National Register Review Committee Meeting

December 14, 2017, 1:00pm
Capitol Park Welcome Center
702 N. River Rd
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Minutes

Chairman Lynn Lewis called the December 14, 2017, regular meeting of the National Register Review Committee to order at 1:13 p.m. In addition to Mr. Lewis, members present included Martha Saloman, Dr. Rebecca Saunders, Turry Flucker, Peggy Lowe, Dr. Robert Carriker, and Sue Turner. Kelly Rich, Tarah Arcuri, Dr. Matthew Savage, and John Sykes were unable to attend.

Mr. Lewis asked for a motion to approve the agenda. Dr. Carriker so moved and Dr. Saunders seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Jessica Richardson, National Register Coordinator, welcomed the audience and committee members to the meeting and also introduced all Review Committee members present to the audience.

Mr. Lewis asked for a motion to approve the minutes from April's meeting. Dr. Saunders so moved and Dr. Carriker seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Under New Business, it was time to elect a new chair/vice-chair. Dr. Saunders moved that we continue to have Lynn serve as chair and John as vice-chair. Dr. Carriker seconded the motion. All members present voted unanimously to keep the current chair and vice-chair in place for two more years.

After this item, 6 new nominations were presented to the committee.

Caddo Parish Public School Building Program, 1946-1961 Multiple Property Submission and Bethune Junior-Senior High School, Caddo Parish

Presented by Lane Callaway , nomination preparer

The public school system in Caddo Parish, Louisiana, during the time of 1946 to 1961 was racially segregated. The parish's public school system would not become unified until 1979. One piece of evidence denoting segregation was the massive program of construction and expansion of the physical plant of public schools during years 1946 to 1961. During this time, 39 new schools were opened – 21 white, 18 black – most within the incorporated limits of the City of Shreveport. If this racial separation of school campuses in Caddo Parish is the only element examined, then it is shortsighted. Steps, short of the integration of students by race on any particular school campus, were taken beginning in 1943 to create the foundation for an eventual unified school system in Caddo Parish. If these 39 new schools had not been constructed in the period of 1946 to 1961, then Caddo Parish could not have easily achieved a fully unified district by 1979 without great cost and quick expansion in its physical school plant. These 39 schools, although geographically scattered within Caddo Parish and the City of Shreveport, have several common characteristics. They share similar design styles, architects, method of construction, scale, spatial arrangements and orientation, setting, materials, and feeling.

The 39 school buildings (see tables in Section E) were primary and secondary school buildings constructed in the time period of 1946 through 1961. This was a time when racial integration of public schools had not yet been achieved. Therefore these schools were built specifically for white or black students and located respectively in predominately white and black neighborhoods within the City of Shreveport. Of the four primary and secondary public schools built in the rural areas of Caddo Parish, three were for black students. This effort was to consolidate 77 schoolhouses composed of one to five room wood-framed buildings that had been used for black students since 1918 and continued to be built up to 1941. So the construction of schools between 1946 and 1961 were done to not only accommodate an increase in the local student-aged population within Caddo Parish and specifically the City of Shreveport, but also as an equalization approach during this racially segregated era.

Bethune Junior-Senior High School (currently named Oak Park Elementary-Middle School) is an urban public school sitting on a 20 acre tract of level ground located within a primarily African-American neighborhood. Built in the International Style, this complex is one-storied, has steel framed buildings with flat roofs using brick curtain exterior walls featuring glass and metal panels. A singular open courtyard is the connecting point between classroom wings on the east side of the school; library to the north; educational and activity spaces, auditorium, and cafeteria on the west side; and a full gymnasium on the south side. The campus also includes two contributing sites – a football field/track and tennis courts; two non-contributing structures – two playgrounds; and one non-contributing site – a concrete pad that formerly housed a classroom structure. Uniquely, the architectural elements of the main school building include exposed I-beams, exposed ventilation ducts, and exposed electrical piping to denote an industrial look. Despite a library being added soon after the school opened and a third classroom wing added in 1968, as well as the football field bleachers being removed, the school retains its overall integrity and National Register eligibility.

