Settlement Succession in the Tensas Basin.

Yvonne Phillips

Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College

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SETTLEMENT SUCCESSION IN THE TENSAS BASIN

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in

The Department of Geography

by

Yvonne Phillips

B. A., Northwestern State College of Louisiana, 1947
M. A., Louisiana State University, 1950
September, 1952
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In the course of gathering the material for this dissertation and in its preparation, the writer has received aid from so many individuals that to acknowledge all of them by name would be virtually impossible. The

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A full measure of credit must go to the Office of Naval Research for sponsoring the research project of which this paper is a part. Without the help of that organization and its personnel, the completion of this paper would have presented almost prohibitive difficulties of cost and time.

Appreciation is expressed to Dr. Fred B. Kniffen who directed the research and the preparation of this paper, to the other members of the Department of Geography of Louisiana State University, and to the graduate students at the University who were associated with the writer in the initial phases of the research.

For aid in library research, the author gratefully acknowledges the help of the Staff of the Hill Memorial Library at Louisiana State University, and of
Miss Irene Pope, Reference Librarian, Scharlie M.
Russell Library, Northwestern State College. The author
is indebted to Mr. Marshall Carver of Natchitoches for
the use of the American State Papers.

This acknowledgment would be incomplete without
a special word of appreciation to Dr. John S. Kyser who
introduced the author to geography in the first place
and whose interest and encouragement in her progress
have never diminished. His advice and practical help
in all phases of the preparation of this paper from
photography to methodology and even proof-reading have
been invaluable.

Finally, to the author's parents, Mr. and Mrs.
J. M. Phillips, go heartfelt thanks for their spiritual
and financial assistance. As long-time residents in
the Tensas Basin, their excellent memory and observant
nature have aided me as nothing else could.
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ABSTRACT

This study of settlement succession in the Tensas Basin of Louisiana—defined as that area lying between the Mississippi River on the east and Bayou Macon and Black River on the west—is directed toward the determination of the sequence of occupance by whites with particular reference to the elements of the present settlement pattern. The purpose of the study is to analyze the evolution of the present settlement pattern in terms of the people who settled in the Basin; the time of settlement and of the introduction of the elements of the settlement pattern; the conditions of settlement and of the introduction of new elements—economic, political, and technical; and the processes whereby the elements of the settlement pattern changed form and function to result in the cultural landscape of the Tensas Basin today.

As described, this paper is a part of a broader study of the cultural geography of Louisiana, sponsored by the Office of Naval Research and the Department of Geography and Anthropology of Louisiana State University, in which a survey of the elements of the present settlement pattern of Louisiana and the interrelationships thereof has been conducted. This paper is one of a
series of research projects on the development of
distinctive settlement patterns in the state that con­
stitutes the second phase of the study of the cultural
geography of Louisiana.

Research involved extensive field observation
and interviews with residents as well as an examination
of records, legal abstracts, and library sources. Maps
were constructed showing phases of the development of
the settlement pattern and an extensive pictorial
record was obtained by means of photographs.

As a result of the field work, it became apparent
that certain periods of time represented distinctive
stages in the evolution of the settlement pattern of the
Tensas Basin. Hence, the study is organized on the basis
of these settlement epochs and the elements of the
pattern of each epoch is analyzed therein.

It may be concluded from the study that many
elements of the present settlement pattern--houses,
outbuildings, fences, patterns of land use--have
their origins in the initial phases of the settlement
of the Tensas Basin between 1796 and 1830 and from 1830
to 1860. The form and function have been altered in
many cases, as dictated by subsequent events, but the
derivation of most of the elements is clear. It is
also apparent from the study that the patterns imposed
on the landscape during early settlement have tended to retain a considerable degree of dominance in spite of forceful innovations rising out of the Civil War, the advent of the railroads and lumbering, the coming of the boll weevil, the depression of the 1930's, and the New Deal.

The plantation system based on the cultivation of cotton is the basis for the settlement pattern upon which more recent elements and patterns have been overlaid. The first alteration of the pattern resulted from the Civil War and the introduction of the sharecropper system; but, beginning in 1890, new elements, unrelated to the plantation system, appeared as large-scale lumbering and new modes of transportation developed. The changes in the settlement pattern which have occurred since 1930 are immediately responsible for the distinctive pattern of settlement which is characteristic of the Tensas Basin today. Principal among these is the introduction of cattle-raising, certain activities of the Federal government with regard to farming, and the exploitation of natural gas.
CHAPTER I

SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

Purpose and area of study. It is the purpose of this paper to examine the individual cultural elements in the landscape of the Tensas Basin, to determine their historical significance and development, sources of origin and original forms. Further, it is intended to determine the functional position of each trait and its associations with other traits, the circumstances under which each element was introduced and under which it is disappearing. No extensive attempts have been made to study elements which have not left an imprint on the landscape as it exists today. It is hoped that such a study, within the limits ascribed to it, will reconstruct and show the processes involved in the development of past landscapes so that the present landscape may be more thoroughly understood and interpreted and possible future trends detected.

In northeastern Louisiana there stretches a great area of alluvium bounded on the west by the Ouachita River and on the east by the Mississippi River. This area, known as the Ouachita Valley and the Tensas Basin, is divided by an older terrace formation called Macon Ridge. Tensas Basin, the eastern section, lies between
Bayou Macon, which flows along the east flank of Macon Ridge, and the Mississippi River.\(^1\)

The Tensas Basin is composed of Recent Mississippi alluvium and derives its name from a former channel of the Mississippi River.\(^2\) As a part of the Mississippi floodplain, the Tensas Basin is an area of lakes, back-swamps, old river channels, and natural levees. Soils vary from sandy silts on the natural levees through silty clays to the clays of the backswamp. The area is characterized by slight relief and a difference of only a few feet in elevation may make a significant difference in the ever-present problem of drainage as well as in the distribution of vegetational types.\(^3\)

\(^1\)See Map I, Appendix A.

\(^2\)R. J. Russell, "Quaternary History of Louisiana," Bulletin of the Geological Society of America, LI (1940), 1199-1234. The course of Tensas River through the Basin represents the oldest of the Recent channels of the Mississippi. Meander scars indicate free movement of the river during the period, principally in the central and west valley.

\(^3\)Due to the pattern of natural levees, the back-swamps are regions of interior drainage and form a huge float-time reservoir where cypress swamps occur. The swamps also contain tupelo gum, swamp red maple, Drummond red maple, and water ash. Slightly drier land is favored by overcup oak, bitter pecan, green ash, willow, water oak, and hawthorn. On the natural levees grow cottonwood, sycamore, red gum, black willow, hackberry, swamp privet, honey locust, water locust, as well as a variety of oaks.
For purposes of this study, the area may be defined further as extending to the Arkansas State Line on the north; Bayou Macon, Tensas River, and Black River on the west; and to Red River on the south. This precise delimitation of the Tensas Basin is not intended to represent definite culturo-geographic boundaries but is intended only to indicate an approximate mean of the zone of transitional merging with cultural influences from other areas of the state. The validity of the boundaries as they are described here is justified by the findings of several studies including those resulting from the survey which preceded the preparation of this paper. These findings coincide with the naive recognition of differentiation by the

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4 In terms of political divisions, the area studied includes East Carroll, Madison, Tensas, and Concordia parishes as well as that portion of Franklin Parish east of Bayou Macon. This is an area of about 1,552,640 acres.

5 The only instance in which this is not true is in the case of the northern limits of this study—the Arkansas State Line. Except for the fact that this paper is part of a study of the cultural geography of Louisiana, and limited to this state, there is no justification for the use of a political boundary in defining the northern limits of this study.
natives themselves. To many people in the Tensas Basin, the area is known as "the delta," by which is meant essentially the territory involved in this study. Rarely is any other term used and certainly the term "Tensas Basin" is not in common usage. As differentiated from "the delta," Macon Ridge to the west is known as the "hills."

While the Ouachita Valley, and Macon Ridge, may share many common threads of settlement, historical development, and material culture with the Tensas Basin, the variations which occur are sufficiently significant to impart a stamp of individuality upon each area.

The trained observer frequently and unfortunately forgets that a valuable index of no mean proportions in any culturo-geographic study is the orientation of the peoples involved. Familiarity with the ideas of natives, however uninformed or untrained, will often reveal flashes of insight about the local scene that the academician misses. Discovery and verification of the naively expressed concepts of Tensas Basin residents has proved immeasurably rewarding.

While doing the field work, the author learned very early that, in determining the prior residence of the population in the Basin, it was not enough to discover that a given individual or family had come from the "hill" area of Louisiana—usually defined as meaning that part of north Louisiana between the Ouachita and Red rivers. In most instances, it was found that if a person had come from the "hills" his prior residence had been one of the Macon Ridge parishes.
In a very real sense, Bayou Macon is a profound boundary. It not only marks a break in land forms--it lies to the east of Macon Ridge which is a terrace several feet higher than the surrounding bottom lands--but also serves as a convenient marker of cultural changes. The lands along the Mississippi River fronts were settled at an earlier date, the holdings were larger, the colored population proportionately greater, and in general there was a synthesis of natural and cultural conditions which made the separation a meaningful art.  

This fact becomes most apparent to anyone who allows himself more than a cursory survey of the areas involved. In some places, a sharp line between the patterns and elements characteristic of the Tensas Basin and those of Macon Ridge is discernible; but more often, the patterns gradually merge in a transitional zone that varies markedly in width.

Evolution of the study. The material for this paper is the result of the research, supported by the Office of Naval Research, in the cultural geography of Louisiana carried out by the Department of Geography of Louisiana State University since 1949. The first phase of the research, to be referred to hereafter in this paper as "the Survey," involved an inventory of the

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material culture of the state in order to determine the elements of the present cultural landscape, their distribution and concentrations. The field work on this survey was done during the summer of 1949. Compilation of the data secured was undertaken shortly thereafter and is still in progress.  

The survey established the settlement type patterns over the state, their nuclear areas and provided information regarding the components of the settlement patterns and the nature of their associations. On the basis of this information, the second phase of the study began. It involved a more detailed investigation of the individual elements of material culture and of the settlement patterns. This second phase of the work was designated the "historical-functional studies" since the historical development and functional nature of the elements of the landscape were the principal matters to be determined.

One area in Louisiana, the Tensas Basin, which seemed to justify such a study based on the survey data,

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9It is not the purpose of this paper to give a detailed statement and analysis of the methodology of the initial cultural survey of the state which is not directly germane to the Tensas Basin research. If such is desired, the reader is referred to the Final Status Report, Cultural Survey of Louisiana, N 7 ONR 35606, November, 1951.
is the subject of this paper. As a result of the survey, a largely static picture of the culture complexes and elements of the area was available but questions of cultural succession and relative age of the various elements were largely unanswered. There was no information regarding what had happened in the past to produce the present landscape. The historical-functional studies of the cultural areas of the state were initiated to solve these problems so that the third phase of research might begin: a unified study of the state combining the results of the several historical-functional studies and relating the culturo-geographic changes in each area to factors such as migration, technological advances, and political events.

This study, like the similar studies now in progress, is based on the theory that investigations should begin at the core of the settlement complex and proceed outward from it in all directions in order to obtain a clear picture of the "pure" type and the variations thereof. Thus, the primary responsibility of

10 Other studies now underway include the examination of the "midwestern complex" in southwestern Louisiana, the hill settlement of the state, and the bayou settlements in southeastern Louisiana.
this study is to examine the characteristic settlement pattern of the Tensas Basin. It is outside the scope of the paper to consider in detail the nature of the transitional areas as such or to ascribe definitive areal limits to the settlement pattern. To solve these latter two problems satisfactorily, further peripheral studies must be made and the completion of the studies of other culturally nuclear areas in Louisiana and adjoining states must be accomplished.

Elements to be studied. The selection of material culture elements to be studied in the Tensas Basin was made on the basis of the preliminary survey data. Those elements which seemed to have great significance in terms of number, either in extent of distribution or in the concentrations thereof, were selected. Other criteria included size, conspicuousness in the landscape, and economic importance. Actually, no aspect of the cultural landscape was regarded as beyond the interest of the author; and considerable investigation of the minor aspects of the landscape was carried out, at times with great reward.

However, some selectivity had to be exercised in determining those elements most worthy of intensive study, at least in the initial phases of the work. One
very practical reason for selectivity is the fact that
this study, as well as the other historical-functional
studies in progress, is based on information gleaned from
the Survey of the state. The data on hand from this
Survey are almost limitless in the number of elements
that have to be mapped and studied individually; and
the need for making significant cross-correlations
between certain elements requires literally thousands
of maps. The effort required to complete the work in
its entirety is something which a single individual
could not reasonably accomplish within any predictable
length of time. Indeed, complete analysis and mapping
will require the work of several people over an extended
period. For that reason, the author candidly admits the
limitations of this paper but maintains that the
restrictions in no way invalidate or diminish the value
of the study as an initial attempt to analyze landscape
succession in the Tensas Basin. This study will provide
a framework which can be and must be supplemented by
further research.

On the basis of the criteria mentioned above, the
elements of the landscape chosen for study are as
follows:

1. Houses: form and construction relative to age,
   length of use in the Tensas Basin, pattern
of occurrence, origin, conditions under which introduced or altered in form.

2. Barns and other outbuildings: same information as for houses.

3. Land use: size and pattern of fields, condition, location, evidences of changes in land use--when and why, methods used and changes.

4. Transportation: water travel, roads, railroads--changes in patterns of transport as such and relation to development of settlement pattern.

5. Other aspects of the landscape such as fences, silos, windmills, churches, cemeteries.

Attention is also directed toward the agents of cultural landscape succession--the people themselves, where settlers came from, the time of arrival, and conditions of arrival.

Research procedure. Research for this paper, apart from the work on the survey, was started in the spring of 1950. The preliminary work was done primarily with library sources which have continued to yield information throughout the course of the study. Unfortunately, the Tensas Basin is one of the less well-documented areas of Louisiana; and the author learned that only with persistence could pertinent information be located. It must be confessed that this difficulty has not been overcome entirely.11

11Local newspapers, principally parish weeklies, have had to be excluded almost entirely. Files are very
The major part of the field work was accomplished during a three-month field season during the summer of 1950. A number of extended field trips have been made to the Tensas Basin from September, 1950 through June, 1952. The value of this field work has been augmented by the background possessed by the author as a one-time resident of the Basin and the contacts made with former residents now living in Arkansas, Mississippi, Texas, and other areas of Louisiana.

The procedure adopted for the field work was simple but effective. The large area to be covered dictated that a preliminary reconnaissance of the area be made and sample areas selected. Selection of sample areas was made on the basis of data obtained from the general survey and substantiated by library research and the personal orientation and judgment of the author. Recommendations of persons familiar with the region supplemented this information.

Based on the survey data, the primary core of the Tensas Basin complex seemed to be located in Concordia Parish, centered around Vidalia and reflecting incomplete except in the publishing offices where very little attempt at filing is made and systematized research precluded by the general disorder.
the influence of the early settlement at Natchez. Secondary centers of influence which seemed worthy of investigation, although they were not apparent from the preliminary study of survey data, were Vicksburg and Lake Providence. Actually, for the Tensas Basin, the interesting circumstance is that historically the principal centers of cultural influence have been located outside the Basin, a condition that is true to some extent today. Other than Vicksburg and Natchez, the Black River and Bayou Macon areas offer excellent examples of this fact. It would seem that the primary cores of influence for this area were the Avoyelles Parish and Ouachita Valley settlements. It has been only recently that any area in the Basin has become a nucleus and point of dispersion for a cultural pattern not having its immediate forerunner in a specific locality adjacent to the Basin. In the opinion of the author, the Tallulah area qualifies as a core area in this sense.

\[12\] The orientation of the people in the upper part of the Basin as represented by Madison and East Carroll parishes is today toward Vicksburg and Monroe to a greater extent than toward Natchez.

\[13\] This point will be discussed in Chapter VI.
Based on these ideas, the Lake Providence, Tallulah, and Vidalia areas were chosen as primary sampling points. Several of the more remote areas influenced by one or more of the core areas were also selected, including Newlight, Quimby, Milliken, and Clayton. While outside the area of study as defined in this paper, Como in Franklin Parish and Readland, Arkansas were also given some attention which proved valuable.

Although the places enumerated were those most intensively studied, field work was by no means limited to them. Virtually every road in the Basin was traversed at least once and many were travelled several times. However, the field worker who limits himself to roads passable to automobiles will miss much of value in a study of this kind. The author often found it profitable to desert the automobile as a means of transportation and proceed on foot, by boat, or on horseback.

Information was secured on a number of points simply by personal observations. Upon entering an area, the best procedure was found to be formally presenting oneself to the community leaders and officials to acquaint them with the problem. The author was fortunate in most cases to know one or two people with
whom a liaison could be made; but, in addition, the parish courthouse, Chamber of Commerce, Agricultural Adjustment Association, or the Production and Marketing Administration offices were excellent sources of information. An initial interview of this type resulted in information concerning places and people to see, and frequently the author found that persons recommended in this way were expecting a visit when she called and were prepared with information. Usually this procedure had something of a chain reaction. Interviews progressed from the general questioning of those first contacted to the gathering of more and more specific information from numerous others recommended as having knowledge of a particular topic. It was found worthwhile to call on many of these informants a second or third time after a lapse of several days in which the persons had time to remember forgotten details.

Since it is virtually impossible to predict where the next informational gold mine will occur, something of a house-to-house canvas involving broad general questioning and conversation with residents was employed. This procedure proved immensely valuable since the rank-and-file population was almost invariably unhurried, willing to talk, and possessed information not
acquired—or at least concealed—by the community leaders. An old Negro is frequently as valuable an informant as the leading citizen and verification of statements is required equally in both instances.

In the interviews with residents, no formal check list or schedule was used. The wide variety of people questioned precluded the possibility of devising a schedule applicable to all and it is maintained that the range of topics and the ramifications of them could not have been anticipated in preparing a schedule. Preparing an adequate schedule, even in retrospect, would be a monumental task; but, granted that one were devised, it is doubtful that the results would warrant it. It was found that many of those questioned became nervous and were averse to having their comments recorded. The author soon learned to take a minimum of notes during the interview and to record the information in full immediately at the end of the conversation. Further, the approach to and the framing of each question had to be varied in accordance with the background of the person who was being interviewed. The best approach was to make the interview as informal as possible and to begin the conversation on a point obviously of interest to the "interviewee." Use of the
vernacular and tactful guidance of the conversation by the interviewer was required at all times. As a guide in place of a schedule, the author used a generalized check list written in a small notebook and allowed the course of the interview to determine the trend of the more specific questioning.  

Other methods of gathering information included the examination of parish and other local records. Patience in examining a family photograph album was frequently rewarding and private papers at times yielded data. Photographs were made to record elements in the present landscape, and rough sketches and maps proved of use. Other valuable aids were topographic quadrangles, parish highway maps, ownership maps, and aerial photographs.

Organization of dissertation. This paper is organized on a chronological basis as would be suggested by use of the term "historical-functional." As

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14 The items included in this check list were those elements of the landscape listed on pages 9 and 10.

15 In most cases, the few such records of value in the possession of residents are so highly valued that it is very rare to be allowed more than a cursory examination of them. For detailed study or reproduction, the author would require more prestige or financial backing than she now commands.
research proceeded, certain periods of time seemed to
demand recognition as phases in the evolution of the
landscape of the Tensas Basin. The phases as they
developed are as follows:

1. The period prior to 1830, specifically 1796 to
   1830, or what might be termed the period of exploratory
   settlement;

2. The period from 1830 to 1860, the period which
   represents the first extensive peopling of the area and
   the development of many of the distinctive features of
   the landscape;

3. The period from 1860 to 1890, essentially a
   transitional epoch caused by the Civil War and its
   aftermath;

4. The period from 1890 to 1930, a time of revitali-
   zation for the Tensas Basin and one which witnessed
   many changes and innovations in the landscape; and

5. The period from 1930 to the present in which
   further changes dating from the depression years have
   occurred with remarkable rapidity.

This treatment of what might be termed the
"landscape epochs" is followed by a summary and con-
clusion.
Elements and complexes are discussed for the period in which they first appear or become significant. Many of the elements and complexes are characteristic parts of the landscape for more than one period--some have been integral parts of the landscape throughout the history of white settlement in the Tensas Basin. In such cases, for periods subsequent to the introduction of the elements, their continued presence is noted along with any changes that have occurred; but to prevent repetition, the characterization of the original pattern is not given. Thus, the content of each chapter is built upon that of the preceding chapter to the extent that no one chapter will be completely intelligible when read by itself. Continuity of study is essential if the purpose of the paper is to be achieved and if the analysis of material gained from the survey as discussed in Chapter VI is to be truly meaningful.

As a supplement, two "case studies" of areas among those the author observed most intensively are included. It is hoped that they will serve to amplify the evolution of landscapes in the Tensas Basin since they localize the process and indicate the nature of the changes in the landscape in a way that a general treatment cannot do.
Further supplementary material, included in this study, involves maps and photographs. Due to the large numbers of maps and photographs which are incorporated and the repeated references to them, it was deemed advisable to include them as a body in the appendices. The study is thoroughly footnoted for easy reference to either maps or photographs which are arranged to allow continuity if examined alone.