Bethune Jr-Sr High School, located in the Mooretown-Hollywood Heights neighborhood of Shreveport in Caddo Parish, is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under the Caddo Parish Public School System Building Program, 1946 to 1961; multiple property submission at the local level under Criterion A: Education and Ethnic Heritage-Black. It meets the registration requirements of Property Subtype – Secondary School found in Section F of the MPS cover. It was conceived, built, and opened during a period of history where the United States had a legally segregated society. When opened in September 1961, the school was a modern neighborhood school with the sole role of secondary education at the seventh through twelfth grades for local African American students. This new school construction program by Caddo Parish, which included new schools like Bethune for black students and separate schools for white students, was a way to mitigate and delay implementing the 1954 decision in *Brown v the Board of Education*. The school was significant in providing education to the surrounding area's African American students in a new educational facility during this equalization era. On April 5, 1968, it was also the site of a spontaneous student boycott of classes after lunch in response to the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the day prior on April 4, 1968. The students attending Bethune School and participating in the boycott not only acknowledged the loss of Dr. King, but also confirmed their personal and collective involvement in taking up the mantle of civil rights. The period of significance for the school campus is 1961-1970, encompassing the years the school functioned as an African-American only school in Shreveport.

Lynn Lewis asked if all of the schools are kindergarten through twelfth grade. Lane answered that no, they are all different age groups now. Originally, they were set up as K-6, 6-9, and 10-12 grades. Peggy Lowe commented that this submission is unique because they are not all located geographically near each other and wanted to know if this was okay. Jessica Richardson explained that this is why the multiple property submission is used – to list discontinuous resources because we can't list them all via a very large district. Lynn Lewis mentioned that he saw 1946-61 and 1961-64 mentioned. What is that time period? Lane Callaway explained that the 39 schools were built between 1946 and 1961 and that after that, there were no schools built specifically for a certain race in mind because of law suits and the new schools that came after 1961 differed architecturally as well.

Turry Flucker moved that the property be recommended to the State Historic Preservation Officer and Dr. Saunders seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Avery Island, Iberia Parish

Presented by Cecil Hymel, representative for Avery Island, Inc.

A geological oddity located in Iberia Parish, Louisiana, Avery Island occupies an area of about 2,200 acres, stretches about 2.5 miles across at its widest point, and rises about 165 feet above an adjoining coastal plain. The island is a salt dome, meaning it sits atop a column of nearly pure rock salt pushed up over eons to create a compact range of rolling hills and valleys in otherwise flat south Louisiana. Although not an "island" in the traditional sense, it is surrounded on all sides by wetlands — either grassy salt marsh, wooded cypress swamp, or slow-moving muddy bayous — and from a distance is insular in appearance. In fact, it has been referred to as an island since at least 1779, when a French explorer mentioned the prominence as "the so-called island that we saw from the sea." By the 1790s it was called Côte de Coiron (Coiron's Hill or Coiron's Slope). In the early to

mid-nineteenth century it was known as Île Petite Anse (Little Cove Island); and around the Civil War it became Avery's Island and finally Avery Island. Although the Island has experienced many changes since its prehistoric occupation by Native Americans, the landmark's general appearance no doubt remains the same — a sometimes wooded, sometimes grassy eminence rising dramatically from a low, flat littoral along the Gulf of Mexico.

In addition to its landscape features, Avery Island also contains a number of vintage structures, most if not all of which have been modified by their inhabitants over the generations. These include Marsh House, which is the original plantation home of John Craig Marsh. He constructed the dwelling on the west side of the Island in 1818. In Jungle Gardens, the large home called Mayward Hill still exists, though abandoned; it is three stories tall and sits atop a sizeable basement. The home of E. A. "Ned" McIlhenny, Mayward Hill was built in the mid-1920s after the original home on the same site burned. Today, tourists can view the exterior of Mayward Hill from the surrounding Jungle Gardens. (The Island attracts over 100,000 tourists annually to its Tabasco® Visitors Center, Jungle Gardens, and Bird City wildfowl refuge, all located on a section of the northern part of the Island that is open to the general public; the majority of the Island, however, is closed to the general public.) The Hayes/Avery/Duncan House still stands, though unoccupied at present. Its core was built in the 1790s by Elizabeth Hayes, a German immigrant, and her several children. The Hayes family remained in the house until 1869, when D. D. Avery purchased the large tract on which it sits, and the structure became home to the Averys and, eventually, to the Duncan branch of the Averys. Two of the Marsh House Slave Quarters cottages remain standing. Made of brick, they have been tied together since the mid-twentieth century by adjoining modern structures, and while the two cottages appear from the outside to be free-standing, primitive rural housing, they are on the inside actually modern "wings" of a much larger, more recent home inhabited by a branch of the McIlhenny family. Perhaps the most notable, but often overlooked, vintage structure is the Second Tabasco® Factory. Built in 1905, it served as the sole Tabasco® Factory from 1905 to 1980, when it was replaced by the current factory on Avery Island. The Factory building was then extensively renovated, but with an eye toward preserving its original brick walls, original wood-framed windows and glass panes, and original cypress post-and-lintel construction on the second and third floors. The post-and-lintels of the first floor have always been made of cement. The Factory's roof is of step gable construction, reflecting its early twentieth-century industrial purpose.

Avery Island has local, state, and national — even international — significance. The Island is the birthplace of world-renowned Tabasco® Sauce, which was invented in 1868 by Edmund McIlhenny. Even today, nearly 150 years later, the pepper mash used to make Tabasco® Sauce is aged on the Island in white oak barrels for three years, mixed with vinegar on the Island, and finally bottled in the Island's factory. From there the bottles, labeled in twenty-two languages and dialects, are shipped around the world to over 185 countries and territories. A Tabasco® Museum on the Island, replete with historical artifacts, substantive text panels, and intriguing video kiosks, attracts over 100,000 tourists annually.

Avery Island is significant under **Criterion A for Commerce, Industry, and Invention** because it is the place where Tabasco® inventor Edmund McIlhenny concocted his now famous sauce around 1868. The world's supply of Tabasco® Sauce continues to be manufactured on the Island. As mentioned, shipments are made from Avery Island to over 185 countries and territories around the globe, and cartons are labeled on Avery Island in 22 languages and dialects.

In addition, the Island is significant under Criterion A because it is the site of the nation's first rock salt mine, opened in 1862 during the Civil War to supply the blockaded southern states with a supply of the vital mineral (used not merely for seasoning food, but for curing hides and meats used by the Confederate military, and for its nutritional and health value in humans and livestock). This salt mine remains in operation today, leased by Avery Island Inc. to Cargill Inc.

Historically, the Island also produced large quantities of canned products, including canned fruits and vegetables, as well as bottled extracts. It served around 1905 as homeport to a fleet of oyster luggers that harvested shrimp and oysters from the Gulf of Mexico. This seafood was processed just off the Island (on a site literally about 175 feet across Bayou Petite Anse from the Island) and canned for sale to the general public.

Avery Island is also significant under **Criterion A for Agriculture** because it has been under constant cultivation for sugarcane, cotton, or peppers since 1818. Avery Island Inc., the modern family-owned corporation that controls the Island's surface and mineral rights, traces its lineage back to the earlier Petit Anse [*sic*] Company, which stemmed from the earlier Avery Planting and Improving Company. In turn, that company derived from the Avery Plantation, formerly the Marsh-Avery-Henshaw Plantation and, ultimately, the Marsh Plantation, founded in 1818. The Island has also commercially grown fruits and vegetables that were canned in the early 1900s by a sister company to McIlhenny Company. Finally, Jungle Gardens operated as a commercial wholesale and retail plant nursery, and even created new plant varieties for sale to the public.