The maps have been derived from a number of sources which are noted, if possible, on the map itself. Maps which are the result of the Survey preceding this study are so indicated simply by the appearance of "The Survey" on the margin of the map. Maps which are reconstructions of the author based on a composite of the memory of residents, bits of evidence remaining in the landscape, and similar sources have no sources indicated on the maps. In some cases, however, information from a number of maps of Louisiana for various periods have been used to produce a single map. In such instances, the source of the map is shown as "Historic Maps." A complete list of maps thus employed is given in the bibliography.

All photographs not otherwise marked were made by the author in the course of the field work.
Photographs accompanied by the initials of the photographer were made almost without exception by some member of the author's family during the past fifty years. The date of the photograph, as well as the general locality in which it was taken, is indicated in every case. Almost two hundred photographs are included in order to give as complete a pictorial record of the landscape as possible.
CHAPTER II
THE TENSAS BASIN PRIOR TO 1830

For approximately a century, or during the French and Spanish colonial periods, the settlement of Louisiana was confined largely to what is now called French Louisiana. Although isolated settlements were in existence, there was no general regional occupancy of the entire Red River Valley, the great stretch of the Tensas Basin, or of the bordering areas in the Upland Coastal Plain. The early posts or towns that were established during the colonial period have merit in directing attention to critical foci but they must not be allowed to obscure the larger regional settlements. This is particularly true in the Tensas Basin where the establishment of small agglomerations preceded general settlement by many years.

To White men, the Tensas Basin from the time of DeSoto well into the eighteenth century was largely an unexplored and unknown area. After DeSoto's brief visit, one hundred forty years passed before another white man, LaSalle, saw the region. Except for a few small Indian clearings, the Basin was a land of unbroken forest—giant cypress, water oak, pecan, and sweet gum, as well
as ash, elm, walnut, willow, and cottonwood. Wraiths of trails, many times ankle-deep in water and penetrable only by the Indians, wound through the chaos of vines, cane, and brush.

The celebrated traveler Christian Schultz on his voyage down the Mississippi River in 1808 noted that the growth of cane began to increase every day after he moved south of the Ohio River and increased in height until it was 30 feet high and the stalks were about four to five feet (sic) in circumference.\(^1\) The growth then began to diminish until the thirty-first parallel was reached when it disappeared altogether. The dense cane formed the lair of wild animals such as bears, wolves, and panthers. A man did not venture into the jungle lest he lose his way or forfeit his life to the wild beasts.\(^2\)

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\(^1\) The circumference of the cane was more nearly four to five inches. Southern cane (Arundinaria gigantea) rises to a height of thirty feet, "with numerous, short, spreading branches." It is a native of the United States and is found from "Virginia to southern Ohio and Illinois, south to Florida and Texas and being cultivated as an ornamental elsewhere. The plants sometime form almost pure stands, making the well-known cane brakes of the South that often are extensive in lowlands...Favors rich lowlands along rivers, with plants flowering simultaneously over great areas at irregular but frequent intervals. Erect stems or culms may be as much as three inches through, hard and strong, and make an impenetrable barrier to traffic since they grow crowded closely together." The young shoots, leaves and seeds serve as forage for cattle. E. Laurence Palmer, *Fieldbook of Natural History* (New York: Whittlesey House, 1949), p. 103.

White men observed this setting from their boats, or by brief visits to Indian tribes on the banks of the river, and passed on. The scattered remains of the mound-builders and a few place names are all that remain to invite speculation into the past.

**Indian settlement.** The main village of the Tensas Indians was on the banks of Lake St. Joseph in Tensas Parish. A lesser settlement was located on what is now known as Indian Village Plantation in northern Concordia Parish. The Tensas Indians had hunting grounds scattered throughout the Basin; two camping sites for hunters were at Frogmore and Horse Shoe Lake where villages may have been located as well.3 There are mounds in West Carroll Parish along Bayou Macon which are among the largest in the area. (168)4 Others are to be found in Madison Parish back of the "Sondheimer Forties," around Tallulah, and at Mound.5

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4 See Appendix B, Photograph 168. Numbers in parentheses throughout the text indicate photographs in Appendix B to which the reader is referred.

5 F. W. and L. H. Williamson, *Northeast Louisiana* (Monroe, Louisiana: Historical Record Association, 1939), p. 5. Williamson states that at least one of these mounds has been used as a cemetery by whites. Although the author has never seen a mound put to such use in the Tensas Basin--nor had a case reported--she has
At the time of settlement by Europeans, no Indians other than hunters were found in the Tensas Basin: only crude camps were maintained and no cultivation was attempted. Indian groups were present in small numbers until the latter part of the nineteenth century. There were Indians in Concordia Parish as late as 1851.6

**Conditions of white settlement.** The transfer of Louisiana from Spain and France to the United States had a marked influence in changing both the tempo and pattern of settlement in Louisiana. In the Tensas Basin, this event, together with the influence exerted by the cotton gin, virtually marks the beginning of settlement. The effect of the latter momentous invention had very little immediate effect in Louisiana, but exerted a pronounced influence in the state by the second and third decades of the nineteenth century until the outbreak of the Civil War. Agriculture and commerce

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seen an instance of it south of Houma in Terrebonne Parish. White settlers have also made use of the mounds for gardens and orchards.

6*Ibid.*, pp. 5-6. The author's grandmother, who was born in 1856, remembered seeing in her youth small groups of roving Indians. The Indians of this period did not build mounds.
dominated the settlement of the Tensas Basin and the early spread of Americans into the area represented a virgin occupance by White men in contrast to other areas of the state where it was a process of infiltration into older rather thinly settled agricultural areas.

In the settlement of Louisiana, there was no exclusive desire for alluvial lands. Floods and disease actually caused the delay of settlement in the Tensas Basin in preference for higher, better-drained hill lands.

Ordinarily the upland and mountain regions were settled first. The bottoms were avoided because they were thought to be too low and swampy to be healthful. Then, too, the jungle was so dense that as one old settler expressed it, 'you couldn't a stuck a butcher knife to the handle in the cane brake that covered the whole face o' the yearth.' In contrast to the lowland jungle, the uplands were more inviting. There was little underbrush and a settler could drive a wheeled vehicle by the nearest route from place to place through the open forest.  

It may be added that the tendency of settlers to seek out lands similar to those which they had left intensified this distrust of the bottoms. These ideas are substantiated by Williamson in his discussion of

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7Dick, op. cit., p. viii.
8Williamson, op. cit., p. 81.
Catahoula Parish which is adjacent to, but not a part of, the Tensas Basin. Until 1808, Catahoula was a part of Rapides but the settlers of the area were linked as much to Concordia as to Rapides. A higher percentage of the earlier settlers was from Spain with a few from the Atlantic states. Apparently they favored the area because they were afraid of the swamps and preferred to locate their grants in the pine woods where the danger of floods was less.

The first active encounter of white men with the Tensas Basin was as a route of passage—an area to be crossed and escaped from as quickly as possible. Overcropping and other problems in the hills brought about a later emphasis on the bottom lands that has resulted in a fluctuating but never-ending movement of people from the hills into the land of the Tensas Basin. However, the Basin was an unsettled wilderness enclosed on all sides by settled areas until after the beginning of the nineteenth century. Settlement began just prior to the purchase of Louisiana in 1803 on the basis of

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9 As if natural dangers were not enough, travelers had to contend with the outlaw bands that preyed upon migrants. Bayou Macon and Joe's Bayou are said to have derived their names from the leaders of two such groups.
Spanish land grants, but large-scale settlement did not begin until two decades later. All the land along the Mississippi River is surveyed according to the arpent system of the French and Spanish in contrast to the interior which has the rectangular General Land Office survey. This fact should not be interpreted to mean that settlement was extensive along the Mississippi prior to 1803; such was definitely not the case.

The Natchez settlement. The principal nucleus for the settlement of the Tensas Basin was Natchez, founded in 1716 by Bienville and originally known as Fort Rosalie. Following the establishment of the fort, some land concessions were made from year to year and the immediate vicinity was settled. These activities were confined to the east bank of the Mississippi, for

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11 The settlement at Natchez was twenty-five miles deep, one hundred miles long. The settlers came from the Atlantic seaboard about the time of the American Revolution and were primarily hill people, some of whom had property. Large plantations began to be characteristic about 1803 and the area became wealthy. To own a hundred slaves was common. Dick, *op. cit.*, p. 79.
as Calhoun states: 12

Although the site of the present town of Vidalia was in rifle range of Fort Rosalie, Concordia remained a wilderness for approximately eighty years after the first white settlement at Natchez. The French neither established a post nor made any land grants in Concordia; although, following the founding of New Orleans, grants were made as far up as Point Coupée. The settlement of the west bank in our locality was not undertaken because of the Natchez Indian Wars and the final abandonment of Fort Rosalie. 13

There is one very interesting notation that Calhoun 14 makes to the effect that when Fort Rosalie was abandoned, some of the French crossed the Mississippi and went to what is now Catahoula Parish where they settled along Black River. This settlement would antedate the arrival of the French from the Avoyelles Parish area and serves to illustrate the fact that the Tensas Basin began as a cross-roads where the earlier colonists

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12 Calhoun, loc. cit.

13 Fort Rosalie was abandoned in February, 1730. The Natchez Indians, who retreated to Sicily Island, were pursued and in January, 1732, were decisively defeated. Those who were not killed, scattered through the swamp and eventually reached either the Red River where they attacked Fort St. Denis (Natchitoches) or Mississippi where they and the Chickasaws continued the fight against the French. Ibid., p. 47.

14 Loc. cit.
of Louisiana, the French and Spanish, met the Anglo-Saxons who ultimately gained dominance. As Williamson\(^{15}\) aptly expresses it, "the character of the entire area has become completely overlaid with an Anglo-Saxon flavor like the overtones of a great mural," with the result that the "story of this region is especially important as one of the most significant links in the progressive march of the Anglo-Saxon peoples of this country in opening vast territories west of the Mississippi."

Early land grants in the Tensas Basin. In any event, Natchez was the base for settlement of the Tensas Basin in this early period. However, according to the records, the site at Vidalia was not the first to be settled unless credit is given to the settlement of a group of Acadian refugees which is believed to have existed for a time across the river from Natchez.\(^{16}\) More positive evidence supports the supposition that the first definite land grant was that given in 1796 to

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\(^{15}\) Williamson, *op. cit.*, pp. xiii-xiv.

\(^{16}\) Charles Gayarre, *History of Louisiana* (New Orleans: Handsell Company, 1903), Vol. 2, pp. 185, 245. The substance of this belief is the statement made by Aubry in 1768 that Ulloa had established a post opposite Natchez to counteract British influence at Natchez.
Louis Bringier by Carondelet, consisting of 40,000 superficial arpents\textsuperscript{17} at the junction of the Black and Tensas rivers.\textsuperscript{18} The Bringier Grant was the largest in the Concordia district of Louisiana and was the only one on Black River other than the Henry Confirmation of 1,000 acres in the same area. Antonio DeVaca, Juan Mansel, and Miguel Sante among others entered claims on Bayou Macon but there is no proof that they actually settled there.\textsuperscript{19} No Spanish grants were given in the interior, away from the river fronts, and none were given on Tensas River above the Bringier Grant.\textsuperscript{20} Other

\textsuperscript{17}A superficial arpent is a square arpent.

\textsuperscript{18}The principal point open to question is the statement by Williamson, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 28, that Governor Miro granted to Don Juan Hebrard 1,000 acres of land at the junction of the Ouachita, Tensas, and Little rivers on March 22, 1786. In the \textit{American State Papers, Documents, Legislative and Executive of the Congress of the United States in relation to Public Lands, from March 4, 1789 to February 27, 1809} (Washington, D. C.: Duff Green, 1834), Vol. 2, p. 715, however, is the statement that the Hebrard grant had been occupied for only ten years in 1812. The discrepancy may be due to the fact that actual settlement of the grant took place at a time much later than the official grant. Such a circumstance was not uncommon and was definitely the case in the Bringier grant.

\textsuperscript{19}Williamson, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 90.

\textsuperscript{20}Calhoun, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 434. "The Bringier grant comprised all land from the intersection of the east line of Moro Plantation with Tensas River, thence down Tensas River to Black River, one-quarter to
early grants for which there is some definite information are those given to Thomas and James Grafton and to John Grafton in 1797 by Carondelet. Both of these grants were on the Mississippi River and comprised 1,000 and 500 arpents respectively.

Many of the legitimate settlers were not actual or potential residents of the Tensas Basin. Perusal of the information pertinent to the confirmation of grants in the *American State Papers* indicates that many of the claims did not represent actual cases of settlement but only intermittent occupancy involving no cultivation or clearing of land.

One-half mile below the residence of Joseph Willson at Lismore, then due east to the west side of Horse Shoe Lake, thence around the north side of the lake and down the east side to within one-quarter mile of Cross Cocodrie Bayou, thence due east...to the Range line between Ranges 7 and 8, thence north with the Range line to beginning."


*Settlers were legitimate in the sense that they obtained permission to settle the land in the form of grants.*


*There were no "A" type claims—those with unquestioned validity—listed for the Tensas Basin. Of the 240 claims, forty-five were in the "B" class, involving some questionable aspects but recommended for confirmation; and 195 in the "C" class in which the evidence did not seem to support confirmation. These records are the result of the attempt of the United*
The Vidalia settlement.\textsuperscript{24} The establishment of a settlement opposite Natchez can be dated definitely, however. On March 4, 1798, Don Jose Vidal\textsuperscript{25} petitioned for 800 arpents for himself and 500 arpents each for his sons. His petition was granted on April 21, 1798. Actual settlement occurred also in 1798 according to the testimony of one William Gillespie, made in 1812:

That in 1798, he was engaged by Capt. Jose Vidal to make a settlement and improvement on ... a parcel of land situate in the States Government to determine and protect bona fide claims in the newly acquired Louisiana territory where tenure was based on a variety of conditions—French or Spanish grants, Indian titles, and squatters rights. Fabricated claims and fraudulent sales were numerous. Land speculation was rife and many people established claims only to sell off the timber or for their resale.

\textsuperscript{24}The Vidalia site, opposite the bluff at Natchez, on Waverly Point is fifty-five to sixty-five feet above sea level. The principal reason for founding the town on a point bar where relief is slight and subject to floods was the value of the site as a ferry landing opposite Natchez. The location of most of the earlier land grants as discussed in the next few pages bears out the statement that the higher lands or the natural levees on the cut bank sides of the meanders north and south of Waverly Point were preferred to the Vidalia site.

\textsuperscript{25}Vidal, born about 1755 in Spain, was a Captain in the Spanish army and served as secretary to Governor Gayoso de Lemos at Natchez. When Stephen Minor was made governor of the province, Vidal was made Commandant at Natchez. Vidal's purported reason for desiring a grant was the fact that the United States was preparing to take possession of Natchez and he wished to move to Spanish land across the river.
County of Concordia, on the west margin of the Mississippi River, opposite the City of Natchez, containing 800 arpents of land; that he crossed the river in that year, and did go upon the said premises and make an improvement for the said Vidal, by clearing lands and residing thereon; that he continued on said land until 1801, in which year said Joseph Vidal took possession thereof for several years thereafter, with his family... \(^{26}\)

The original post was known variously as New Concordia, Post of Concord, and Post of Concordia, but the name was later changed to Vidalia. A map of the settlement, made in 1802, shows three acres in the post.

According to Peter Little:

In 1801 there were but few people living at Vidalia ... perhaps five or six houses. In 1803 or 1804 there were about twenty or thirty acres cleared and in cultivation on the Thompson tract. \(^{27}\)

Apparently there was no settlement at the site other than that made for Vidal and his family until

\(^{26}\) The information regarding the Vidal grant is found in the *American State Papers*, pp. 633-34, 637, where it is listed as Claim No. 221. The provisions of the grant were as follows: "...opposite the landing and Plaza of Natchez a strip fronting 3 arpents on the river by a depth of 20 arpents shall be reserved for the purpose of building a stronghouse, in case it should be thought advisable for the government to erect one, and also to provide a place of refuge for reputable persons living east of the river who might not wish to remain there..." This reserved strip is shown on the U.S. Township Plat as Sect. 47, Tp 7 N, R. 10E. Calhoun, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

\(^{27}\) *Ibid.*, p. 64. Thompson was a brother-in-law of Joseph Vidal, who, along with other members of the Vidal family, settled at Vidalia.
1802 or 1803 when a number of grants for town lots are recorded.\textsuperscript{28} The post was transferred to the United States in 1804; and, at that time, according to the act of transfer, there were no public buildings. Vidal's home had been used for that purpose.\textsuperscript{29}

**Expansion of settlement from Vidalia.** Perusal of the early records show that the majority of land grants and settlements in the first two decades of the nineteenth century were located in the vicinity of Vidalia. Certainly, the overwhelming number of them were located in what are now Tensas and Concordia parishes. Grants were made principally along the Mississippi from very near Red River into Tensas Parish around Lakes St. Joseph, Bruin, St. John, and Concordia. A few grants were made in 1801, a larger number in 1802, and a still larger number in 1803. The recipients of these grants were principally of Anglo-Saxon stocks with a sprinkling of French or Spanish. Their names indicate Irish,\textsuperscript{30} Scotch-Irish, English, and, to a lesser extent, German origins. Most of these people had come from the eastern states, stopped

\textsuperscript{28}Loc. cit.

\textsuperscript{29}Ibid., p. 215.

\textsuperscript{30}In the 1850's another contingent of the Irish came into the Basin to work on levee construction.
for a time in the Mississippi territory, then crossed the river. They began occupying land under Spanish concessions as much as two or three years prior to the Louisiana Purchase in anticipation of that sale.  

Among these grants was one for 740 acres to Don Manuel Texada which stretched from Lake Concordia to the Mississippi. Made in 1801, this grant is now a part of Tacony and Arnaudlia plantations near Ferriday. In all, one hundred seventy grants were made along the Mississippi in Tensas Basin during or before 1803, thirty on Lake Concordia, seven on Tensas River, six on Bayou Vidal, four on Lake St. Peter, and five on Lake St. Joseph. These grants varied in size from seven acres to approximately 2,800 acres with the majority being about five hundred to seven hundred acres.

The Lake Providence settlement. A minor nucleus of settlement during this period was located around Lake Providence in what is now East Carroll Parish

31 The land fever generated by the Louisiana Purchase was felt in the Natchez district where the population between 1800 and 1810 increased 252%. Dick, op. cit., p. 79.

32 Calhoun, op. cit., pp. 54-55.

33 American State Papers, pp. 668-735. See Map III, Appendix A.

34 See Table I, p. 36.

35 It was called Stack Island at the time.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acres</th>
<th>Number of Grants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 - 99</td>
<td>3*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100 - 199</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200 - 299</td>
<td>48</td>
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<tr>
<td>300 - 399</td>
<td>37</td>
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<td>400 - 499</td>
<td>22</td>
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<td>500 - 599</td>
<td>38</td>
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<tr>
<td>900 - 999</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1000 - 1999</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000 - 2999</td>
<td>1*#</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The smallest of these three grants was for seven acres. The other two grants were the only ones granted to Negroes, described as "Victoria, Free Negress" and "Hannah, a free Negress." They received thirty acres and twenty-nine acres respectively.

#This largest grant was to Jose Vidal for about 2,800 acres.

and extending into Arkansas. Lake Providence was the eastern terminal of the most northerly route through the Tensas Basin to the west and developed more or less independently from the influence of Natchez.

It is sometimes claimed that Lake Providence is the oldest town in Louisiana north of Natchitoches, based on the belief that a log cabin was built there as headquarters for trappers during the original period of French rule. However this may be, it is known that the area was occupied by river pirates at the time, and that bona fide settlers were there by 1803. There were approximately ten or eleven plantations in the area with land under cultivation by 1813. Most of them were

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36 *Louisiana, American Guide Series* (New York: Hastings House, 1941), p. 591. It is unlikely that any true settlement existed: "There is no other settlement on the Mississippi except the small one called Concord, opposite to Natchez, till you come to the Arkansas River, whose mouth is 250 leagues above New Orleans." An *Account of Louisiana*, 1803, as cited in Kyser, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

37 The name of the town was derived from the difficulties experienced with river pirates. If the river men passed Bunch's Bend and reached the town without incident, they regarded it as providence.

located on the west side of the lake, although the earliest settlement seems to have been on the ridge between the lake and the river where the town was originally located.

Squatter settlement. It is generally believed that prior to and simultaneous with these recorded grants and settlements, hunters and trappers including some Canadian French voyageurs scattered throughout the area from their bases of operation at Monroe or Natchez.39 Some eventually made more or less permanent settlements from place to place without benefit of grants. Williamson gives the following account of the life of hunters in the early nineteenth century:40

A great part of the inhabitants still continue the old practice of hunting during the winter season; their peltries go to the merchant at a low rate in exchange for necessaries. In the summer the people content themselves with making corn barely sufficient for bread through the year; in this manner they always remain extremely poor. Some few who have conquered their habits of indolence and addicted themselves to agriculture,

39Williamson, op. cit., p. 22. Williamson says the country often had a "smoky, misty appearance due to the habit of the Indians and hunters to fire the woods." Ibid., p. 60.

40Ibid., pp. 61-62.
live more comfortably and taste a little of the sweets of civilized life.

The hunters count much of their profits from the oil drawn from the bear's fat, which at New Orleans is always of ready sale, and is much esteemed for its wholesomeness in cooking, being preferred to butter or hog's lard. It is found to keep longer than any other oil of the same nature, without turning rancid; they have a method of boiling it from time to time with sweet bay leaves which restores it or facilitates its conservation.

Audubon, during his journey down the Ohio and Mississippi in 1820, wrote an account of similar unchronicled settlers in his journals. It is a more revealing and informed account of squatters than is usually found among the writings of the period.\(^4\)

The individuals who became squatters, choose that sort of life of their own free will. They mostly remove from other parts of the United States, after finding that land has become too high in price, and they are persons who, having a family of strong and hardy children, are anxious to provide for themselves ...  

I shall introduce you to the members of a family from Virginia ... The land which they and their ancestors have possessed for a hundred years ... is completely worn out ... Their strenuous efforts to render it productive have failed. They dispose of everything too cumbersome or expensive for them to remove, retaining only a few horses, a servant or two, and such implements of husbandry and

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other articles as may be necessary ...

I think I see them ... harnessing their horses, and attaching them to their wagons, which are already filled with bedding, provisions, and the younger children, while on their outside are fastened spinning-wheels and looms, and a bucket filled with tar and tallow swings between the hind wheels ...

Days and weeks, nay months, of unremitting toil, pass before they gain the end of their journey ... They have been travelling from the beginning of May to that of September ... But now, arrived on the banks of the broad stream, they gaze in amazement ... they at once cross the Mississippi, and select their place of habitation.

... A small patch of ground is cleared by the axe and the fire, a temporary cabin is erected, to each of the cattle is attached a jingling bell before it is let loose into the neighboring canebrake, and the horses remain about the house, where they find sufficient food at that season. The first trading-boat that stops at their landing, enables them to provide themselves with some flour, fish-hooks, and ammunition, as well as other commodities. The looms are mounted, the spinning-wheels soon furnish some yarn, and in a few weeks the family ... array themselves in suits adapted to the climate. The father and son meanwhile have sown turnips and other vegetables; and from some Kentucky flatboat a supply of live poultry has been procured.

... The largest ash-trees are felled; their trunks are cut, split, and corded in front of the building; a large fire is lighted at night on the edge of the waters, and soon a steamer calls to purchase wood ...

when spring returns ... their enlarged field is planted with corn, potatoes, and pumpkins. Their stock of cattle, too, has augmented; the
steamer, which now stops there as if by preference, buys a calf or a pig, together with the whole of their wood.

...The sons have by this time discovered a swamp covered with excellent timber,...and have seen many great rafts of saw logs, bound for the mills of New Orleans ...A few cross-saws are purchased,...in a short time their first raft is made ...and loaded with cordwood.

Every successive year has increased their savings. They now possess a large stock of horses, cows, and hogs ...The government secures to the family the lands on which, twenty years before, they settled in poverty ...Larger buildings are erected on piles, secure from the inundations; where a single cabin once stood, a neat village is now to be seen; warehouses, stores, and workshops increase the importance of the place ....

Characteristics of settlement: buildings and crops. Much of the description of squatter settlement is true of those settlements based on land grants. There are general clues in early records as to the characteristics of settlement during this early period. Although the log cabin has entirely disappeared in the Tensas Basin,\[42\] this symbol of pioneering was an integral part of the early settlement. The construction of a log cabin might represent either the first or second phase

\[42\]A few dilapidated cabins can still be found in the Basin but none are used as dwellings. They are either used for storing hay or are completely abandoned.
of settlement to the pioneer in the Basin. In some cases only a rude camp was constructed and a more habitable cabin built at a later time. A more important consideration than the cabin seemed to be the accomplishment of the monumental task of clearing the land--cutting timber and cane--and planting a small patch of corn and, perhaps, some vegetables. The plot of corn was rarely more than an acre in size, more often less than that. The maximum seems to have been about ten acres.\(^4^3\)

These fields were enclosed either by picket or rail fences and in some cases the entire establishment was enclosed by the fence. Sometimes the temporary dwelling was made of pickets which served until more substantial shelter could be constructed. In the *American State Papers*,\(^4^4\) the claim (No. 197) of a Phineas Smith is described as having a "house of pickets." The claim of one James Cook\(^4^5\) was described as having a

\(^4^3\)A rather unusual case was that of Antoine Carrel (or Carroll) who had a six hundred arpent grant on Tensas River, of which twenty acres were in cultivation by 1802. *American State Papers*, p. 629. In 1802 he also planted some sugar cane which is believed to be the first such effort in the Tensas Basin. Williamson, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

\(^4^4\) *American State Papers*, p. 632.

camp of pickets and "not more than an acre of cleared ground." It is stated that he "later built a cabin and cultivated about an acre of corn in an enclosed field." The log cabin was never fully developed in the Tensas Basin as it was in other parts of the South; and it has disappeared earlier than in many other areas. The reason seems to be the relatively recent settlement of the area in any significant numbers. The cabin was not able to become entrenched before the advent of the flush pre-Civil War days when planters could afford to

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46 Whether palmetto was ever used extensively in the construction of temporary living quarters is not known. Occasionally palmetto was used as a roofing material and may have been more commonly used than the records indicate.

47 American State Papers, p. 621.

build a better house. This plus the coming of the saw-mill prevented the log cabin from remaining a folk-type in the Basin. However, these circumstances have not precluded the existence of the log barn or crib. A handful survive and are in use at the present time in some of the less accessible places. (75, 76, 77) They seem so anachronistic in the present landscape that one seldom fails to make note of them.49

As the reader undoubtedly has noted, corn must have loomed large in the diet of these early settlers—the plant provided corn meal and hominy as well as whisky. Few of them owned slaves50 and agriculture was not extensive as a rule. A small plot of ground was cleared of timber and canes; trees deadened, the cane dried and burned. Soon thereafter, corn would be planted. It was an ideal first crop and required no special preparation of the soil. The only tool needed to plant it was a sharp stick with which holes were made in the ground. The corn was dropped into the holes and covered with soil. An even simpler method of planting corn was simply to tramp the corn into the ground. Very little

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49 Log barns and cribs are not nearly as numerous in the Basin as on Macon Ridge where they are common.

50 In lieu of slaves, Indians were sometimes used. William M. Murphy, Notes on the History of Madison Parish, Louisiana (Ruston, Louisiana: Louisiana Polytechnic Institute, 1927), p. 9.
cultivation was necessary.

A little more land was cleared each year and many plantations were in the process of being cleared for years. As a result, the land actually under cultivation was usually small although the total lands owned by a given individual might be immense. A regular winter activity was clearing a bit of land called the "new ground." (100) At the end of several years the pattern of crop growing was established, the usual procedure being to plant about equal acreages of cotton and corn along with some vegetables. The normal acreage was about six acres for each field hand. It was not a wise practice to grow more cotton because a worker could tend more cotton than he could pick; and his time could be used to better advantage in cultivating foodstuffs.51

The first cotton gin in the Tensas Basin was erected by Vidal in 1802. Although there is no record of them, it is likely that there were others in the Basin at an early time because cotton figured predominantly in the economy of the area from the beginning. Cotton was put in long bags until the wooden

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box or press was developed. Whether the screw press was used during this period in the Basin is not certain. The first of the type was made in 1801 and in use at Natchez; and a development of the same principle was made much later by Edward Newell. All the work of ginning and baling was done with slave labor since the application of the steam engine to the cotton gin was not developed until 1830 and was not in general use in the Basin until after that time.

In addition to cotton and corn, crops, in small acreages, included indigo, tobacco, wheat, rice, and sugar cane. Sugar of good quality was never produced in the Tensas Basin although a crude type of "brown sugar" was made for local consumption. The principal product was molasses or syrup. The typical syrup mill (130, 131, 132) was made of wood and consisted of:

three wooden rollers, two feet long and eighteen inches in diameter,...set vertically side by side on a solid bench ...wooden cogs or spurs attached to the top of the rollers and a sweep was fastened to the top of the middle one. A horse hooked to the outer end of the sweep walked in a circle ...Four people were needed to run the mill ...one to drive the horse, one to carry the cane, one to feed the

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52 The making of rum with sugar cane has never been the practice in the Tensas Basin in so far as can be determined. The cultivation of sugar cane was introduced into Louisiana from the West Indies. It seems to have come to the Indies from Spain where the practice was introduced by the Moors.
cane into the mill, and one to feed the cane back through."\(^{53}\)

The fire beneath the open vats was usually enclosed with brick. When in operation, the cogs "could be heard squeaking a mile away."\(^{54}\) Except for the use of metal parts, the process of making molasses has changed very little although the practice is fast disappearing in consequence of the ease with which syrup can be bought in the grocery store.

**Characteristics of settlement: transportation.** Limited agriculture was supplemented by hunting, both as a source of income and for food. Trade was essential to the prevailing economic pattern; and for the purpose of trade, trails connected the posts at Natchitoches, Natchez, and Monroe, and probably were in use prior to any permanent settlement in the Basin.\(^{55}\)

In the beginning, trails were those used by the Indians with perhaps a little improvement. One of the early routes was that used by Bienville in 1700. It began at Lake Providence, passed through Mer Rouge to the Ouachita River, and from there followed what is called

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\(^{53}\)Dick, op. cit., p. 248.

\(^{54}\)Loc. cit.

\(^{55}\)Calhoun, op. cit., p. 53.
the Natchitoches Road to Red River. This route was to become one of the principal transportation lines through the Tensas Basin from the Mississippi to the settlements on the Ouachita and Red rivers. Another of the Indian trails to be used by explorers, trappers, traders, and settlers was the one which began at Vidalia, ran along Lake Concordia, across Concordia Parish to Trinity on Black River, and from there to Red River. This route is probably the oldest one used continuously by white settlers. There also seems to have been an Indian trail from Monroe to Vicksburg although this route was not used by white men to any extent until the coming of the railroad. A road was blazed from Vidalia to Harrisonburg in 1800.

In all probability, these Indian trails were of an intermittent nature and limited to indistinct footpaths. White men found it necessary to clear them for passage on horseback and to clear a path in the wilderness to connect the trails. There must have been a

56 Williamson, op. cit., p. 181. See Map IV, Appendix A.

57 Ibid., p. 184.

58 Ibid., p. 186. This trail is not shown on maps of the period.
constant necessity to re-blaze and clear the trails. The practice of blazing trees so that the trails could be followed was a custom that lasted throughout the nineteenth century. Even with the trails blazed, it was not uncommon for travelers to get lost in the swamp. 59

In their efforts to colonize the area, the Spanish began feeble attempts to create roads but improvements were slight and the movement of wheeled vehicles was impossible. A further difficulty was the need for means of crossing streams. Legal records involving ferries as well as road construction and maintenance are numerous for this and subsequent periods.

It must be remembered that the early roads which deserved the name were east-west routes designed to connect trading centers, notably Natchez, on the Mississippi, with those on Red River. Hence, the matter of ferriage across streams for traders and settlers loomed large. 60 Travel within the Tensas Basin was

59 Ibid., p. 183.

60 The route from Vidalia to the west was used extensively for livestock trade. Longhorns were driven from Texas to Vidalia, "one of the toughest little towns in the world." When the cowboys were paid off at the end of the trail drives, they spent their money in Vidalia or Natchez. American Guide Series, op. cit., p. 466.
largely via streams and roads, where they existed, were local affairs running parallel with the streams for short distances. 61

In their east-west course, roads traversing the Basin ran along the natural levees near the streams to the greatest extent possible, then cut through the backswamp—where road-building today is a serious problem—until the natural levee of another stream was reached. Roads followed the "line of least resistance" and meandered through the backswamp to make use of the ridges or abandoned natural levees.

The first two ferries to be operated were on the Mississippi between Natchez and Vidalia 62 and on Black River at the present site of Trinity. The franchise to operate the ferry on Black River was granted to Don Juan Hebrard with the proviso that he was to open a road from Black River to Bayou Cocodrie. Revealing descriptions of the road from Vidalia to Trinity and of the ferry service are found in early records involving testimony

61 One such local road was at St. Joseph. It extended for several miles away from the river and was the only plank road in the Tensas Basin.

62 This franchise was granted in 1801 to Thomas Thompson, a brother-in-law of Joseph Vidal. Vidal operated the ferry from 1803 to 1817 and it was thereafter operated by his son-in-law, Samuel Davis. Williamson, op. cit., p. 182.
in the litigation over ferries. Undoubtedly, the testimony reveals conditions typical of the time. The testimony of David B. Morgan states:

...was acquainted with the road leading from the Post of Concordia to Lake Concordia in 1802. At that time it was a road cut through the woods and cane, but was not as much as 30 or 40 feet wide ...The country from the river ...to Bayou Cocodrie was a thick canebrake. There were very few persons then residing in that section.63

The testimony of Polycarpe LaMothe states:

I was in the Parish of Concordia in the year 1801 or 1802 for the purpose of trading in cattle ...I crossed Black River at the junction of Little River, at a place called Cadet Hebrard's ferry, from which place there was a road all the way to the Mississippi, after which the road extended up the bank of the river to the ferry landing opposite Natchez, a distance of 3 or 4 miles. The road was used by the public, but I don't know whether for carts or wagons. There was a great deal of cane and heavy timber. The road was used for travelling on horseback as well as on foot.64

LaMothe implies that the road was used for wagons which may have been true for short distances along the natural levees but most of the evidence does not support the idea that the road was passable to wagons. Pack horses and small sleds (159) were the more usual means of transport. Dr. David Lattimore testified that from

63Calhoun, op. cit., p. 63.
64Loc. cit.
1805 to 1810, "the Thompson road was nothing more than a bridle-path." 65 Two other bits of testimony bear out this fact:

I live nine miles above the Post of Concordia ... moved my family there in the year 1801 ... was acquainted with the country four or five years before I moved my family ... There was a ferry there (Vidalia) then, used principally for crossing stock ... I think it was for ... private use. After that, Thompson kept a ferry for the public. There was a road from the ferry landing to the Cocodrie or Cocodrile, and I think I saw Thompson cut the road out. The country at that time consisted of a dense cane brake and was thickly timbered. The road was used by travelers on foot and on horse. I think it was wide enough for wagons, though I never saw wagons on it, but had seen wagon tracks. The road was passable for teams at the time, partly if not all the way. 66

Finally, according to the testimony of General Joseph Walker:

I was frequently in Concordia Parish in 1802 and 1803, and from 1804 to 1807. I lived three miles below Vidalia. Thompson kept the ferry in 1803 and 1804. I recollect that in the fall of 1802, there was a road cut from the Post of Concordia to Bayou Cocodrie, and which crossed the Cocodrie at a place afterwards called Lee's Landing and running to Cady Hebred's ferry on Black River. The road passed through a cane ridge just below Vidalia. The road was sufficient for the travel of the time, for at that time no person hardly ever traveled it except on foot or horse. 67

65 Ibid., p. 64.
66 Testimony of Francis Henderson, Ibid., p. 63.
67 Ibid., p. 65.
While nothing of these early trails remains in the landscape today, the early routes find their direct counterparts in the present highway and railroad network, both of which utilize in part or almost wholly the routes of the earlier roads. Transportation routes of the earlier period become increasingly significant elements of the landscape when later periods are studied; and the influence of transport lines in determining the overall pattern of settlement is realized.

**Summary.** The Tensas Basin prior to 1830 was largely a wilderness in which the efforts of the earliest white settlers were hardly noticeable. Settlement in many cases took place first in the localities formerly inhabited by Indians—on the natural levees along the streams and ox-bow lakes. The immediate impetus to settlement was the Louisiana Purchase, the effects of which were first felt in Concordia Parish, across the river from Natchez. A smaller settlement also occurred in the vicinity of Lake Providence. Natural conditions, however, retarded extensive settlement. In all instances, the pattern of settlement was of the simplest sort, involving log cabins and a minimum of out-buildings, also of logs, surrounded by a rail or picket fence. Acreages under cultivation were small and individuals
supported themselves in part by hunting and lumbering.

Occupance of the area by settlers was many times seasonal in nature, being limited to the planting and harvesting periods or to time devoted to the cutting of timber or to hunting. Many land-holders, as a matter of fact, were not bona fide settlers in any sense of the word but only acquired land for purposes of speculation or quick exploitation of its timber.

Knowledge of the Tensas Basin was first acquired based on attempts to pass through the area to reach the settlements in western Louisiana and the earliest roads of note were east-west thoroughfares, barely passable except in dry weather. Conditions of travel emphasize the difficulties of movement and settlement during the period and make understandable the ribbon-like settlement along the streams and lakes where access to water transport was an advantage.
CHAPTER III
THE TENSAS BASIN: 1830 to 1860

The year 1830 is a significant one in the settlement of the Tensas Basin. It marks the initial occupancy of the area on a large scale and the development of an agrarian society usually considered typical of the ante-bellum South. The decade of the 1830's was a boom period in the United States and many states along the eastern seaboard were losing population to the western states and territories. Along with the Tensas Basin, parts of Mississippi, Alabama, and western Tennessee were being settled by people from the Carolinas and Georgia. Many who settled in North Louisiana were on their way to Texas but never completed their journey. This movement was halted temporarily by the panic of 1837 but shortly thereafter the stream of settlers began to flow into Arkansas and Louisiana again. They came not only from the Carolinas and Georgia but from Kentucky, Tennessee, Indiana, Ohio, Illinois, Michigan, and even New York in small numbers. The usual practice of the settler was to stop for varying periods of time.

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1See Table II, p. 56.
TABLE II

POPULATION OF TENSAS BASIN PARISHES BY DECADES

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<tr>
<th>Parish</th>
<th>1810</th>
<th>1820</th>
<th>1830</th>
<th>1840</th>
<th>1850</th>
<th>1860</th>
<th>1870</th>
<th>1880</th>
<th>1890</th>
<th>1900</th>
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<td>9,977</td>
<td>14,914</td>
<td>14,871</td>
<td>13,559</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<table>
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<th>1890</th>
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<td>9,977</td>
<td>14,914</td>
<td>14,871</td>
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<tr>
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<th>1940</th>
<th>1950</th>
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<td>14,829</td>
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<td>17,444</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tensas</td>
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<td>12,085</td>
<td>15,096</td>
<td>15,940</td>
<td>13,151</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
in Mississippi, especially Natchez, before crossing the Mississippi to settle in the Tensas Basin.²

A very practical manifestation of the influx of settlers into Louisiana was the number of parish creations in this period. Prior to 1832, the Tensas Basin was included in two parishes—Concordia and Ouachita; but the rapid population growth, reflecting the activity of the time, made several subdivisions of this large territory necessary.

The decade 1830 to 1840 is marked by a definite change in the tempo and locale of parish creations and alterations. The movement of people into Louisiana from other states is at something of a floodtide. The population of Louisiana increased 63.4% in this decade as opposed to 40.6% from 1821 to 1830, and 46.9% from 1841 to 1850.³

Carroll Parish⁴ was created in 1832, Tensas in 1843, and Madison in 1838. Thus it was during the decade 1831 to 1840, with one exception, that the parish structure of the Tensas Basin received essentially its present outlines.

²Family histories and the records to be found on old gravestones tell the story of the states of westward movement. (177) See Appendix D.
³Kyser, op. cit., p. 87.
⁴Carroll Parish was divided into East and West Carroll parishes in 1877. The parishes in the Tensas Basin have remained substantially the same since that date.
Pattern of settlement. Settlement continued to take place on the natural levees along streams, lakes, and abandoned natural levees, not only because the best land was located there but because the land was more protected from floods, easier to clear for cultivation, and more accessible. The land along the Mississippi was most intensively settled and a ribbon of plantations extended the length of the Basin along that river as well as other streams.

For protection against floods, levees six to fifteen feet high were built by the individual landowners. By 1825, disconnected levees extended along the west bank of the Mississippi from Red River to the Arkansas River; but cooperation among landowners was not notable. Hence, the protection sought by levee construction was not adequately realized. Such levees were also built along other streams in the Basin. In 1850, the Federal government granted all unsold swamp lands to the states with the revenue from the sale of such lands to be used to reclaim alluvial land and to provide for flood control.  


6Ibid., p. 334.
Levee districts\(^7\) were established and taxes levied for levee building and maintenance. Madison, Carroll, and Catahoula parishes were among the first to be so organized. Concern over floods also resulted in Tensas and Concordia parishes being among the first to take over the responsibility of landowners to provide levees. The police juries of these two parishes were empowered by the legislature to raise funds for levees by taxation.\(^8\)

The United States township surveys, made between 1820 and 1840, show virtually no entries except for a few near the "front" in the Tensas Basin prior to 1830; but after that time, the entries are numerous. Settlement began at Clayton about 1830 and on Tensas River and at Frogmore about 1839. During this period, the first significant settlement along Black River took place. There had been no Spanish grants on Black River south of the Bringier grant; and settlement had been restricted because the United States would not recognize many claims which antedated the Louisiana Purchase. In

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\(^7\)The first levee districts were created in 1852. Emmett Asseff, *Special Districts in Louisiana* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1951), p. 29.