The Island is also significant under **Criterion A for Conservation** because the McIlhenny family has been involved in conservation since 1895, when E. A. "Ned" McIlhenny, son of Tabasco® inventor Edmund McIlhenny, helped to save the snowy egret from extinction. He did this by creating the private Bird City wildfowl refuge on the Island. Ned played a crucial role in arranging the donation of about 175,000 acres of wetlands to the state of Louisiana as bird sanctuaries. Ned eventually opened his private estate, Jungle Gardens, to the public; in it he collected and displayed tropical and semi-tropical trees and plants from around the world. He also propagated plant species and created new varieties, which he made available to the public through his mail-order business. The present-day Avery and McIlhenny families continue to manage the Island as an informal, private wildlife refuge populated by deer, bears, nutrias, otters, minks, rabbits, raccoons, armadillos, opossums, coyotes, alligators, and thousands of birds, among them herons, egrets, ibises, and vultures. The Island's many white-tailed deer are a recognized subspecies, *Odocoileus virginianus mcilhennyi*, named in Ned's honor. The Island is also inhabited by Louisiana black bear, *Ursus americanus luteolus*, one of sixteen formally recognized American black bear subspecies. The families plant cord grass, bull rush, and cypress trees by the thousands to stop coastal erosion around the Island, and they also work with the Audubon Society and other conservation groups, and participate in annual bird censuses.

Avery Island is significant under **Criterion A for Military** because it was the site of a Union amphibious attack in November 1862. During this assault two Union gunboats and a transport vessel loaded with foot soldiers attempted to invade the Island from Bayou Petite Anse in order to destroy the Island's valuable salt works. The Island subsequently served as the site of Camp Field, a temporary military encampment of the Confederate "Crescent Regiment," whose presence was evidently intended to deal with any future invasions of the Island. Six months after the initial attack, however, the Island was taken by land during the first of Union general Nathaniel Banks's three Teche campaigns

The Island was also home to several notable military figures. These include Dudley Avery, an officer in the Confederate infantry who later served as a general in the Louisiana state militia; John Avery McIlhenny, who in 1898 joined Theodore Roosevelt's Rough Riders cavalry regiment and afterwards served during the Filipino Insurrection; and Walter S. McIlhenny, a World War II veteran who rose from the rank of private to brigadier general in the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve. The Island also was home to Admiral Kenneth Duval Ringle, USN, and Admiral Arthur Dewey Struble, both World War II veterans and members of the Avery family.

Avery Island is significant under **Criterion D for Landscape Architecture** because it is the site of Jungle Gardens, the 170-acre estate of the late Edward Avery "Ned" McIlhenny. Ned imported plants from around the globe and propagated them in the Gardens, which began as a plant nursery and landscape architecture business. Naturally, Ned indulged his landscape architects in transforming his own property, and he himself designed many of its features. For example, tunnels of wisteria cover portions of the walks; roads are hedged with oriental holly. Slopes of tropical plants overlook waterfalls built of old sugar kettles. These falls spill into pools containing enormous African water lilies. Azaleas are the Gardens' most numerous plants, with acres upon acres planted by Ned and his groundskeepers. These represent more than 100 varieties whose colors include white, variegated, single, double, magenta, pink, red, and purple. Some hilltops are carpeted with wild flowers; others display clusters of evergreens ringed in chrysanthemums. The Gardens abound with wildlife – deer, nutria, rabbits, alligators, and thousands of birds, among them herons, egrets, and ibises. The old roads have been widened to permit cars to drive through the Gardens. However, parking spaces are provided so that the beauty can be enjoyed by walking the miles of hidden paths paved with stepping stones.