\(^8\)Tompkins, *loc. cit.*
1836, a large group of eastern seaboard farmers settled small tracts on the east bank; and soon thereafter, people from Mississippi and from Avoyelles, Rapides, and Catahoula parishes joined them. This was not an area of large plantations or imposing homes. Since the plantation system was never developed, slaves were few; and, as a result, Negroes are not numerous today, although some have infiltrated the area since 1860.

Another of the significant settlements of the period from 1830 to 1860 was made by Edward D. Newell and his brother. They arrived in the Basin in 1834 and settled on Newell's Ridge near the present site of Newellton. They eventually bought about 30,000 acres of government land. However, the most celebrated settlement of the period was that of Norman Frisby who

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9 Calhoun, op. cit., p. 437, says settlement began in 1838. For names of settlers, see pp. 437-39.

10 T. Lynn Smith and S. Earl Grigsby, The Situation and Prospects of the Population in the Black River Settlement, Louisiana (Bulletin 319, Louisiana State University Agricultural Experiment Station, June, 1940), pp. 4-11.

11 Williamson, op. cit., p. 86. Newell was one of several men who was responsible for the founding of the Tensas Gazette in 1852. On Newell's Ridge near the site of his home is an arch marking the entrance to the family cemetery. In the Basin, it is a unique marker; and the lengthy inscription contains much of interest to the student of the area. It is quoted in full in Appendix D. (177)
Development of the plantation system. One of the significant developments resulting from the surge of settlement during the period from 1830 to 1860 was the entrenchment of the plantation system as the overwhelmingly dominant economic and general cultural force. In the ante-bellum South, the plantation system involved ownership of slaves and an expanse of land, the cultivation of large fields, and the one-crop system—usually cotton. The system as it developed imparted a distinctive appearance to the landscape that is still characteristic of the Tensas Basin.

As a result of the plantation system, the residents of the Basin during this period belonged, by and large, to one of three classes: slaves, landowners or planters, and an intermediate but numerically small group of

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12 Magazine Supplement, Morning Advocate (Baton Rouge), November 5, 1950, p. 3.

13 Actually, the plantation system represents a way of life upon which no rigid economic criteria, in terms of amounts of land owned and the like, can be set. Some minimum requirements are necessary, of course, but definition of these essentials varies widely. It has been the experience of the author that a certain segment, at least, of the people in the Tensas Basin regard anything less than 1,000 acres as a farm, not a plantation.
managers or overseers, and slave-drivers. Many of the last group eventually became landowners by buying places lost by their former employers. A possible fourth category was composed of the merchants in small towns but many of these were planters as well. Indicative of this composition of the population is the fact that the distribution of land ownership in the Basin was not extensive in 1850 but that eighty-two per cent of farm operators owned their land. The reason for this lay in the fact that settlement was more recent in this area than in the southern parishes, as Owsley suggests; but it was also due to the influence of the plantation system which had not become entrenched in the southern part of the state.

The use of slave labor was largely responsible for the self-sufficiency of the individual plantation units. All buildings were constructed by them and the materials with which they were built were prepared at the site. Slaves were trained as blacksmiths, carpenters, coopers, boatbuilders, tanners, and sometimes tailors as well as other specialties. The demand for slaves  

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resulted in the operation of slave markets in the Basin by 1860.

Many plantation cores became well known as rural centers; and most towns in the Basin had their origins as plantation centers. Their rural character does not diminish their significance, for they served in the past—and to some extent today—as a point of focus for many social functions—economic, religious, and recreational.

A significant feature of the plantation system in Louisiana has always been absentee ownership, a feature particularly characteristic of the period prior to 1860 and traceable principally to Natchez although some absentee owners lived in the eastern states. As the Natchez planters became wealthier, they acquired more and more land, including large holdings west of the Mississippi in Louisiana and Arkansas.¹⁵ Overseers were placed in charge of these plantations with the owners making more or less regular inspection trips.¹⁶

¹⁵ The Bowie brothers owned land near Lake Providence; the Minor family had several plantations in Concordia and Tensas.

¹⁶ At one time Capt. Frank Surget, son of Pierre Surget, was the owner of fourteen vast plantations extending for miles and miles both in Mississippi and Louisiana and it was his constant habit to visit each
Many of the plantations had an overseer's house and slave quarters but no "big house." Much of the wealth that made possible the ante-bellum Natchez so glorified today was derived from the bottomlands west of the Mississippi. The Greek-revival mansion with its columned veranda was never typical of the Tensas Basin—they were built in Natchez instead, and stand as a tribute to Louisiana as much or more than to Mississippi.

Characteristics of settlement: houses. The houses of the period, 1830 to 1860, were much like the log cabins of the earlier period in form. In fact, most of them were adaptations of the log construction and differed principally by being somewhat larger and constructed of hand-hewn and rived timbers. The log cabin itself had not passed from the scene by any means. It was still in use on the smaller plantations and among farmers just getting established. Settlers depending primarily upon hunting or other non-farm activities for their

plantation on horseback at least once a week. David Hunt of Windsor Castle was at one time the owner of 20 plantations and 1700 slaves ..." Theodora B. Marshall and Gladys C. Evans, They Found It in Natchez (New Orleans: Pelican Publishing Company, 1939), p. 74. The case of Surget is an unusual one—inspections were rarely made as often as that.
means of livelihood usually lived in log cabins. The residence of the operator of a riving mill, or a wood-cutter whose sole employment was supplying steamboats with wood, was a log cabin in most instances. The principal significance of the year 1830 lies in the fact that it symbolizes the decline of the numbers of log cabins, per se, built and in use as the typical dwelling in the Basin. It marks the beginning of construction of more elaborate houses as an adjunct to the developing plantation system. In a considerable number of cases, instead of replacing the cabin with a new dwelling, the original building would be covered with boards and enlarged.

The open-passage, so often characteristic of the double-log pen, was the last feature of the early houses to disappear. The author has succeeded in finding only one house with an open passage but numerous examples have been found of houses with open passages that have been walled in some time after the date of construction. (37, 40) Prior to the Civil War, the open passage was still a common feature of houses; and

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17Small, local, riving mills were scattered throughout the Basin, and a few existed until the beginning of the twentieth century.
its presence usually indicated a house intermediate or above average in quality.

For the most part, all population groups in the Basin lived in variations of the same house type—that is, a derivative of the log pen. Basically, the log pen is a one-room structure with sideward-facing gables to which is usually added a front porch and a lean-to room in back. The roof is usually characterized by a break where the porch begins, although this feature is by no means universal. (7, 8) The log pen in this elemental form rapidly became identified as a slave dwelling in the Tensas Basin. Many times the house was enlarged by adding a duplicate of the building as described immediately adjacent to the first structure. The house of the overseer was usually a replica of this construction but enlarged and better-built, usually with a central hallway or passage which might or might not be enclosed.

The house of the landowner18 or the "big house" as it was called, might be either the same size or slightly larger than the overseer's house with a central

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18 At least two houses of the period might be termed forerunners of the modern pre-fabricated homes in that they were built in Kentucky and brought to Tensas by flatboat. One of these was the Farrar House in St. Joseph.
hallway and embellished with shutters, larger windows with glass panes, transoms over the front door, and the like. (1, 2) Another refinement of the "big house" was the occurrence of one central doorway on the front instead of two. (4, 10, 11) The simpler houses which were two rooms wide usually had a front entrance for each room. (19) Most of the houses, even the better ones, were only two rooms and a passage wide and usually not more than two rooms deep. If the "big house" contained some unusual features, the overseer's house was occasionally built as a smaller replica of it. (14, 15, 16)

The appendage,¹⁹ already mentioned, usually to the rear but occasionally to the side of the house, served as a kitchen. As a family grew or prospered, a larger ell consisting of a kitchen and dining room usually replaced the older one. Frequently, however, the central passage served as a dining room as well as a general living room. The kitchen ell was connected to the house by a covered porch. Near the kitchen, sometimes attached to it or just off the back porch or

¹⁹Almost all of the houses built prior to 1910 had this characteristic ell construction. (5, 6, 12, 22, 25, 27, 28, 34, 38)
"gallery" was a cistern or cistern room. The first cisterns were built level with the ground, and later the tops were raised and bricked over in a domed shape. (8) Water was procured by means of a rope and bucket or, in some cases, by means of a chain to which small cups were attached. 20

The overwhelming majority of the houses was of one story, and the better ones elevated well above the ground. They were elevated at least two feet, and many were high enough to permit the later construction of a ground floor beneath the original rooms. Beneath the house, tools were stored and sometimes livestock was quartered there. (1, 3, 4, 8, 14) The choice building material was cypress, of which an abundance existed at the time. Horizontal board construction was the rule, (2, 4, 7, 8, 10, 15) the boards varying markedly in width in both the walls and floors. Home-made brick was used frequently for the foundation piers as well as chimneys 21 at

20 Pumps were not used. Much later they were introduced and some cisterns were so equipped. A good number of cisterns are still used in the Basin, but most have been abandoned. Some have been converted into cesspools.

21 Chimneys were frequently constructed in a faulty fashion; fires occurred with the result that the majority of the houses have been destroyed. (19)
either side of the house. (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8) The better homes had chimneys for each room. (52) If the space beneath the first floor was enclosed to add another story, it was usually made of brick. (23) In such cases, the upper floor remained the "first" story and was reached by a flight of wide steps. (14, 20)

Cypress shingles (34, 37) were used as roofing until the introduction of composition roofing materials about 1915. In addition to galleries across the front of the house and down the ell, (5, 6) a gallery frequently ran completely around the house (23, 26, 27) and was usually enclosed by a railing. (1, 4, 7, 9, 14, 17, 20, 37) Paint was not used except on the big house and overseer's house, but this was not a universal practice by any means. Whitewashing the houses was a more common practice.

In addition to the houses which were derivatives of the log cabin, house types with characteristics of the French building complex were apparently numerous. These types found their heaviest concentrations in the southern Tensas Basin in Concordia Parish, both along the Mississippi and Black River. They were found in large numbers on Bayou Macon and Tensas River. They may still be seen but have disappeared almost entirely
in the northern part of the Basin possibly due both to the greater degree of destruction there during the Civil War and to the smaller numbers of them which were built in the north.

The characteristics of the French-type houses referred to include the built-in porch in contrast to the broken roof of the log-pen derivatives, the false gallery, the outside stairway and story-and-a-half construction. In reference to the built-in porch, it must be cautioned that in later periods the log pen derivatives frequently have been constructed without a break in the roof but the porch still retains the appearance of an appendage. (44, 54) In other houses, however, the porch forms an integral part of the house and resembles in all its essentials the typical French dwelling of southeastern Louisiana. (33, 35) In some better dwellings dating from this period, the built-in porch is found in combination with the central hallway and suggests derivation as much from the Georgian house as from the log pen or the French built-in. (4, 18) Where the built-in porch occurs in conjunction with story-and-a-half construction, there can be little doubt of French origin or influence. (32) Some houses had outside stairways, but this feature has been the
first to disappear. The false gallery seems to have been a feature of houses only in the southwestern part of the Tensas Basin. In the houses dating from the period prior to the Civil War, the false gallery is associated with the built-in porch and the story-and-a-half construction, but the feature is found on newer houses in this area as well. The distribution of the false gallery has not been studied as it must be before conclusions can be reached as to its place in the French building complex. General observation in parts of Louisiana outside the Basin, however, indicates that this feature occurs in areas peripheral to the French culture area proper.

It is a matter of some uncertainty as to the source from which these features were introduced into the Tensas

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22 The author has seen a unique case of the outside stairway on Black River in the case of a two-storied shotgun house with an outside stairway. An unusual placement of the stairway, technically not an outside one, was its location between the two rooms of a house with the only entrance to it being through a door on the front porch. This resulted in three front doors. There was no central hallway—the two rooms were separated only by the width of the stairs.

23 The same is true of the central hallway in association with the built-in porch.
Basin. The weight of evidence available seems to point to infiltration from the settlements in the Avoyelles area via Black River. Natchez cannot be entirely discounted as a source but was in all probability of secondary importance. The peculiar combination of features found in the southwestern area had no comparable counterpart in Natchez as far as has been determined.

An interesting French-type house which was apparently fairly common in the Basin in the period prior to and immediately following the Civil War had as its outstanding feature a break high in the roof—a break which does not coincide with the beginning of the porch. Houses of this type are found in large numbers on Bayou Lafourche in South Louisiana, at False River, Natchitoches, and other places in the French culture area of Louisiana. (31) They are also found in the old French areas of settlement on the Upper Mississippi. In contrast to some of the other elements of the French building complex, houses of this type have a distinct association with the eastern, and particularly the southeastern, section of the Tensas Basin. There can be little doubt that Natchez served as a nucleus for their dispersion. They are still numerous around Natchez and along the Mississippi in Concordia Parish. A handful are found today in Tensas Parish, where they were once more numerous. (29, 30)
While some of the houses incorporating French building features were built by French or Spanish residents originally, it would be a mistake to assume that their former abundance indicated a large Latin population in the Basin. Most of them were built by Anglo-Saxons who came from a variety of places and who had the opportunity, either elsewhere or in the Basin itself, to encounter these features and copy them. Probably no better example of acculturation exists in this area for the period of the nineteenth century.\footnote{No houses involving these characteristics in any distinctive form are being built today nor have any been built in the last fifty years. The only exception to this statement occurs in the use of the false gallery, although in comparison with its use on Macon Ridge, this feature, too, is becoming less common.}

A house type with a distinctive roof of uncertain origins or associations was also found occasionally in the Basin. It was of minor import in terms of numerical strength and is mentioned principally for the sake of completeness. The roof is characterized by beveled ends. In other words, the roof is semi-pyramidal or of a type sometimes described as hip-roofed. The house is wider than it is long and, thus, does not have a true pyramidal roof. It suggests derivation from the Georgian house or overtones of French influence. A map...
of Natchez in 1725 shows houses of this type. It strongly suggests or resembles, and may be a simpler version of, what is known to architects as the French Provincial. In his book, La Louisiane, Guenin has an illustration of an early settler's cabin with a roof of this type. (10, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17)

Characteristics of settlement: out-buildings, fences, fields. The big house, whatever its type, fronted on the bayou or river on the crest of the natural levee with the slave cabins arranged in one or more rows either behind the big house, the overseer's house, or along the edge of the fields nearby. Centrally located for the convenience of each cabin was

27 A distinctive occurrence of certain shade trees around the dwellings was notable. Most common were the oaks, followed by the cedar and magnolia, a peach tree perhaps, and, of course, the inevitable chinaberry. The chinaberry tree (Melia azedarach) is a native of southwest Asia but has been widely introduced into the West Indies and southern United States. L. H. Bailey, Manual of Cultivated Plants (New York: Macmillan Company, 1949), p. 612. It is grown in the Tensas Basin for purely ornamental purposes. The fruit of the chinaberry, if eaten by chickens or hogs, produces a toxic condition that can be fatal. Any use of the trees as a source of wood is incidental.
a cistern or well (170) and a woodpile. A plantation bell on a scaffold was located nearby. (176) Located to the rear or one side of the house, were a number of outbuildings including a blacksmith shop, cooper or joiner, smokehouse, chicken house, pig pen, grist mill, syrup mill, brick kiln, nursery or hospital, (93) and perhaps a small store or saloon, laundry, and stables. Barns tended to be quite large and used for storing corn or hay and quartering horses, mules, and cattle. A shed usually extended around the barn, and a wide passage extended through the middle of the barn from end to end. (65, 74, 76, 77, 78) Some barns had two such passages that intersected in the center of the barn, forming four large compartments or rooms at each corner of the building. Outbuildings were made of wood, either boards or logs. The use of log construction for outbuildings was the common practice, but occasionally barns were made of brick.28 (66)

Every plantation had its steamboat landing and, nearby, a cotton gin. Self-sufficiency in the matter

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28 All buildings were substantially constructed, but this is the only period in which brick was used for the construction of outbuildings. It is common to find supporting timbers one to two feet square.
of ginning was necessary since the work was time consuming and done at a season of the year when weather was bad and transportation uncertain. The gin was usually a wooden structure and associated with it was a storehouse of wood or brick where cotton was placed until it could be ginned, bales stored until they could be shipped, and cottonseed kept until planting time. Many of these storehouses are in use today as barns. (65, 67, 68, 72) The smokestack for the gin, the principal remnant of these old gins to be seen today, were of naturally made brick. (62, 63, 64) Power to operate the gin was supplied by mules or the furnace was stoked with wood. Most of the gins were the old lever horse type which remained in use until after the Civil War. If wood was used, a principal occupation of slaves in off seasons was cutting wood to be stored until ginning time. Ginning was carried on in the fall and winter after field work was completed. There was a race against time to finish ginning before time to begin preparations for spring planting and before the spring rise when steamboats plied the river or bayou to collect the cotton. An output of from three to five bales a day.29

was excellent.

Very near the main dwelling, sometimes in the front yard, a cistern or spring house was constructed. It was a latticed structure, usually octagonal or round in shape and large enough to accommodate the family as a sitting room in summer. It enclosed a well or cistern where milk and butter were kept. (171) Also near the main dwelling to the side or back was a family cemetery planted with trees—frequently cedars—and flowers and containing marble memorials. Space for burial was provided not only for whites but for slaves as well.\(^{30}\) Well-regarded slaves might be buried beside their masters. Burial was a family matter—the coffin was made by a slave and the burial service took place on the plantation. As a general rule, whites tended not to build churches for themselves in rural areas until very late in the century, and there is still none in many places.\(^ {31}\) Church-going was limited either to the visits of an itinerant preacher with a camp meeting in an open

\(^{30}\)The Black Code provided for burial of slaves in consecrated ground.

\(^ {31}\)The oldest church in Tensas Parish is believed to be Wesley Chapel, built in 1852 and located about ten miles west of St. Joseph. Williamson, op. cit., p. 87. The sign at the site of the church gives the date about 1843. (94)
arbor perhaps once a year or to infrequent visits to town.

The plantation center containing the big house and the outbuildings was usually fenced, at least in part. A fence of pickets or ornamental wrought iron might be placed around the front yard of the big house and sometimes in place of, or in addition to, this fence, another enclosed the house itself.\(^3\)\(^2\) (18, 24, 33, 37, 40) The same type of fence frequently enclosed the cemetery, and one of pickets usually surrounded the garden, tobacco patch, and orchard. The barn lot was enclosed by a fence of pickets, vertical boards, or rails. Fields were usually not fenced unless marauding animals made it necessary. (142) In such cases, rail fences or horizontal pole fences were used.

Pasturage as we know it today was almost nonexistent. Cows were a prized possession; and they, along with other livestock and chickens, might be allowed to graze in the house yard or on the stream banks. Pigs roamed almost at will, deriving much of their sustenance from acorns and wild plants. During the summer and fall, the swamps were usually dry

\(^3\)\(^2\)The house itself was fenced if the space around it was grazed by livestock.
enough to be used in this manner.\textsuperscript{33}

More land was under cultivation during this period than during any other in the history of the Basin and most of it was devoted to cotton. (105) Parker described the cotton fields and the processing of cotton as he observed it in 1835: \textsuperscript{34}

We passed half a dozen cotton plantations, some quite large, and saw an army of negroes picking it. The cotton plant grows about as high as a man's head... A negro takes a basket or a bag, and swings it at his side, and with his thumb and finger picks out the cotton, almost as fast as a hen picks up corn... A field of cotton in full blossom makes a fine appearance. After it is picked, it is laid on a rack to dry; then ginned to take out the seed, and put up in bales for the market. The rope and bagging used, are the manufacture of Kentucky, ...one prime hand on good land would make ten bales of cotton a year, and raise corn enough to support himself. The average worth of these bales is five hundred dollars... the plantations generally make about seven bales to the hand.

The abundance of slave labor and the application of the principle of the steam engine to the cotton gin made such cotton production possible. The latter was


\textsuperscript{34}A. A. Parker, \textit{Trip to the West and Texas} (Concord, New Hampshire: White and Fisher, 1835), pp. 97-98.
accomplished in 1830 by Dr. Rush Nutt of Natchez\(^{35}\) and it was quickly adopted in the Tensas Basin. The first to use it was a Mr. Alexander who lived on Lake Concordia. He was followed closely by Job Routh on Lake St. Joseph\(^{35}\) (69, 70, 71) A further boon to cotton growers was the invention, in 1855, of a machine which separated the hull and kernel of cottonseed, thus establishing the manufacture of cottonseed oil.\(^{37}\) Peak production of cotton was not reached until the 1850's, the decade in which the plantation system in the Tensas Basin was truly hitting its stride.

**Characteristics of settlement: transportation.** Despite remarkable progress during the relatively short period of settlement up to 1860, the Tensas Basin was not conquered by any means. Much of the area remained a wilderness even as it does today. Each plantation was something of an oasis of cleared land on the natural levees, separated from others by the backswamp wilderness. The most striking proof of this fact is to


\(^{36}\)Loc. cit.

be found in the accounts of travellers. Conditions of travel had improved only slightly since the first days of settlement. A. A. Parker, who travelled through the Basin in 1835 on the road from Vidalia to Black River, gives the following description:\textsuperscript{38}

Our route lay, for the first six miles, up the river near its bank; and then we turned more to the west...Our route now lay through a dense forest--and the ground generally so miry that we could only ride at a walk. Sometimes we came to the thick cane-brakes, about twenty feet high, and overhanging our narrow path. Sometimes, we found the palmetto, standing on a stem a foot high, and so thick that we could hardly ride through them, or see any path at all. Sometimes we came to a sheet of water one hundred yards wide, in which a horse would plunge to the saddle-skirts, and for awhile, become stuck fast; and again, we would find a cypress swamp, full of cypress knees and mud. Indeed, it is the worst swamp I ever travelled over,....

Eighteen miles from Natchez, we came to two log houses and a small stream, called the Tensaw. We crossed the ferry...we now had twelve miles to go to find a stopping place for the night, and all the way, through a dense forest of lofty trees...The first half of the distance was decent travelling, although we could not ride much of the way, faster than a walk. Then we came to a wet and miry road.

It began to grow dark in the woods; the trees were quite thick, and hung full of Spanish moss; and there was no moon in the

\textsuperscript{38}Parker, \emph{op. cit.}, pp. 98-99.
sky. The wolf, the wildcat, and the owl, had pitched their tune for the night; and soon, thick darkness shrouded our path. The heavens were clear; yet so dense were the foliage and moss, that it was seldom I could find a loop hole, through which a star might cast its ray upon us. I never had been in such a gloomy situation before. We were in a path, to us untravelled; and by its appearance, seldom travelled by man. We had shoals of muddy water to cross, and sloughs of mud to wallow through. And then, the night was so dark, and the track so faint, we frequently lost it, and found it again only with difficulty.

Tanner's map of 1825 shows a road, possibly a stage route, along the route Parker took. After reading Parker's description, one has the feeling that the cartographer was overly optimistic. Apparently, there were no stage coach routes in Louisiana prior to 1824 and, in the Tensas Basin, there were none until the 1850's in the sense of a regularly operating line. Travelling by stage coach was a slow process, for frequently the coach travelled at a rate not exceeding two and a half miles an hour. The driver often was forced to move through the woods because the road was impassable.

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39 See Map V, Appendix A.

Sometimes when passing through the dense woods, the driver had to leave the coach and make a survey, sounding the ruts of the cotton wagons, and finally marking out a channel by guiding stakes which he cut from the underbrush with his hatchet. If ... he found no passage shallow enough, he would make one himself ... Sometimes rails had to be taken out of fences to prize the coach out of sloughs ... Sudden rains raised the creeks and floated off the poorly anchored bridges ....

As indicated in the quotation, roads were definitely passable for wagons, at least along the natural levees if not through the backswamps. Maps of the period show roads skirting along the Mississippi and the near-by lakes that were passable to wheeled vehicles. A road which was a stage route after about 1849 or 1850 was cut between 1836 and 1838 to connect Monroe and Vicksburg; but it is doubtful if the road was much more than a horse trail or passable during much of the year because it traversed thick canebrakes

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4Williamson, op. cit., p. 182.

4Labor for road upkeep was provided by the citizens who were required to devote a specified number of days each year to work on public roads.

4See Map V, Appendix A.

4Wagons drawn by two horses, mules, or oxen were the most common wheeled conveyance for farm work, transporting cotton to town, or for family travel for short distances. (160) Wagon yards at river landings were prosperous.
and swamps. There were no settlements along its course through the Basin. The first proposal for a road along this route was made by Slidell and Abert who suggested one of two types of construction—one involving an embankment of dirt across the swamp and the other consisting of piles or trestles. The cost of either would have been prohibitive; and the embankment, which they recommended for its permanency, would have been of little use unless covered with plank. Despite these proposals, only a trail existed through the area prior to 1860 with the exception of about one-half mile of elevated roadway in Madison Parish.

The route from Vidalia to Harrisonburg is shown on maps of 1849 as a stage route. Another extended from New Carthage, south of Milliken's Bend, to Richmond.

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45 The men who marked the road were lost for almost two weeks in the swampy morass.

46 Williamson, op. cit., p. 185.

47 Andreassen, op. cit., p. 7.

48 This road was also a mail route. Williamson, op. cit., p. 215. The road was long delayed in its construction. An act for opening the road was passed originally in 1811, one again in 1824; but nothing was done. Attempts were still being made to legislate action as late as 1833. Andreassen, op. cit., pp. 59-60. See also C. M. Kerr, "Highway Progress in Louisiana," The Louisiana Historical Quarterly, II (January, 1919), 65.
and a stage route from Lake Providence via Richmond terminated in Monroe. A road from Waterproof to Natchitoches, known as the "old Texas Road" was used by wagon trains going to Texas. A ferry connected Waterproof and Rodney, Mississippi; but its route through the Basin is uncertain.  

The need for better conditions of overland travel is indicated by the law adopted by the state legislature in 1853 which required proper markings of roads. An important aspect of travel was ferries which were in use from the beginning of settlement. A few bridges were built, but these were exceptional. To build a bridge in sparsely settled country was not economical and interfered with the use of streams for transport. Bridges, where they existed, were usually made of puncheons and were rather undependable. The privilege of operating a ferry was sold to the highest bidder, frequently at public auctions. Maps of the period

49 Williamson, op. cit., p. 86.

50 Ibid., p. 190. Williamson states that roads were bordered with flowering hedges and maintains that "as late as 1919 it was possible to drive over the entire valley between the Ouachita and the Mississippi River and never leave a road bordered by Cherokee roses."
indicate ferries at numerous places including Trinity, Grand Gulf, Bayou Cocodrie, and several on Tensas River. To operate the ferry, a line was usually anchored to a tree on each side of the stream, and the ferry pulled across.\textsuperscript{51} (153, 154)

Although overland travel steadily increased, the principal routes of movement were the rivers and bayous. Beginning with flatboats, keelboats, and the pirogue,\textsuperscript{52} river traffic blossomed with the development of the steamboat. (147) The first steamboats operated only on the Mississippi and were used for shipping cotton by Tensas Basin planters from the beginning.\textsuperscript{53} Shipping points along the Mississippi in the Basin were located at Vidalia, Waterproof (Goldman's Landing), St. Joseph\textsuperscript{54}

\textsuperscript{51} The first steam ferry was located at Rodney on the Mississippi River. \textit{Ibid.}, p. 191.

\textsuperscript{52} The pirogue, a dug-out made from the trunk of a single tree, usually cypress, was used in the Basin until about 1920. The author encountered one on Tensas River in 1952—certainly one of the last to survive.

\textsuperscript{53} The steamboat, New Orleans, on its first trip down the river in 1811, took on the only cotton it carried at Natchez—a shipment owned by Samuel Davis, a resident of Concordia and a brother-in-law of Jose Vidal. Williamson, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 199.

\textsuperscript{54} John Densmore settled at the present site of St. Joseph about 1803 and built a house and a store. It became a center for inhabitants of the locality. Another of the early settlements at this site was that of Jerry Watson on Panola Plantation.
(Densmore's Landing), Lake Providence, Grand Gulf, Milliken's Bend, Newellton (Hard Times Landing), and New Carthage. Any plantation with a landing had the services of river shipping.\textsuperscript{55}

Steamboats were in common use on other streams in the Basin as well as on the Mississippi. In general, however, their operations were limited to seasons of the year when the streams were full. Boats went up Black River and, from there, dispersed into the Ouachita, Tensas,\textsuperscript{56} or Bayou Macon and their associated streams. Williamson\textsuperscript{57} states that Harrisonburg was the most northerly point on the Ouachita accessible the year round; but that boats moved as far north as Arkadelphia, Arkansas, when the water was high. Also navigable when the water level had risen were Bayou Macon, (152) Tensas River, (150, 151) Bayou Vidal, Roundaway Bayou, Walnut

\textsuperscript{55}By 1834, there were 230 packets on the Mississippi, and 1,000 by 1849—a total of about 250,000 tons. In the 1850's, the tonnage on the Mississippi exceeded the entire tonnage of the British Empire. Mississippi River Commission, \textit{Navigation on the Mississippi River} (Vicksburg, Mississippi: Mississippi River Commission, 1949), p. 3.

\textsuperscript{56}By 1815, steamboats navigated up Tensas River over thirty miles. Francois Xavier Martin, \textit{The History of Louisiana} (New Orleans: James A. Gresham, 1882), p. 214.

\textsuperscript{57}Williamson, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 214.
Bayou, Brushy Bayou, and perhaps others. Bayou Macon was navigable for a distance of sixty miles, and Tensas River for one hundred miles. The most northerly point for steamboat traffic on Tensas River was Quebec Landing, a plantation site where Highway 80 now crosses the river. Even showboats plied the streams in the Basin both before and after the Civil War. At times of low water, when many of the streams were not navigable, goods were stored to await shipment; or, if the roads were passable, they were sent across to the Mississippi for shipment. Transport on the Mississippi, however, was irregular and largely seasonal.

That the means of transport were inadequate for the needs of the planters during this period is shown in the early attempts, largely unsuccessful, to build railroads in the Basin. The project was initiated with the idea that a railroad would facilitate river traffic

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58 *Loc. cit.* By 1852, Bayou Macon was made navigable to within six miles of the Arkansas State Line.

56 Capt. Stoughton Cooley proved in 1868 that it was possible to navigate the Tensas its entire length when he entered the Tensas from the Mississippi at Lake Providence and proceeded downstream to the junction of the Ouachita.

60 During low water, depths of two and one-half and three feet were not uncommon on the Mississippi. *Mississippi River Commission, op. cit.*, p. 2.
and serve as a feeder line in the place of the unsatisfactory roads. At the outset, no one envisaged the railroad supplanting the steamboat; but some apprehension must have developed very soon on the part of the boat operators who gave the champions of railroads no little opposition. Opposition also was felt in towns which owed their existence largely to river trade. But from 1830 onward, the need for better transportation became increasingly urgent and had to be met.

In 1830, the legislature passed the first charter for a railroad in the Basin. It was to extend from the Mississippi River near Lake Providence to Red River near Natchitoches and to be known as the Lake Providence and Red River Railroad. This charter, obtained by residents of Ouachita Parish, was never brought to fruition. The eastern terminal of the proposed line was located at Lake Providence instead of Vicksburg because the territory between Vicksburg and Monroe was a wilderness, uninhabited except along the Mississippi and only sparsely so there.61 The city of Vicksburg dates from about 182062 and, in 1835, was only a small

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62 Claiborne, op. cit., p. 534.
town and a notably disorderly one. Other abortive proposals for railroads included one in 1837 for a line from Vidalia via the mouth of Tensas River to Trinity and Alexandria, and another to begin at Charleston, South Carolina, via Vicksburg to Mexico.

It was not until the decade of the 1850’s that any practical result of the agitation for railroads was forthcoming. Vicksburg was growing and beginning to by-pass Natchez and Lake Providence in its influence. Monroe also experienced a surge of growth; and Shreveport, instead of Natchitoches, had become the center for northwestern Louisiana. The movement for a railroad began in Shreveport in 1851 and resulted in the incorporation of the Vicksburg, Shreveport, and Texas Railroad in 1852. Construction began in 1854 at DeSoto, across the river from Vicksburg. By 1857, twenty miles of the line had been completed to Tallulah.

63At the time of the construction of the railroad, Tallulah did not exist. The line was originally surveyed to run through Richmond, a few miles south, but was changed, according to tradition, when the chief engineer was persuaded by a "charming widow" to build the railroad through her property north of Richmond. The story has it that the widow lost interest in the engineer after the railroad was built and that he, in turn, named the station he established there, Tallulah, after an earlier love. Murphy, op. cit., pp. 7-8.
and opened for business. By 1859, the road had been extended to Delhi and, by 1861, to Monroe. This was the only railroad in operation in the Tensas Basin prior to 1860. Its route is virtually the same as the earlier road for horses and wagons which connected Vicksburg and Monroe.

Summary. The period from 1830 to 1860 was one of the most vigorous episodes of settlement, if not the most vigorous, that the Tensas Basin has ever experienced. People travelling overland from the Carolinas, Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi—as well as southward via the Ohio and Mississippi—poured into this virgin area with a rapidity that transformed a wilderness into an agricultural bonanza in the short span of thirty years. A way of life and a pattern of settlement was so strongly entrenched that the combined effects of events and conditions that occurred subsequently have only succeeded in eradicating a part of that pattern. Numerous alterations resulted but the basic elements of the plantation system as they originally developed

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64 See Map V, Appendix A.

65 Walter Prichard, editor, "A Forgotten Louisiana Engineer: G. W. R. Bayley and his 'History of the Railroads of Louisiana'," The Louisiana Historical Quarterly, XXX (October, 1947), 1179-1209. Williamson, op. cit., p. 245, states that the road was open to Tallulah in 1854.
during this period are still recognizable in the landscape. Curiously, in some cases, the changes in the landscape involving the plantation system that occurred between 1860 and 1950 are disappearing and a reversion to the original pattern of 1830 to 1860 is taking place. Indeed, it is not impossible to visualize a time in the near future when, for certain selected areas, and for selected elements of the landscape, it will be impossible to determine from mere evidence in the landscape that a departure from the original pattern ever occurred.

66 This development is discussed in Chapter VI.
CHAPTER IV
THE TENSAS BASIN: 1860 to 1890

The Tensas Basin, like other parts of the South, was affected severely by the events and aftermath of the Civil War. A social system disintegrated; much of the development of the area came to a standstill or was destroyed. Severe floods did further damage due to the neglect of levees during the war; capital became almost non-existent; and the population of the Basin was decimated by the death-lists of the war and by migration to other areas.¹

The Civil War. The difficulties ensuing out of the war were intensified by the campaigns on the Mississippi, particularly the Vicksburg Campaign, which resulted in an extensive amount of physical destruction in the Basin. The Union Army did not invade the area until the winter of 1862-63; but at that time, Lake Providence and other places in East Carroll and Madison parishes served as headquarters for Grant's armies. The greatest weight of destruction was felt in East Carroll and Madison parishes although no part of the

¹See Table II, p. 56.
Basin escaped. In the movement of Grant's troops south in the first phase of the march on Vicksburg, the armies under Sherman and Tuttle devastated the area. Sherman graphically describes the march:

Our route lay by Richmond and Roundaway Bayou; then, following Bayou Vidal we struck the Mississippi at Perkin's Plantation. Thence the route followed Lake St. Joseph to a plantation called Hard Times, about five miles above Grand Gulf. The road was more or less occupied by wagons and detachments belonging to McPherson's corps; still we marched rapidly and reached Hard Times on the sixth of May. Along the Bayou or Lake St. Joseph were many very fine cotton plantations, and I recall that of a Mr. Bowie, brother-in-law of the Hon. Reverdy Johnson, of Baltimore. The house was very handsome, with a fine, extensive grass plot in front. We entered the yard, and, leaving our horses with the headquarters escort, walked to the house. On the front porch I found a magnificent grand piano, with several satin-covered arm chairs, in one of which sat a Union soldier ... with his feet on the keys of the piano, and his musket and knapsack lying on the porch ... The house was tenantless, and had been completely ransacked; articles of dress and books were strewed about, and a handsome

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2 General William T. Sherman, Memoirs (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1875), Vol. 1, p. 320. The day after Sherman saw the house he described, it was burned.

3 Richmond, the parish seat of Madison Parish since 1839, was destroyed by fire in 1859, rebuilt and burned again by Federal troops in 1863. After the second burning, it was never rebuilt. The town was located two miles south of Tallulah, the present parish seat, at the junction of Brushy and Roundaway bayous.
boudoir with mirror front had been cast down, striking a French bedstead, shivering the glass. The library was extensive, with a fine collection of books, and hanging on the wall were two full length portraits of Reverdy Johnson and his wife...Behind the mansion was the usual row of cabins called the "quarters"....

General Tuttle's description of the same march is as follows:

We marched for fifteen miles along Lake St. Joseph...The lake was a lovely sylvan flood, and around its fertile shores had been one of the garden spots of Louisiana. Even as we gazed the country to the rear was one vast field of sugar cane and Indian corn... Only the day before expensive homes, sugar mills, and cotton plants of great cost looked out upon the placid lake in proud serenity. Now, where we marched, were smouldering ruins, and for miles ahead we could see smoke and flames wrapping roofs and walls that towered high. 4

Not all of the destruction, by any means, can be ascribed to Federal troops or battle activities. Guerilla bands, 5 deserters from both sides, and footloose slaves infested the swamps, raided the countryside and caused as much trouble for the Union authorities

4Williamson, op. cit., p. 149.

5Quantrell's guerillas were active in East Carroll Parish; and during the period after the Civil War, it is believed that the area served as a refuge for the Younger brothers and the James band. Apparently the extent of their activities here was raiding for food. Ibid., pp. 95-96.
as for the natives of the area. The conscription law passed by the Confederacy in 1862 caused those who wished to escape army service to flee to the swamps. Much of the destruction caused by these groups had been unfairly blamed on Union troops.

After the fighting was over in this part of the South, the Federal troops were faced continually with the problem of how to handle the large numbers of slaves who were living on the abandoned plantations. They were never able to solve adequately the disposition of Negroes.7

Economic conditions during reconstruction. On the heels of the war, an influx of people from northern states made itself felt in the Tensas Basin. In an attempt to control the Negroes, Federal officers developed a plan to employ the Negroes as civilians. Plantations were leased to northern operators who

6Ibid., p. 144. Others went to Texas to escape conscription and never returned.

7Ibid., p. 149. Many Negroes had been placed in camps where the death rate was alarming. The problem was extreme in the Basin where camps were established at Shipwell's Landing, Goodrich Landing, Milliken's Bend, Paw Paw Island, Young's Point, and Davis Bend. A commission, appointed to ensure humane treatment and adequate food and clothing, was ineffective.

8They were required to pay a tax of two dollars
were provided with Negro laborers by a commission set up for that purpose. Regulations existed to ensure fair treatment of the Negroes but the enforcing officials were subject to bribe. Plantations were not leased by northerners for humanitarian reasons; and Negroes received treatment far worse than they had been accustomed to as slaves. The northern operators, for whom the venture was purely a money-making proposition, felt compelled to get all the work possible out of each laborer before he was conscripted for labor or disappeared during a Confederate guerilla raid.9

Many of these northern lesiers were in effect absentee landlords for many did not find residence in Louisiana appealing; but others actually operated the lands they leased or bought. This resulted in the introduction of a population group into the Tensas Basin which, for the first time, was not essentially southern in its background and traditions. These planters faced the same problems that beset the native farmer returning to his devastated properties, with the on every bale (400 pounds) of cotton produced. Ibid., p. 150.

9Ibid., pp. 150-51.
exception that the southern planter could not depend upon laborers as could the northern operator with the system of forced labor, backed up by the Union Army. In addition, the northern operator was not generally faced with depletion of capital and credit.

More than half of the plantations on Lake Concordia were rented by northern men who, generally, were not attracted by hill lands. In his testimony before a committee of Congress investigating conditions in the South, Major-General Lorenzo Thomas stated:¹⁰

...there are sixteen plantations on Lake Concordia, and only six now cultivated by their owners. The others are leased to northern men, and one place sold to Negroes. In Concordia this year not more than one acre in ten that was formerly cultivated will be under plow...Our plantation of about 1,400 acres will raise 1,000 bales of cotton ordinarily. Under the old system, 150 negroes were employed on it...when I was there recently, I found 61 persons...only sixteen able hands...The number of acres cultivated by one man is about ten for cotton and two for corn.

The conditions described above were not limited to Concordia Parish. In Madison Parish, the cotton

¹⁰Calhoun, op. cit., Vol. 16, pp. 312-313.
¹¹The year was 1868.
crop was reduced from 40,000 bales to 3,000 bales a year; and in 1880, one-half of the lands once in cultivation was idle. Similar conditions prevailed in the other two parishes.

Thus, in 1865, while most of the country prospered and enjoyed a good international market, the southern farmer was returning to his lands faced with a staggering job. If his buildings had not been destroyed, they were in a bad state of repair; fences were non-existent; and farm implements were gone. Seed for planting was dear; the boll weevil was making its first appearance; and his labor supply, if not diminished, was thoroughly disorganized. The conditions the farmers in the Tensas Basin had faced a short twenty or thirty years before were more favorable than those now encountered. Game was scarce, as well as any sort of food, and stock virtually a thing of the past—all cattle had long since been butchered.

The southern farmer had operated on credit and was usually in debt a year ahead of each harvesting season.12 The usual security for loans had been slaves;

12 Commission merchants and later the modern bank, cooperative association, Federal Land Bank, or insurance company were sources supplying the planter with cash for his operations.
but in 1865, it was the land that had to be mortgaged to pay the debts of 1860 and 1861 as well as to get a new start. The large number of plantations that changed hands in this period attests to the difficulty of adjustment. Not a few of those who succeeded did so by "trickeries which would have turned the meanest card sharper green with envy." Many planters turned to merchandising to make money.