Dr. Carriker commented that Shane Bernard, the historian for Avery Island, has given his classes the tour of the island many times and it is shocking how diverse the history is. Cecil Hymel replied that he definitely agrees and

believes there is more than enough evidence to show that Avery Island is eligible. Lynn Lewis asked why the waterways were shaped so regularly (on the aerial map). Cecil said that those were cut by the oil companies to store barges. Dr. Saunders stated that there are some artifacts on the island that are over 10,000 years old so she has some changes to make to the document. She also stated that the LSU museum has been a benefactor of some of the Avery family baskets.

Dr. Carriker moved that the property be recommended to the State Historic Preservation Officer and Dr. Saunders seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Public Schools of the Consolidation and Conversion Era in Orleans Parish, 1945-1960 Multiple Property Submission and Alfred C. Priestley Junior High School, Orleans Parish
Presented by Gabrielle Begue, nomination preparer

This Multiple Property Documentation Form is a listing of public schools in Orleans Parish associated with the Public Schools of the Consolidation and Conversion Era in Orleans Parish, 1945–1960, and includes one historic context, African American Public Education in New Orleans, Louisiana, 1718–1960. The educational facilities included in this listing were identified as part of research efforts conducted by Clio Associates LLC to investigate the potential historic significance of one of these schools, Alfred C. Priestley Junior High School at 1601 Leonidas Street (formerly 1619 Leonidas Street). The buildings are located in various residential neighborhoods in New Orleans so that a contiguous National Register district is not feasible.

This multiple property documentation form identifies one property type, School Buildings, with two subtypes, Primary and Secondary Schools, which are significantly associated with the context. The context serves to describe and identify the different types of public educational facilities associated with African American residents in New Orleans. The property type and subtypes are derived from the Data Categories for Functions and Uses utilized by the National Register Registration Form. The context statement outlines general historic developments related to the theme. The discussion of property types includes a description of physical characteristics, an evaluation of significance, and registration requirements for the property type and subtypes. The schools included in this multiple property group are listed in Table 1.

The school buildings associated with this multiple property group (see Section E Table 1) are white public primary and secondary school buildings that were constructed in the pre-war period and then converted for African American use after World War II. They are located in a variety of different neighborhoods in conformance with the Orleans Parish School Board's policy of school construction based on neighborhood population. Dating between 1910 and 1940, these schools exhibit the physical characteristics of "modern" school architecture as it manifested in the first half of the 20th century and thus stand in marked contrast to the wood-frame schools and repurposed building types (e.g., residences) associated with African American public education in New Orleans during this period.

Alfred C. Priestley Junior High School is a former public junior high located at 1601 Leonidas Street (formerly 1619 Leonidas Street) in the Carrollton neighborhood of New Orleans, Orleans Parish, Louisiana. It occupies a full city block and consists of two contributing buildings: a 3-story school completed in 1938 and expanded in 1956 and a 1-story gymnasium constructed to the rear of the school in 1956. Initially built for white students as Walter C. Flower Elementary School, it was converted to a black junior high in 1953, when it received its current name, and was then renovated to better accommodate this new use. The buildings stopped functioning as a school by the early 1980s and were used as office space and storage by the Orleans Parish School Board. The property has been vacant for several years and the buildings have sustained some water damage and vandalism, but it otherwise retains a high degree of all seven aspects of integrity and thus easily retains eligibility for National Register listing.

Alfred C. Priestley Junior High School is significant at the local level under Criterion A in the areas of education and African American heritage as one of the surviving schools associated with the "consolidation and conversion" era of New Orleans's racially segregated public school system after World War II. It is directly associated with the historic context "African American Public Education in New Orleans, Louisiana, 1718–1960" developed as part of the multiple property submission (MPS) "Public Schools of the Consolidation and Conversion Era in Orleans Parish, 1945–1960," and meets the registration requirements of Property Subtype –

Primary and Secondary Schools under School Buildings found in Section F of the MPS cover. The period of significance begins in 1938, when the school was originally constructed as a white elementary, and ends in 1960, when the first Orleans Parish public schools were finally desegregated.