Results of the war: the share-cropper system. A major change in the agricultural operations of the south was the introduction of the share-cropper system. It had its inception in the difficulties of Union authorities to control and feed the freed Negroes. General Banks issued an order to:

...establish a yearly system of negro labor which should provide for the food, clothing,

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13 Only a few plantations in the Tensas Basin remain in the possession of the original families.

14 Williamson, op. cit., p. 161. "Reconstruction was a period of social and political transition. Moral standards in finance and politics were at low water mark. Many of the men who accumulated fortunes in the twenty years following the Civil War ...were financial gangsters who sat in high places and often passed the communion plate on Sunday. Their fortunes are now largely dissipated. The policy of these men was to keep a firm hand on the law-making bodies. Public debt in Louisiana rose from 6 to 50 million dollars ...."

15 Ibid., p. 150.
proper treatment, and just compensation of the negroes at fixed wages or on an equitable share crop basis.

General Thomas made observations as to the way in which the system worked:16

...a place on Lake St. John is worked by negroes, the former master furnishing mules and implements, the negroes feeding themselves and receiving half the crop ...This does not work well; negroes have to have someone to direct them; they complain of each other ...They do not like to work under negro overseers ...They will work under their former masters where they have been kind to them ...The only complaint I have heard negroes make were against two northern men who did not pay them.

The system with some alterations has become an integral part of the southern plantation system and is the immediate reason for several notable changes in the landscape of plantation areas after 1860. Principal among these was the dispersal of many elements of the settlement pattern. Prior to 1860, the distribution of farm buildings on a given unit of land tended to be compact; but, with the operation of a plantation on "shares," dispersal took place. Each tenant usually worked a fifteen or twenty-acre plot on the plantation and was provided with work animals, tools, and seed by the owner. Since so many of the living quarters were

16Ibid., pp. 162-63.
destroyed during the war or had deteriorated to the point of being unusable, houses for the Negroes were built near the fields they worked.

The scattering of living quarters resulted in a cluttered landscape since, in conjunction with the tenant house, a small shed, shed-like barn or corn crib, and perhaps a chicken coop and pig pen were built. Mules and horses were usually housed in a large barn near the plantation house, but the practice was not universal. Occasionally the tenant owned his work animal. Small, make-shift enclosures around the assemblage or some of its component parts further added to the cluttered appearance. (29, 51)

Another result of the system was the reduction of the size of fields since each tenant worked his acreage independently. The great disparity that existed as to the care each tenant gave his fields was indicated by variations in excellence of crop stands, weeds in the fields, and the like.

With the advent of the share-cropping system, the plantation commissary came into its own. (86, 87, 88, 89) Its predecessor had been the ante-bellum plantation stores which were found on well-travelled roads or at steamboat landings. These stores had been
servicing agencies for travellers and for local planters without access to the river. The post-war commissary fulfilled these functions; but, in addition, they were, as their name implies, sources of supply for the tenants who obtained there whatever necessities they required. Credit was extended to each tenant, and the amount of his debt was subtracted from his income for the yearly crop and other earnings on the plantation.

Results of the war: landownership. A further immediate result of the Civil War which was accompanied by a more extensive distribution of landownership than had ever existed in the Tensas Basin was the increase in the number of small farms of three to fifty acres based on the acquisition of land by freedmen and poor whites. The greatest increase occurred in farms of fifty acres or less; but later the increase was in farms of fifty acres or more as a result of small farmers acquiring more land or due to large units being broken up—the latter being the usual reason. Holdings of over five hundred acres had been hardest hit by the war, but by 1880 there was again a swing toward larger farms. McGinty\textsuperscript{17} feels that the return to larger landholdings

was not so much a readjustment as an experiment in plantation operation by newcomers. There is justification for this point of view in terms of the numbers of plantations sold for taxes and bought by northerners. On the other hand, there is the fact that some freedmen acquired farms of usually forty acres and rarely more than one hundred sixty acres immediately after the war and were unable to hold them. These lands were re-incorporated into the larger holdings from which they had originally been carved.

Results of the war: contraction of settlement.
The deterioration and abandonment of plantations after 1860 was so extreme that in many cases very little, if any, evidence of occupancy remains. In East Carroll and Madison parishes, few houses were left standing and the forest rapidly encroached on once-cultivated fields. Madison Parish records indicate that only two houses survived the Civil War and Reconstruction—one in the town of Tallulah (7) and the house at Crescent Plantation. (21, 22) Arlington, in Lake Providence,

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18 Even the rail fence disappeared from the scene. They were dismantled and used for fuel.
20 "Crescent Plantation on the west bank of Walnut
is another survivor of the pre-Civil War period. (23)
Built in 1841, it was originally a one-story structure of cypress construction. About ten or fifteen years after it was built, the house was raised and an under-story of brick added. Gossypia, north of Lake Providence, was built in 1856 and stands today virtually unaltered. 21
(24) Examples of similar survivors are more numerous in the southern part of the Tensas Basin. 22 A few of

Bayou stands in a grove of tall cedar and magnolia trees. The original house was constructed about 1832; the present eight square columns supporting a wide gallery. The great front doorway, flanked by French windows which extend almost to the top of the fourteen foot ceiling gives entrance to a spacious hall. A spiral stairway with a mahogany railing ascends from the rear of the hall to the second floor. The original brass knobs and locks of the door are still in use, as are the transoms of stained glass, imported from Europe. The plastered walls and ceiling ornaments are also well preserved."
Ibid., p. 479.

21 The name of the plantation is derived from the term "gossypium." The house was built by the Goza family (Spanish) and is a combination of Gothic, Spanish, and Moorish architectural styles. It is two-storied and is topped with a square tower and a pyramidal roof. The original picket fence as well as the slate roof is still intact.

22 It is acknowledged that the structures noted here are the outstanding ones in the Basin. They were outstanding prior to the Civil War as well since impressive buildings were never numerous. Their very scarcity has caused an undue amount of interest in them, and the facts regarding them are more definite--hence, their use here. For the more commonplace buildings, dating is less accurate--in many cases the fallible memory of old-timers is the only evidence other than the clues offered by the characteristics of construction.
the more notable are Wavertree, (26, 27, 28) Cross Keys, (18) Burns, (17) and Delta Bridge. (14) Of the buildings that survived the Civil War, some later burned, caved into the river, gradually deteriorated, or were destroyed to make way for newer structures.

The houses that replaced those destroyed in the 1860's included very few as impressive as those mentioned above. House types did not change from those built during the period prior to 1860, and no innovations are to be noted. The plantation assemblages were duplicates of the earlier ones on a somewhat simpler scale, and the various elements in the assemblage remained intact with the exception, already noted, of the discontinuation of "quarters" for Negroes.

Restoration and expansion of transportation.23 Once the Basin began to function again, it was apparent that other things had been changed only slightly. The pattern of roads was almost unaltered and most of the routes were back in operation shortly after the war although they were in bad condition. Troop movements and supply trains had done little to improve them. Some roads that had fallen into disuse during the war

23See Map VI, Appendix A.
had to be re-cleared, but not all were reopened. The areas that suffered most from depopulation were those last settled prior to 1860—the lands along the smaller streams and particularly the western part of the Basin. Tensas River and Black River both lost significance after the war that they never have regained. In these areas, roads as well as ferries fell into disuse.

The steamboat remained the principal means of transportation for the Tensas Basin in this period. Slowly, around the turn of the century, more and more commerce was diverted to the expanding railroads and river traffic appeared to have died. But prior to 1890, the river was still the real highway and railroad construction almost at a standstill.

The railroad from Vicksburg to Monroe had suffered severely during the 1860's. A crevasse on the Mississippi in 1862 resulted in the flooding of forty miles of the railroad west of DeSoto. The road continued in operation until 1863, however, and was used

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24 The overland route from Vidalia to the west was not closed to traffic by the war until July, 1863. It was used as a shipping point for the transport of Texas cattle to Union armies. Williamson, op. cit., p. 155.
in moving Confederate troops. Grant's attempt to cut a canal opposite Vicksburg resulted in wiping DeSoto, on the river side of the canal, off the map. When the railroad was rebuilt and the bed raised in 1881, Delta Point became the eastern terminus.

To do the construction work, over 1,000 Italians from New York were imported. Many of them remained in the Basin after the work was completed. They formed the nucleus of an Italian element in the population that is notable today. They became merchants in the towns and many acquired land although they remained primarily town residents. Their coming altered the landscape in no respect since they adapted themselves to the area as they found it with the possible exception that they were Roman Catholic in religion and largely responsible for the few Catholic churches which exist

25 Grant attempted three canals, one across the river from Vicksburg, one at Lake Providence, and one at Yazoo Pass. Sherman, op. cit., p. 305. None of them were successful, but the river thirteen years later accomplished what Grant could not do and cut through the meander across from Vicksburg leaving DeSoto an island in the river. Williamson, op. cit., p. 246.

26 Ibid., p. 251.

27 The sprinkling of Jews found in the towns of the Basin also date from the period following the Civil War. They began as peddlers and today are merchants, bankers, lawyers, doctors, farmers, and teachers.
in the Tensas Basin. Not all have remained Catholics, however; and the churches differ very little, if any, from the Protestant churches of the area in external appearance.

As noted in Chapter III, construction of the railroad did not lead to settlement along its route. The first maps on which extensive settlement is indicated are for the years 1871, 1878, and 1885. The stations indicated on the two latter maps are Delta, St. Martin's Station, Mounds, California, Barnes, Lums, Tallulah, Lake One, Quebec, Waverly, and Delhi. Hardee's map excludes St. Martin's, Mounds, California, and Lums but includes Dallas, just west of Quebec. The significance of these notations lies principally in the evidence they offer of the revitalization that occurred in the Tensas Basin after 1870. It also marks the establishment of a series of settlements oriented toward and influenced by Vicksburg rather than Natchez.

With one exception in Concordia Parish, other efforts at railroad construction in the Basin were not


29 Hardee's Map of Louisiana, 1871; Gray's New Map of Louisiana, 1878; Map of the State of Louisiana, Bureau of Immigration, 1885.
realized until the beginning of the twentieth century when the influence of the railroad and associated factors became apparent as an important aspect of the evolution of the landscape. The exception referred to was the first railroad in Concordia Parish, built in 1875 and 1876 from the river at Vidalia to Carter Plantation on Lake Concordia—a distance of two or three miles. It was a narrow-gauge road used to transport freight from the river to the lake where a steamboat was in operation.\(^{30}\) The railroad ceased operations when the Natchez, Red River, and Texas Railroad, chartered in 1881, began operations. This line was also a narrow-gauge road and was completed from Vidalia to Trinity on Black River by either 1885 or 1886.\(^{31}\)

**Summary.** If it were not for the disruptive influence of the Civil War and the development of the share-cropper system that resulted from it, there would be little justification in regarding the period, 1860 to 1890, as a distinctive epoch in the evolution of the landscape of the Tensas Basin. Much remained

\(^{30}\)Calhoun, *op. cit.*, Vol. 16, pp. 470–471. The river cut into the lake in 1880 and a levee was built across Bayou Cocodrie.

\(^{31}\)Loc. cit.
the same and many of the aspects of the old order still fitted the needs of the time. Yet, alterations that did begin to develop were of such significance in the subsequent landscapes as to warrant separate treatment.

In a profound way, the period is a transitional one. The people of the Basin were attempting to get back on their feet while retaining as much of their pre-war culture as possible—this at a time when most of the United States was pushing forward. The turn of the century was almost upon the Tensas Basin before it began to take on a "new face."
CHAPTER V

THE TENSAS BASIN: 1890 to 1930

While revitalization and resettlement of the Tensas Basin began in the 1870's, and the majority of the oldest elements in the landscape dates from that time, reconstruction was based on the attempt to resurrect as much as possible of the pre-Civil War pattern. It was not until about 1890 that a series of events and conditions began to create and superimpose a landscape pattern which was neither predicated on the ante-bellum plantation system nor a direct outgrowth of the war and its aftermath.

Transportation improvements in the form of railroads and a new industry—large-scale lumbering—constitute the core of the nature of the alteration of the landscape during this period. Significant railroad building began about 1885 or 1890 and is linked inseparably with lumbering. To consider the settlement pattern of the period apart from these developments is impossible.

The advent of the railroad marked the decline of the earlier modes of transportation. The use of ferries

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1At this time the bonanza days of lumbering in the Great Lakes states were on the wane and the principal centers of "big time" lumbering shifted to the southern yellow pine and hardwood forests and to the Pacific Northwest just as the principal center had shifted earlier from New England to the Great Lakes.
was curtailed, although some are still in operation in isolated places. (153, 154) The stagecoach disappeared entirely. As noted previously, river traffic was almost at a standstill; and, for the first time in the history of the Basin, streams ceased to be the principal route of movement.

**Railroad construction.** (161) Just as the steamboat was symbolic of the nineteenth century, the railroad became equally representative of the period immediately following. Almost all of the revolutionary changes in the landscape around the turn of the century can be correlated to some degree with the coming of this new means of transportation. The establishment of a rail network essentially in its present form rapidly became a reality after 1890.2

The New Orleans, Natchez, and Fort Scott Railroad from Vidalia to Bastrop was begun in 1899 and completed in the following decade. The Memphis-Helena and Louisiana Railroad from Ferriday to McGehee, Arkansas, was completed in 1904. The Texas and Pacific began acquiring rights in Concordia Parish for its Port Allen branch and had a line in operation by 1904. A line also was established from Vidalia to Black River and

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2See Map VII, Appendix A.
beyond, With the exception of the last two railroads mentioned, the lines in the Basin passed into the hands of the St. Louis, Iron Mountain and Southern System which also built a railroad from Ferriday northward through Lake Providence into Arkansas. These lines later passed into the hands of the Missouri Pacific System.

Non-Anglo-Saxon population groups, principally Italians and Chinese, were introduced into the Basin with the coming of the railroads. Today their descendants are shopkeepers and, in a few instances, plantation owners. To do the work of lumbering, northern skilled and semi-skilled laborers came to the Basin, but the majority remained only for a brief period. Of greater significance was the number of persons who changed residence within Louisiana or who came from neighboring states. Arkansas and Mississippi particularly were sources of new settlers.

The settlement pattern. The construction of railroads altered the pattern of settlement considerably. Rather than follow the course of the winding streams where the few roads were located and where the land was most extensively settled and most expensive, the railroads tended to be built near the backswamp on slightly elevated road-beds. For the first time, the people of
the Basin were afforded an all-weather means of travel. For this reason and the fact that lumbering operations depended on the railroad, settlement of the period shifted from the stream banks to the railroad right-of-way.

It is generally a simple matter to date settlement generally by noting the transportation route to which rural dwellings, as well as towns, are oriented. In a ribbon of land, sometimes not more than two miles wide, three successive stages of settlement can be discerned. The earliest stage is represented by rural and urban settlement on the banks of streams and cut-off lakes. The elements of this phase of settlement have already been described. The second phase is the location of settlement along the railroad and characterized by types of buildings not introduced into the Basin before this time. The third line of settlement, that along the modern highways, does not begin to be significant until the 1920's and will be discussed in the following chapter.

Except where coincidence of two or more of the phases of settlement occurred, each successive stage of settlement has been accomplished to a noticeable extent
by the decline of the earlier sites of settlement. Most spectacular is the decline of significance of the railroad hamlets or towns which sprang up along the railway, principally as centers for the collection and shipping of lumber and where some farming on cut-over land was carried on.

It has been noted earlier that most of the urban agglomerations in the Basin prior to this period had their origins as steamboat landings or at places about a day's travel apart on the few east-west roads. With the coming of railroads, hamlets sprang up where none had appeared before. Milliken, Roosevelt, Sondheimer, and Quimby\(^3\) are examples of this development. The town of Ferriday is also a direct result of railroad construction. When both the Texas and Pacific and the Iron Mountain systems chose the spot as a terminal point, the town sprang up on what had been part of Helena Plantation prior to 1803. Ferriday began as a site for railway shops and gradually expanded with the establishment of other businesses based on or associated with railroad transportation. These included a hoop

\(3\)Quimby is discussed in Appendix C, Part II.
mill, cooperage, cotton compress, compression plant, and sawmills.

Towns dating from this period are built around the railroad along which the principal street or streets extend, in contrast to the older towns whose main streets run parallel with the stream or levee. Where railroad construction coincided with older lines of settlement, a surge of growth dating from the time of construction is noted. This applies to all the principal towns in the Basin. In many cases, the location of a station at the site of a plantation performed the function that plantation steamboat landings had performed earlier. Such was the case at Somerset, Alsatia, Transylvania, and Clayton among others.

When the heyday of lumbering passed in the 1920's, most of these towns were left without reason for existence since they had been founded to serve the needs of a lumbering population rather than the large farming population. The farming group tended to continue patronizing the older towns, thus giving these towns an insurance of longer existence, if not for marked growth. With the exception of Ferriday, Clayton, and a few other towns, the development of modern roads has materially speeded up the disappearance of these
small agglomerations predicated on lumbering and the railroad.

The former town of Millikon is an excellent example of this trend. Lumbering and the railroad resulted in the creation of this hamlet out of the wilderness. It once contained several stores, a cotton gin, railroad station, two churches, a school, post office, and several other buildings. Among the houses were several above the average in construction and size. While the land is still farmed there, the decline of lumbering reduced the number of people who could make a livelihood. Improved highways to larger trade centers nearby have prevented it from serving as a trade center for the surrounding area. By 1950, when the author first visited the site, all but five houses had disappeared and those were in bad repair. Only one store, a church, two section houses, and one small shack remained. Of these, the store and the section houses were still in use. When Milliken was re-visited in 1952, only three houses and the two section houses were in existence.

**Lumbering.** The Tensas Basin at this period and well into the twentieth century had a great area of virgin hardwood forests. Several midwestern and
northeastern concerns either bought up large tracts of forest or rented them on long term leases, some of which are still in effect or have been renewed.\(^4\)

Theodore Roosevelt, who hunted in the area in 1907, described the country at that time:\(^5\)

Beyond the end of cultivation stands the great forest. Wherever the water stands in pools, and by the edges of the lakes and bayous, the giant cypress looms aloft, rivalled in size by some of the red gums and white oaks. In stature, in towering majesty, they are unsurpassed by any trees of our eastern forests; lordlier kings of the green-leaved world are not to be found until we reach the sequoias and redwoods of the Sierras. Among them grow many other trees—hackberry, thorn, honey locust, tupelo, pecan, and ash. In the cypress sloughs the singular knees of the trees stand two or three feet above the black ooze. Palmettos grow thickly in places. The canebrakes stretch along the slight rises of ground, often extending for miles, forming one of the most striking and interesting features of the country. They choke out the other growths, the feathery, graceful canes standing in ranks, tall, slender, serried, each but a few inches from his brother, and springing to a height of fifteen to twenty feet. They look like bamboos. They are well-nigh impenetrable to a man on horseback; even on

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\(^4\)No attempt is made in this paper to give lumbering the exhaustive treatment it deserves. The subject is worthy of study as the topic of a separate dissertation.

\(^5\)Theodore Roosevelt, "In the Louisiana Canebrakes," *Scribner's Magazine*, XXXIV (January, 1908), 47.
foot they make difficult walking unless free use is made of the heavy bush knife. It is impossible to see through them for more than fifteen or twenty paces, and often for not half that distance. Outside them, in the swamp, bushes of many kinds grow thick among the tall trees, and vines and creepers climb the trunks and hang in trailing festoons from the branches.

Into these swamps feeder lines and spurs were constructed from the trunk railroads to carry out the timber. They were numerous and spread out over the country in a dendritic pattern, supplemented by "corduroy" roads where teams of oxen were employed. Very few of the feeder lines still exist—some were dismantled when operations ended but others were simply abandoned. In some cases, engines and cars were left on the tracks at the time of abandonment. Aerial photographs reveal the locations of some of these old feeder lines and along the present-day highways, evidence of old railroad crossings can be seen in the pavement. The slightly elevated roadways on which the feeder lines were constructed still exist in many places. Abandoned sawmills are also in evidence. (138)

Land never cleared before was opened as a result of the lumbering operations and, in some cases, made available for farming. The amount devoted to this purpose, however, was limited by the problems associated
with drainage and flood control. The choice lands long had been under cultivation, and those opened by lumbering are most vulnerable to flooding and drainage difficulties. The soils have a higher clay content, are most difficult to cultivate, and necessitate later planting than along the front lands. Due to these circumstances, only a small part of the land cleared was placed under the plow. Since no scientific efforts have ever been made in the Basin regarding cutting practices or reforestation, the land was left idle to grow up into fields of brambles, small bushes, shrubs, vines, palmetto, and finally trees. (99) If cultivation was carried on after the timber was removed, it seldom lasted for any appreciable length of time. The soil was quickly exhausted, and problems of weeds and palmetto dictated the abandonment of the fields which then reverted

During and after Reconstruction, people living in the states bordering the Mississippi were faced with no more vital problem than that of flood control. Much of their effort was directed toward convincing the Federal Government that it should contribute to the cost of building and maintaining levees. After repeated failures, small amounts began to be received irregularly. The levees in 1877 were in a worse condition than they had been in 1850, and the problems facing the Basin were especially bad. Indicative of this fact levee building in the areas outside the jurisdiction of the Tensas Levee Board were encouraged and aided. See Tompkins, op. cit., p. 334.
to forest. The timber being cut today is largely second-, or third-, growth forest which reappeared in this manner.

**Characteristics of settlement: buildings.**

Accompanying the advent of lumbering and the railroad, several house types completely new to the Tensas Basin were introduced. One of these was the so-called "midwestern" type which, although it varied as to form, was essentially a square, two-storied house. (42) This house type found its best development in south-western Louisiana where it again is associated with an economic epoch—the coming of the railroad, settlement of the grasslands, and large-scale rice culture. Examples of the midwestern house have never been numerous in the Tensas Basin. The best examples of the type are found in towns, but all of them reveal the fine hand of the architect in the form of gingerbread, bay windows, and turrets. (41) The trend toward more elaborate external details in the better houses of this period frequently found expression as well in the single or double log pens built for the Negro share-croppers. The occurrence of fluted cornices along the eaves of the cabins is a case in point.
Far more significant than the midwestern house, however, was the introduction of the shotgun house, the bungalow, and, of lesser importance, the house with the pyramidal roof. All of these types are definitely associated with lumbering and did not exist in the Basin before this period. In terms of relative numbers of such house types appearing in the Basin, the period of World War I is significant.

The shotgun house is most closely associated with the advent of lumbering because lumber companies needed quick, temporary housing. While use was made of the log cabin types, especial use was made of the shotgun—a house with frontward facing gables; one room wide and sometimes one, but usually two or three rooms deep. (48, 49, 50, 51, 53) The house was completed by the addition of a front porch. Shotgun houses are usually enlarged by the addition of one or more rooms at the rear, and some of the houses are extremely elongated. Frequently, however, it became the practice to enlarge the house by means of an ell. (52) The idea of the attached kitchen common among the earlier house types in the Basin thus was carried over to the shotgun.

The introduction of this new house type was accompanied by certain innovations in construction which
made the houses particularly adaptable to the temporary settlement at lumber sites. The most significant feature was board-and-batten construction which needed a minimum of interior support and no interior wall. In contrast to the prevailing practice in earlier periods involving the use of overlapping horizontal boards, the walls of these houses were constructed of vertical boards with narrow strips of timber, or batten, sealing the cracks between the boards. Houses were usually made of rough-sawed, green lumber much given to warping. Board-and-batten construction was particularly adaptable to this material, and it made possible the rapid erection of a house as well as rapid dismantling. When the site of lumbering operations changed, the houses would be loaded on flat cars intact for removal to the new location or knocked down into six or eight pieces—the four walls, floor, roof, and room partitions—for quick reassembly.

The shotgun house rapidly became a folk type in the Tensas Basin, principally as a Negro dwelling in both rural and urban areas. Board-and-batten construction also became widely used not only in the shotgun house but in all other types as well. (35, 44, 55, 58) Older houses enlarged or altered during this period made use
of board-and-batten construction in contrast to horizontal boards. (93)

The house with a pyramidal roof which was also introduced into the Basin at this time was usually a better house than the shotgun. It is square in floor plan, usually with four rooms, and either one or two front doors. A central hallway may or may not be present. A front porch was usually added, and, in some cases, a porch extended entirely around the house. It is rare to find an appendage on a house of this type. The pyramidal house, as well as other houses of the period, was usually elevated about two or three feet above the ground on wooden blocks. It is found in the largest numbers in the urban areas associated with lumbering and has not become a true folk type in the Basin.

Apparently, the bungalow also was originally an urban house type in the Basin, but it has rapidly become characteristic of both rural and urban settlement. The bungalow is characterized by frontward-facing gables and a depth greater than the width. The house is two rooms wide and two or more rooms deep. In the great majority of cases, there is no central hallway in these houses, but in those of better construction a central
hallway is sometimes found. (60, 61)

In both the pyramidal house and the bungalow, board-and-batten construction has been used but horizontal board construction is more general except in substandard houses. The quality of the lumber used in part distinguishes houses dating from this period from older ones. Boards, except in the better dwellings, were invariably rough and splintery and showed the characteristic marks of the saw. In the better houses, the boards show rounded edges and varying widths to facilitate overlapping. Prior to the period of lumbering, the majority of houses was whitewashed, if painted at all. During this period, the practice of staining the houses a bright green came into vogue. One of the distinctive things about towns founded on lumbering--such as Ferriday--or rural areas settled during the period of lumbering is the use of green stain on the exteriors of buildings. Staining is not a general practice today, but whitewashing is still done and the use of paint is becoming more general.

It should be noted that many of the houses dating from this period are only superficially new in terms of house type. The substitution of a pyramidal roof, the addition of a bay window, and similar external features
cannot conceal the basic unchanged form of the house. The central hallway and the floor plan of the double log pen survived in many of these houses. When sawed lumber became available almost all houses were built with this material; but, while the materials of construction were different from those of the earlier periods, the plan and form of many of the houses were altered hardly at all. The advent of the new house types by no means signalled the decline of the older log cabin derivatives—their introduction simply resulted in a diversity of house types unique to the landscape development of the Tensas Basin up to that point.

Outbuildings changed little in form or size with the coming of lumbering except in the material used—and board-and-batten construction in some cases. The general occurrence of smaller outbuildings that began after 1860 continued to be the case except on large plantations. These smaller buildings were the ones that made the most extensive use of board-and-batten. The dispersal of rural settlement associated with the share-cropper system was not altered.

Characteristics of settlement: agriculture. The one common thread interwoven throughout the landscape evolution of the Tensas Basin from 1803 to the present
is economic dependence on cotton. Production of cotton continued after large-scale lumbering began and actually was given new life thereby. Cotton planters, impoverished since the Civil War, now had other sources of revenue—either directly from lumbering or indirectly through building and merchandising. Costs of cotton production were rising, and crop yields were made more uncertain by the appearance of the boll weevil. If it had not been for the income from timber, many cotton farmers might have found it impossible to continue at all. Cotton could be grown only if it were heavily poisoned. Cotton poisoning was originally accomplished by hand and later by means of a device that could be filled with dust and carried by a man on horseback down the rows.

As a matter of fact, some planters found it advantageous to change from cotton to rice culture, or at least to supplement their cotton activities with rice growing. Rice culture in the Tensas Basin represents a temporary and an almost forgotten episode in the succession of cultural landscapes. Only a few inhabitants know anything more than the mere fact that rice was once grown in the Basin. For so recent an occurrence, records are meager, and only by inference
can much of the story be reconstructed.7

Evidences of rice culture in the landscape have been virtually erased in the short period of twenty-five years. Only two rice elevators remain; these are wooden structures now used for storage of grains such as oats and a variety of other materials and have no characteristics particularly identifying them with rice.

(129) The last vestiges of old rice levees in the fields have been removed rapidly in the last fifteen years by farmers levelling their fields to facilitate mechanized agriculture, or in the preparation of high grade pastures for the developing cattle industry. It was possible as late as 1935 in driving along country roads to cross from place to place small rises or elevations in the road which were old rice levees. These disappeared with the road-building programs of the 1930's. The levees which remain today are found in the uncleared backswamp where they have been preserved to some extent

7It will seem strange that the inhabitants of the Basin remember so little of such a recent event unless it is kept in mind that only a minority of the residents ever engaged in rice culture for any length of time. The Tensas Basin until the 1930's was populated by a majority of Negroes, few of whom owned land, and whites who owned plantations and tradesmen. Since 1925, many of the people involved in rice growing have moved away or died and a few of the newcomers only are aware of the history of the area.
by a growth of trees and underbrush. Even these are soon to be obliterated by the clearing of land for pasture.

While some rice was grown in the pre-Civil War period in Tensas and Concordia parishes, production on a commercial scale was an event of the first and second decades of the twentieth century. Rice during the 1840's and 1850's and earlier was grown in small quantities as a subsistence crop only. The rice growing of this period has been virtually forgotten by the natives and the only remaining clues are to be found in a single entry in the census of 1850 and in a few very meager references to rice in local newspapers. Rice prior to the Civil War was planted in small patches for home consumption and was usually called "dry rice" since it was neither irrigated nor necessarily planted in shallow water. The practice was continued on a very small scale after the Civil War, principally by Negroes.

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8Rice culture was introduced into Louisiana from the Carolinas and Georgia where it was first cultivated in the United States.

9The diary of James Monette written while he lived on Roundaway Bayou contains an entry on June 1, 1852 to the effect that he "planted rice one week today." Williamson, op. cit., p. 302.
The more significant period of rice culture in the twentieth century developed as a result of the spread of the boll weevil which seriously curtailed production of cotton in 1907 and 1908. Farmers turned to rice as a cash crop and found it doubly valuable as a means of using land unfit for other crops. Rice in the Tensas Basin, as for river rice in other areas, was grown chiefly in the poorly drained backswamps on the so-called "buckshot" land where a supply of standing water existed. There was the disadvantage of being relatively removed from the water in the streams and lakes that had to be pumped or siphoned to the fields in dry periods.

For the most part, farmers depended upon the so-called "providence" rice--given that name because the rice was planted, then allowed to grow and mature without further attention. Some operators did siphon or pump water as needed from the cut-off lakes, bayous, and rivers. Fairly complete remnants of siphoning devices were in existence as recently as ten years ago but none exists today. (128) The use of water for this purpose placed a severe strain on the sources at hand, and appreciably lowered the water level in the lakes. Many times, the water in the rivers as well became so
low that the cost of pumping or siphoning water was prohibitive. To lessen costs, some operators cut tunnels through the levees from the river but the danger of such tunnels in flood times resulted in laws forbidding the practice.10

Another practice associated with rice growing also hastened the filling of cut-off lakes. Farmers found that with rice culture, they could make use of that part of the batture that was too wet for other crops. A second advantage to the use of the batture lay in the nearness of the water supply if irrigation was required. Rice was usually planted at a time in the spring when the lakes were high and harvested when the water had receded. Thus, there developed on the lake or stream-side slopes of natural levees a crop sequence beginning with rice at the water's edge, then corn, cotton and other crops. As a result, the filling of the lakes and bayous was greatly accelerated. Rice, followed by other crops, was planted progressively

farther and farther out into what had been the lake or bayou. In a ten year period such features as Lakes St. John and St. Joseph became measurably smaller in size, and expressions of concern over the consequences were commonplace.

It was in the backswamp, however, that most of the rice was grown. There, one of the greatest enemies of the rice grower was the weed. Combatting them was an almost impossible task. After three or four years of planting a given field with rice, weeds would be so bad as to cause abandonment of the field. Rice growers generally adopted the practice of leasing land for two or three years as it was cleared by the lumber companies, then abandon it for other fields as weeds became too rank. Thus, the operations of a rice grower often were widely scattered, but it proved financially more rewarding to use the newly cleared land than to battle the weeds. Leasing rice lands was advantageous as well in terms of water supply. The lessee could readily move from one source of water to another as he used the available supply in a locality. However, those growers who did not lease lands for rice, but who owned the land they farmed, followed a two or three year rotation system and burned over their fallow fields to control
weeds. Rice was sometimes grown on plantations abandoned during or shortly after the Civil War and which had not been reclaimed. On such places, weeds were particularly bad, and the planter had to contend with stands of palmetto.

Rice was grown in the Tensas Basin under these conditions from 1907 to about 1925. The conventional cultivation practices characteristic of river rice were applied in general and will not be described here. The same holds true for the arrangement of rice levees. They were not contoured as is the present-day practice. The slope of the natural levee away from the river caused the rice levees to be placed fairly close together and built in the form of cross embankments. A rice levee was usually constructed for every drop of two-tenths to five-tenths feet in slope. Today, however, the rice fields around Readland, Arkansas, and in extreme northern East Carroll Parish are contoured. (114)

Rice production centered about Tensas Parish but spread in general from the south in Concordia Parish and southern Tensas Parish northward. The last parish in the Basin to begin growing rice was East Carroll.

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11 Chioco, op. cit., p. 34.
From there, it spread into the extreme southeastern corner of Arkansas where rice is still grown around Readland.¹²

The acreage in rice in the Basin was always limited by the availability of water and the distance which separated the backswamp production areas from the water supply. At no time did the acreage account for more than one or two per cent of the state total, but production per acre was consistently favorable with the state average.¹³ While Tensas Basin rice represented a very small part of the total state acreage, it nevertheless took on important proportions in the Basin. It was a life-saver at a time when there were few other possibilities for a cotton planter plagued by the boll weevil. Railroad shipments of the period consisted almost wholly of lumber and unmilled rice. When the farmers turned to rice culture, they did so at a time when foodstuffs commanded a good market, but acreages in rice decreased rapidly after the crisis of World War I was passed.

¹²Rice in this part of Arkansas apparently has no generic relationship with the rice area around Stuttgart.

¹³See Table III, p. 136.
### TABLE III

**RICE PRODUCTION IN THE TENSAS BASIN**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>The State</th>
<th>Tensas</th>
<th>Madison</th>
<th>Concordia</th>
<th>East Carroll</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1850</td>
<td>Pounds</td>
<td>1,425,349</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>8,150</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860</td>
<td>Pounds</td>
<td>6,311,257</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>No Production indicated for 1870-1900</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>Bushels</td>
<td>10,839,913</td>
<td>137,280</td>
<td>28,000</td>
<td>64,018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Acres</td>
<td>317,518</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>1,840</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>Bushels</td>
<td>16,011,667</td>
<td>51,000</td>
<td>54,910</td>
<td>12,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Acres</td>
<td>556,959</td>
<td>825</td>
<td>1,379</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td>Bushels</td>
<td>12,289,275</td>
<td>31,500</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Acres</td>
<td>351,594</td>
<td>700*</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Three farms reporting*
Rice growers in the Basin for the most part came from the ranks of long-established cotton planters in the area. There were no significant population changes when rice was introduced or as a result of its disappearance in the twenties. Some few men who had previous experience growing rice came into the Basin from the rice areas in Southwest Louisiana—especially Crowley—but these families can be counted on the fingers of one hand. Furthermore, they contributed nothing distinctive to the material culture of the area. Apparently their midwestern heritage had been tempered by life in Louisiana prior to their arrival in the Basin to the extent that they accepted the culture as they found it and introduced no innovations. When rice culture ceased, they remained and took up other occupations in which they engage today. These newcomers generally did not own the land they farmed—-at least not at first. Today all are landholders. The natives who grew rice owned most of the land they cultivated but occasionally they, too, leased additional land.

With the return to cotton growing in the 1920's, much of the backswamp that had been kept relatively cleared and in rice, was allowed to revert to swamp by the lumber companies and other owners. Much of it
remains in that condition today, but the development of the cattle industry since 1935 has resulted again in the clearing of these areas for pasture.

In contrast to most of the economic pursuits such as cotton or cattle which have occupied the farmers of the Tensas Basin, rice was never regarded as a permanent or long-range crop. Even during the period of peak production the planters who grew it tended to regard rice with disdain—a lowly plant not worthy of taking a place beside King Cotton. It was nothing more nor less than a stop-gap—though an important one at the time—and as such it did not make a lasting imprint on the cultural landscape or on the minds of the people. No new settlement or redistribution of population occurred as a result of rice cultivation and transportation routes were not affected. In fact, the casual traveler, even in 1920, could have traversed the length of the Basin without becoming aware of the presence of rice fields due to their scattered distribution in the backswamp away from the normally travelled routes.

In another ten years no record of rice culture in the Tensas Basin will remain on the scene. Further, it is not likely that farmers in the Basin will ever turn to rice again in times of stress. Today a far
more permanent and practical alternative to cotton culture is becoming well-established—cattle. This development, with the discovery of natural gas and the difficulties inherent in rice culture, force the conclusion that rice in the near future will hold only an historic interest for the Tensas Basin.  

Summary. The period, 1890 to 1930, was for the Tensas Basin a revolutionary one. A new mode of transportation and a new industry appeared and significantly altered the tempo of life and the landscape of the area. The inroads of the boll weevil threatened the social system based on cotton perhaps more seriously than the Civil War. These immediate causes of changes in the landscape were transitory in terms of their relative period of existence in the Basin as dominant forces; but the effects occurred almost instantaneously and were far-reaching. Old material elements in the

14To the author, it seems that this phase of the cultural evolution of the Tensas Basin should serve as a warning to students of the landscape of the ease with which they can overlook a temporary yet significant step in the sequence they are attempting to reconstruct. It serves as an excellent example of the pitfalls inherent in the job before him. He cannot conduct his work on cultural landscapes on the assumption that everything he wants or needs to know to reconstruct the sequence will leave clues in some form or other in the landscape even for the short period of a quarter or half a century.
landscape were visibly altered, new ones introduced, and the pattern of settlement re-oriented. For the first time in the history of the Tensas Basin since the development of a definite pattern of settlement, vibrantly new forces had appeared to revitalize the economy of the Basin and leave an indelible mark on the landscape.
CHAPTER VI
THE TENSAS BASIN: 1930 to 1950

The landscape of the Tensas Basin at the midpoint in the twentieth century is the immediate result of developments since 1930. The wholesale alteration of the landscape since that time indicates that the Basin is going through a period of more rapid and widespread change than has previously been the case. These events may be classified under three headings: governmental activity, cattle, and natural gas.

However, the initial change in the landscape of the Basin in the 1930's was set in motion by several forces dating from the late 1920's. In 1927, there occurred the most severe flood ever experienced in the Basin. Two years later, the financial collapse of 1929 and the depression of 1930, accompanied by the advent of the New Deal policies, caused, for the people of the Basin, not one day but a seemingly endless number of years to be an almost continuous "Black Friday." These disasters rank beside the Civil War and the boll weevil in economic importance.

As a result of the 1927 flood, levee building became a responsibility of the federal government; and,
during the 1930's, a system of levees was constructed which made unfit for farming some lands formerly under cultivation. (169) While the over-all effect of levee construction was advantageous to the people of the Basin, the same cannot be said for a number of individual landowners on or near the Mississippi whose acreages were sharply reduced or made unusable by levee construction. There was no compensation for lands lost in this way.

In the Tensas Basin where cotton culture is traditional, (107, 108) many landowners could or would not adjust to a new economy readily. For as long as the Basin had been settled, farmers had lived under a mortgage system that kept them in debt a year ahead, and suddenly they found themselves unable to do anything but get more deeply in debt. The combined financial results of the flood and the depression caused many farmers to lose their lands or to sell them at ridiculously low prices. Excluding actual physical destruction, the results were the same as those following the Civil War. There was a decline in population¹ and a sharp decrease in the amount of land under cultivation.

¹See Table II, p. 56.
The introduction of livestock. In the early 1930's, the federal government, through various federal agencies, put into practice certain acreage control measures which were supposed to alleviate the economic plight of the farmers. In the Tensas Basin, these control measures materially reduced the amount of land devoted to cotton. For the most part, lands forced into idleness in this way remained idle. There was no apparent stop-gap activity to turn to, and no capital to invest in one if it had been present. The Basin took on a run-down, unkept appearance that is just being overcome. Slowly, however, farmers turned to cattle as a money crop. Except for a few foresighted natives, who can be counted on the fingers of one hand, the development of a livestock economy in the Basin was the work of newcomers. Frequently, men from Texas, Arkansas, Mississippi, and other parts of Louisiana, who had made money in lumbering or oil, regarded the cheaply bought lands of the Basin as an excellent area for the expansion of their herds. They introduced the

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2The author's father was one of the several Basin planters who began raising cattle commercially as early as 1930. Most of the cattle in the Basin are Herefords. Brahma strains were more recently introduced and are preferred over Black Angus. (117, 118, 119)
cattle-ranch or stock-farm complex into the Tensas Basin and very rapidly the symbols of a livestock economy began to dot the landscape after 1935. (32, 120, 121) Local farmers followed their example gradually as finances would permit, and today they combine cattle with cotton production if they have not changed over to cattle completely. By and large, there has been a shift from cotton culture per se to the production of corn, soy beans, small grains, pasture, and hay crops.\(^3\) (102, 103, 104, 115, 116) Much cropland has been converted to pasture and winter cover crops are in general use. This economic pattern gives no indication of being a short-term one, such as rice had been, but a relatively permanent situation.

These developments first took place on a significant scale in Madison Parish centering around Tallulah and from there dispersed northward into East Carroll Parish and southward into Tensas and Concordia. The fact that the southern part of the Basin has experienced

\(^3\)Some rather experimental growing of wheat has been attempted in the Basin. While the acreage in wheat has never accounted for more than one per cent of the land in cultivation, some flour has been made; and until a short time ago, a flour mill existed in East Carroll Parish. (126) It has recently been renovated and enlarged for storage of the more widely grown grains. (127)
the change to livestock more recently and to a lesser degree contributes to the older appearance of the landscape there. By way of contrast, those areas where livestock production has made the greatest inroads present a more prosperous appearance.

Land syndicates. Many of these stock-raisers, along with other large land-holders in the Basin, are organized into companies that might be called land syndicates. The syndicates own significant amounts of land widely scattered over the area.