Dr. Saunders asked if the windows in the gym are operable windows. If they replace those windows, will the school be delisted. Jessica Richardson stated that no, as long as the windows are replaced in kind, it should be fine and remain listed. Dr. Carriker asked if the other four schools identified will be listed. Gabrielle Begue said she isn't sure. Jessica Richardson stated that some are probably already listed as being part of districts.

Dr. Saunders moved that the property be recommended to the SHPO and Turry Flucker seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

St. Mark Baptist Church, West Baton Rouge Parish

Presented by Donna Martin and Sadie Payne Woods, nomination preparers

St. Mark Baptist Church and Ashland Cemetery are located in the northern part of West Baton Rouge Parish on a section of land surrounded by sugar cane fields. Several small plantations - Smithfield, Allendale, Winterville, Orange Grove, and Erwinville - located within a 5 mile radius of the church and cemetery were the communities that made up the vast membership of the church in its early days. Oral history from the elders of the church report that the original church structure was carried down the Mississippi River and carried by wagon to the present site in 1867 with work continuing for ten years until its completion in 1877. This would have been the first church established after the end of slavery in the Chamberlin community. It was the center of all social activities for the African Americans from the plantation communities. The existing textured block building was built in 1922 after the first church was lost and has been relatively unaltered. The interior was updated cosmetically in 1960 with wall paneling and carpet (the original finishes are underneath). There is a small rear addition for bathrooms, kitchen, and hall. Lastly, the original stained glass windows were replaced in the 1950s within the original window opening size. One original stained glass window remains at the altar area (is encased in the wall by the rear addition). These alterations have not negatively affected the building's historic integrity and it is clearly recognizable by former students and parishioners from the period of significance. For these reasons, it is eligible for listing on the National Register.

St. Mark Baptist Church and Ashland Cemetery are locally significant under Criterion A: History in the areas of education and ethnic history: black. The church represents a major phenomenon in the development of educational facilities for African American students during segregation. The building represents the only opportunity for local African American children to receive an education starting in 1922 and ending in 1950 when Chamberlin Elementary School was built next door. Furthermore, it was a gathering place for local families to share news of their crops, families, and to fellowship with their neighbors. It was a focal point of the local African American community both for education and for life in general. Ashland Cemetery was also a focal point for the local African American community as it was a place that they owned, officially starting in 1940, and have used since the early 20th century not only for burying their loved ones, but also as a social gathering place. Its period of significance is 1877-1967.

Lynn Lewis asked if the exterior was stone. Jessica Richardson answered that it is textured CMU block. Lynn Lewis then asked why the bell was taken down. Sadie Woods replied that the structure holding the bell up was weakened. Dr. Carriker stated that churches usually aren't eligible and he wanted to make sure that education is the area of significance and that he was not comfortable with the way the info has been presented as there appears to be more emphasis on the religious aspects of the church. Jessica Richardson stated that yes that is one way that we can list churches. The educational significance and its role as a church are intertwined, but it is not listed for religious reasons. Peggy Lowe disagreed with Dr. Carriker and stated that after the Civil War, this was the first place of education for African American students in the area so the area of significance is clear. Debbie Martin stated that the church became the community meeting spot and that early education at the church was critical. The church also helped house other schools when their buildings were lost. Turry Flucker stated that these churches were often community centers with religious facades. Martha Saloman asked when the baptismal pool was added. Sadie woods stated that it was added in the 1930s and is underneath the floor. Peggy Lowe asked if it has always been called St. Mark and Ms. Woods stated that yes, for 140 years, it has always been St. Mark (not St. Mark's). The Pastor of St. Mark was in attendance and

stated that he and the congregation are very thankful and proud of the church. They also maintain the Ashland cemetery for their people to have a final resting place.

Peggy Lowe then moved that the property be recommended to the SHPO and Martha Saloman seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:44 p.m.