In the Tensas area, both resident and non-resident holdings exceed private holdings. In Tensas Parish there was only one large corporate holding in 1895—owned by a lumber company. Now, in the area, lumber companies own most of the land in large holdings with agricultural corporations second.4

The amount of land owned in a single parish is, in one case, almost half the entire area of the parish. The land may be turned to a combination of livestock and cotton or may be devoted to one or the other. The usual practice is to use those lands near the "front" for cotton and devote the more poorly drained backswamp lands to pasture cattle and hogs. (124, 125) Parcels

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4Desmond L. W. Anker, "Who Owns the Large Land Holdings in Louisiana?," Louisiana Rural Economist, I (April, 1939), 21.
of land may be rented out to tenants, but most of the land is operated by the syndicate itself through an extensive system of managers and overseers. Such large landholdings have larger fields and are largely responsible for the general rise in the size of the average farm unit in the Tensas Basin despite the increase in the number of small farms since 1930. Thus, the trend is toward the larger fields of the pre-Civil War period.

Since farming operations are highly mechanized, fewer Negroes are needed for labor. As a result, abandoned houses rapidly falling apart are a common sight. Frequently, a chimney and a stile are the usual signs of a former house site. (16, 17) There tend to be fewer houses, but better ones, more and larger outbuildings, a widespread use of paint, and a decline in private individual ownership. There are more fences and better ones, usually hog and barbed-wire types. (143, 144)

5 Parenthetically, it may be mentioned here that as a result of the livestock complex, many of the old plantation names are falling into disuse. There is an increasing tendency toward the use of the words "ranch" and "farm" in preference to "plantation." Branding symbols may be used to identify a given place, or it may be referred to simply as "Mr. X's Place." (90, 122)
The Tennessee fence has also been introduced and is used occasionally for corrals and around the barn lot. Various other types of substantial board fences are also in use.

There seems to be a movement on the properties of land syndicates to abandon the scattered distribution of tenant houses through the fields that has been a characteristic of the Basin landscape since the Civil War. The trend seems to be toward a return to the "quarters" arrangement of tenant housing that prevailed during slavery. Several factors enter into this trend—the enlargement of fields accompanying mechanization, decreasing the need for power lines running throughout the plantation now that an increasing number of rural homes are being supplied with electricity, and the need for a central place of departure to and return from work. On these large holdings, each laborer does not work a plot of ground individually as under the share-cropper system. The laborers work for wages and there is a trend toward the use of large "gangs" that must be transported to and from the fields.

The small farm movement. Since 1930, a movement, without precedent on a similar scale in the Tensas Basin, has been the appearance of the so-called family-sized
farms. The movement stems from two sources—the sale of land by lumber companies and the direct activity on the part of the federal government. In an attempt to minimize the share-cropper system, the government bought up certain large defunct plantations and subdivided them into one hundred sixty acre farms. These farms were made available to selected persons and payment arranged by means of federal loans. Most of this activity was carried out by the Federal Emergency Relief Administration and is now handled by the Farm Security Administration.

The elements of the landscape in areas settled by the basis of federal aid differ sharply from those of surrounding areas where private settlement took place. Most of the private settlement of small farms has taken place on cut-over lands. Since there is little effort on the part of lumber companies to utilize forests on a continuous cut basis, the land is stripped and then sold as an additional source of income as well as to reduce taxes. These "new ground" farms constitute the largest proportion of the small units to be created, and most of them are in the

6Lumber companies tended to hold their lands prior to 1930 but began selling them thereafter. (140)
Most of the people who have settled on these lands are migrants from the hill areas of Louisiana, Arkansas, and Mississippi. They came into the Basin as day laborers—"itinerant cotton pickers"—and after a time settled on the lands they now occupy. In the 1930's they represented the first large-scale invasion of non-landowning Whites experienced in the Basin. 7 A much smaller group of Whites settling on the family-sized farms were made up of people who had originally come to the Basin to work in lumbering and had never acquired land.

About three-fourths of the farmers were White, but a quarter were Negroes, 8 most of whom had previously

7 Many times, their social position was lower than that of the Negro in the Basin; and natives, who regarded them as completely undesirable, derisively referred to them as "rednecks" or "peckerwoods." William Alexander Percy, Lanterns on the Levee (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1941), p. 20, summarizes this attitude: "...admire them, trust them, love them—never. Intellectually and spiritually they are inferior to the Negro, whom they hate." Hodding Carter also discusses the migrants in this vein. See Hodding Carter, "Redneck on the River," Lower Mississippi (The Rivers of America Series. New York: Farrar and Rinehart, 1942).

been share-croppers somewhere in the Basin. Negro farms are sometimes found interspersed with those of Whites, but the general practice is the formation of distinct racial communities. Both the federal government and lumber companies have followed the practice of restricting certain blocks of land to Negroes and others to Whites. Although it is not universally true, Negroes are usually sold the less desirable land—less accessible and poorly drained. Aside from the obvious differences of color of residents, small farms settled by Negroes and Whites are easily distinguished by conditions of the landscape. In Negro areas, farms are less well-kept; there is a sparser use of paint, and buildings are not maintained as well as those of Whites.

Two-thirds of the houses occupied by White families are rated only fair as to condition and general appearance; 10 per cent are rated as poor; almost 2 per cent are tents, thus indicating that housing conditions of the new settlers are far from desirable. Only 1 house out of every five occupied by white families is rated good, while just 1 out of every 20 among negro houses is rated good. Slightly more than one-half of the negro houses are rated only fair; approximately 40 per cent are poor, and 5 per cent are but tents.9

On governmentally sponsored farms, buildings are not folk-types common to the Basin, but are the same on

Negro and White farms although those of the Negro are in poorer condition. (53, 55, 151, 156) On farms privately purchased by Negroes, buildings are usually the same types but smaller than those in other farm areas. Emphasis in housing on Negro farms is on the bungalow or the shotgun house. Houses are closer together and less well-kept. They are surrounded by fewer, and poorer, fences and small poorly constructed outbuildings. If present, barns are smaller and are usually the "Vee" type with an attached shed. These farms still are devoted to cotton sometimes with other row crops and perhaps a few livestock. Most of the Negro farms involve forty acres and rarely exceed one hundred sixty.¹⁰ In Tensas Parish, the farms range from forty-seven acres to one hundred sixty-one.

Today, in spite of the settlement of large areas, some of which have not been cleared since the Civil War, there are still extensive uncleared areas of backswamp.

¹⁰Negroes who do not farm for themselves, either as share-croppers, renters, or landowners, have moved into town or left the Basin entirely. Restrictions on acreages by the federal government and mechanization have reduced the amount of labor needed on the plantations and these displaced Negroes now live in towns where they hire out as servants, do manual labor on railroads, for lumber companies, on levee crews, in road maintenance, or as day laborers on plantations. As an alternative, some of them subsist either entirely or in part on relief or welfare rolls.
As in the beginning, most of the settled land stretches along the rivers or ridges in the backswamp although settlement is, of course, more widespread. A large-scale drainage program must be put into effect before much more land can be made agriculturally productive.

The F. S. A. farm. Houses, suburban in appearance, have been built on the small farms developed by the federal government but are restricted to such farms in their distribution. As a matter of fact, the entire assemblage of the governmentally sponsored farm is distinctive from all other farms in the Basin. Such farms, planned by the Farm Security Administration, follow a definite pattern although minor variations occur from farm to farm. (57) The house may vary in plan but is definitely suburban in type, with a stained shingle roof. (56) Very near the house to the left or right rear are a barn and a chicken house. The barn rarely varies in size or form (57) and the same is true of the chicken house. Farm assemblages are spaced rather uniformly about a quarter or half-mile apart. Most of these farms are found in Madison, Tensas, and East Carroll parishes. The headquarters of the Ladelta Cooperative Association is at Thomastown, east of Tallulah. At least five large tracts of land are
involved in this association in Madison and East Carroll parishes. Perhaps the most notable of all such settlements is on the old Transylvania Plantation in East Carroll Parish. In Tensas Parish, all or parts of nine plantations have been subdivided into these small farms—Maryland, Loamland, Hunsicker (the old Beckman tract), Crescent, Winter Quarters, Canton, Ashland, Cane Brake, and Providence.

Natural gas. While much of the alteration of the Basin landscape during the period can be traced to petroliferous wealth, most of it up to this point has come from areas outside the Basin. It has supplied the cash with which newcomers have financed a considerable amount of the large-scale cattle raising and farming. Recent discoveries of natural gas in the Tensas Basin, however, have introduced the derrick, the Christmas tree, and the storage tank to the Basin landscape. (141)

This phase of the economic development of the Tensas Basin is still largely a matter of prediction rather than a statement of results insofar as its impact on the landscape is concerned. Those people on whose lands natural gas has been found have been financially able to make improvements on their plantations which are revealed in the general appearance of the landscape,
but no marked imprint has yet occurred. The general pattern of settlement has not been affected. However, since the strikes are generally not along the established routes of travel some change may take place in the future. It is possible that the next sequence of occupance in the Tensas Basin could be based on this phase of mineral exploitation.

The modern road system.\textsuperscript{11} The decline of lumbering\textsuperscript{12} resulted in the decline of the use of railroads in the Basin and their significance in influencing the pattern of settlement. Sites of settlement began to contract and fall into disuse. This development was speeded up by the appearance after World War I of the first signs of the present-day highway system. Furthermore, modern transportation and communication are rapidly destroying the influence, and causing the disappearance, of the rural plantation trade centers. Today rural settlement is so continuous that the old

\footnote{See Map VIII, Appendix A.}

\footnote{A considerable amount of land in the Tensas Basin is still in the hands of lumber companies although unprecedented sales of land have occurred. A good part of the privately owned woodland is also leased for thirty or fifty years but large-scale lumber mills have given way to the smaller sawmill except in Vialdia, Tallulah, and Ferriday.}
plantation centers tend to merge and become indistinct or die out in favor of urban centers that are easily reached and offer a wider variety of services. However, plantations still "off the beaten track" away from the main highways retain some of the characteristics that caused them originally to be recognized as entities.\textsuperscript{13}

The present-day highways have their immediate forerunners in the roads constructed in the 1920's. They were largely dirt or gravel roads that constituted extensions and improvements on the old incomplete river roads.\textsuperscript{(163, 166, 167)} The trend toward shortening road distances, however, began at about the same time, especially on the principal routes. Highway 65 is an excellent example. In rural areas, parts of the old river roads which closely followed the Mississippi or nearby bayous were abandoned.\textsuperscript{(164, 165)} Gravel, and later asphalt,\textsuperscript{14} roads were constructed through the backswamp or, at least, away from the crest of the

\textsuperscript{13}With the arrival of more passable roads, there appeared in the Basin an innovation in merchandising—the rolling store.\textsuperscript{(91, 92)} Most of them are operated by Italians and are found principally in the southern part of the Basin and in the more inaccessible areas off the main highways.

\textsuperscript{14}Hard-surfaced roads were not introduced until the road-building programs of the 1930's were instituted.
natural levee. As these changes took place, a line of settlement along the new highways occurred which constitutes the third sequence of settlement based upon the transportation feature to which rural buildings are oriented.\footnote{15}

More recent alterations in the road pattern have resulted in the by-passing of those towns located on the river and oriented to it. Just as the construction of railroads away from the river caused the expansion of the towns toward the railroad, the shortening of the principal highways is causing a further growth of towns in their direction. Probably the best illustration of this development is to be found at St. Joseph.

The Basin is networked today by a system of gravel roads, most of which twist and turn in order to follow the highest elevations. Some of these roads that traverse the swamp were constructed only with great difficulty. Such roads were constructed, for example, between Lake Providence and Oak Grove and between Newellton and Winnsboro. In the initial construction of these roads, oxen were used, and

\footnote{15}The reader will recall that this idea of lines of settlement relative to means of transportation was first suggested in Chapter V.
frequently supplies for the construction crews had to be sent long distances by circuituous routes on boats. The supply wagons simply bogged down in the swamp.

While a revival of river transport occurred in the 1920's, and present tonnages carried on the Mississippi are without precedent, there is little, if any, evidence of this activity in the landscape of the Basin. Other than an occasional barge on the river (148) or a beacon light on shore, there is nothing to suggest the volume of river traffic. The local boat landing is a thing of the past.

Timber was taken out before and immediately after World War I via the river, as well as by rail. Railroads are still used for this purpose but logging trucks are now a common sight on the highways. (13½) However, some timber is still barged down Tensas River. In fact, the amount transported in this fashion is increasing due to relative costs. Logs are barged down the Tensas River to Clayton where they are loaded onto freight cars and taken to the lumber mills at Ferriday and Tallulah. (135, 136, 137, 139)

Characteristics of settlement: houses. Since the elements of the landscape of the Tensas Basin in existence prior to 1930 have been analyzed previously, the attention given them at this point will deal
primarily with their distribution and numerical importance in the Basin at the present time, based on the partially completed results of the survey. Elements of the landscape introduced after 1930 will be discussed in their appropriate places following the analysis of survey data. The reader should be warned, in studying the maps, to keep in mind that the distributions of most of the elements are not as widespread as the maps would indicate. In drawing the isopleths, very little attempt has been made to distinguish between settled and unsettled areas.

Maps on house types are incomplete both for the reason that the survey data have not been mapped completely and because maps of certain house types have little to offer the student of the Tensas Basin. The latter is true, first, in the case of the log cabin itself for reasons that have been made apparent earlier in this paper. Secondly, the maps of the pyramidal house and the midwestern house are of no value for a study of the Tensas Basin because the Survey was a rural study and most of the pyramidal and midwestern houses in the Basin are found in hamlets or towns. Pyramidal houses were built and survive in larger numbers in lumbering areas based on pine, rather
than hardwood, forests. For all other house types, discussed in this paper and for which maps are not included, the data either were not recorded by the Survey or have not been mapped. Actually no maps are needed for the log cabin derivatives since they are in such general use that to dwell upon them would be to labor the obvious—in the same way that to plot the distribution of privies would be pointless. It might prove revealing to map details of construction such as the use of board-and-batten, horizontal boards, roof pitch, and appendages; but no data were recorded on these items.

One of the log-cabin derivatives, the open-passage house,\(^{16}\) is of interest since it rapidly is disappearing and is found today only in areas settled for a relatively long time—primarily along the Mississippi River front and Tensas River. The corridor in East and West Carroll parishes where the open passage occurs can be correlated with the early east-west trade route that extended from Lake Providence to Monroe. It will be noted that distribution is more general on Macon Ridge, and, in general, in those areas

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\(^{16}\)See Map IX, Appendix A.
transitional to the Basin where hill settlement merges with plantation areas. The distribution of the open-passage house is most characteristic of hill settlement today and represents only a relic of former times in the Basin. Only a few of the open-passage houses actually have an open hallway today. The passage has been enclosed but unmistakable evidence of the original form remains.

According to the Survey, the built-in porch type\textsuperscript{17} is found in the largest numbers along the lower Mississippi and in southeastern Louisiana in general. The only areas almost entirely settled by Anglo-Saxons where the built-in occurs are northeastern Louisiana and, to a lesser extent, in the Florida Parishes. One noteworthy difference between the built-ins of southeast Louisiana and those of the northeastern part of the state should be noted. In contrast to the built-ins of the French, those in the Tensas Basin never utilized half-timbered construction but made use of the same methods of construction employed in other houses in the Basin. The built-in is not being constructed today in

\textsuperscript{17}See Map X, Appendix A.
the Basin and its distribution there can be correlated with age of settlement. Two areas are notably lacking in built-ins: eastern and southern Concordia Parish where the house type with the break high in the roof was more generally used during the period of built-in construction, and in central and western Madison Parish which was not settled to any extent until 1870, after the period of construction.

While it has been stated that built-ins are not being constructed in the Basin today, a derivative of the log cabin--two rooms wide, with two front doors, four posts supporting the front porch, and a built-in porch--has evolved that is remarkably similar to the genuine built-in house. It would seem that the evolution of the Anglo-Saxon log cabin has resulted in at least one end-product that is difficult to distinguish from one of the elements of the French building complex.

The distribution of the shotgun house in Louisiana is a curious one. While the pyramidal house was typical of the lumbering era in pine forests, the shotgun was the characteristic type for hardwood areas, particularly northeastern Louisiana. Concentrations

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18 See Map XI, Appendix A.
reach as high as fifty-five per cent of all rural dwellings in the Tensas Basin, and the shotgun is fairly general in its distribution throughout the area. However, the highest concentrations in the state—over seventy per cent of all rural dwellings—are found in southeastern Louisiana, principally along the bayous. (50)

While the author is not qualified to explain the statewide distribution of the shotgun, in the Tensas Basin it is a house type introduced first about 1900 in conjunction with the lumbering industry. It was rapidly adopted as a folk type and is in general use as a tenant house, principally for Negroes. Board-and-batten construction was introduced along with the shotgun as a result of the increased availability of sawed lumber. It is very rare to find a shotgun house involving horizontal board construction. Today, widespread use of asbestos siding, not only on shotguns but in other house types, is the rule. (45, 49) Otherwise, no variations in the form of the shotgun are to be noted except for the use of glass windows instead of wooden shutters and the variations in the method of attaching the front porch.

The distribution of the bungalow is so general throughout Louisiana that to make an analysis is
difficult.\textsuperscript{19} In any area of the state that has experienced any settlement or home building in the last forty years, bungalows will be found to some extent. No single house type has ever enjoyed such a complete distribution over the state; and, of all the recently developed folk types, the bungalow is the most widely used. In the Tensas Basin, at least, it began as an urban house type, particularly around World War I and in the boom days of the 1920's. It was for the average-income urban dweller of that period what the architect-created "modernistic" or "functional" house is today. After 1930, the bungalow, usually in a simplified form, rapidly became a folk type and spread throughout the rural areas of the Tensas Basin. It is especially adaptable to the low-income white farmer. It will be noted that the lowest percentages of bungalows in the Basin are found along the Mississippi where the plantation system is most firmly entrenched.

Other than the folk types already described from place to place in this paper, no house types have been introduced into the Basin that seem likely to develop into folk types at this time. Some of the more recent

\textsuperscript{19}See Map XII, Appendix A.
suburban house types have been built in very small numbers in rural areas; but the trend is insignificant and gives no evidence of becoming widespread.

**Characteristics of settlement: outbuildings.**

Prior to 1930, very few new types of outbuildings had made their appearance in the Basin. Those described for the antebellum period were and still are in use. The principal changes occurred in the size and building materials used and in the gradual disappearance of outbuildings with specialized uses such as the brick kiln and the cotton gin. Cotton ginning is now done by large, centrally located, gins in towns. (109, 110, 111, 112) The smokehouse has almost vanished since the 1930's. The number of log outbuildings is rapidly declining, and none are being built to replace them. Particularly is this true of barns.

Most of the barns in use today, whether they date from antebellum days or from subsequent periods, are principally of two types—the "vee" barn and the double-shed barn. The "vee" barn, so-called because the roof

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20See Map XIII, Appendix A. The map showing the distribution of log outbuildings makes no pretense of being complete. It simply located those log outbuildings along the itinerary followed by the field workers.
forms an inverted "V", had no appendages. (79, 81) The double-shed barn had the inverted "V" roof but to it was attached a shed on at least one side but more usually on at least two sides. (72, 73) Frequently, the shed extended entirely around the barn. (76) Barns dating from the period, 1830 to 1860, are larger than those of any later period although of the same type. Barns, in use when mules and horses were the principal source of power, sometimes had the attached sheds latticecd or loosely walled in.

The principal barn type to be introduced into the Basin since 1935 is the hip-roofed barn. In the Basin, this barn is associated with the cattle industry and tends to be quite large and well built. (84) Its distribution in the Basin\(^{21}\) is very limited but it is very likely that widespread use of it will be made in the future. It will be noted on the map that the hip-roofed barn is also found on Macon Ridge, but there it tends to be much smaller, less well built, and generally found on the small, family-sized farms--usually the F. S. A. farms. (83) In addition to the hip-roofed barn, some double-roofed barns (60, 80) have made their

\(^{21}\)See Map XIV, Appendix A.
appearance. The data on this type are not yet mapped, and the author has not been able to detect any pattern to their scattered distribution.

Today, the largest outbuildings are found on large cotton plantations where machinery must be stored and on landholdings devoted to livestock which require storage space for feed and valued animals. (61, 68, 76, 81, 82, 84) The landholdings with the largest outbuildings are also those with the largest number of barns. 22 The distribution of farms with four or more barns is best correlated with areas of extensive cattle production. For storing feed, part of the function of the barn has been allocated to the silo. Prior to 1935, the silo was non-existent in the Basin; and, while it is still not in general use, the silo is by no means an oddity today. (85, 123)

Characteristics of settlement: churches. Some reference has been made to churches as a part of the landscape of the Tensas Basin in previous chapters of this paper. However, no attention was given this phase of the landscape in the Survey, not because it lacked significance but because selectivity was required. It

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22 See Map XV, Appendix A.
has been noted that churches for whites generally have not been a rural phenomenon in the Basin until recently. Churches for whites have been built primarily in towns and have no distinctive features to set them apart from other Protestant churches for whites in Louisiana or surrounding states. (98)

Negro churches dot the rural landscape and have been characteristic of the Basin since 1870. Negro churches are usually simple rectangular frame buildings with a steeple of varying sizes and types. (95, 96, 97)

The church may be small and in such a sad state of repair that the whole is leaning at a crazy angle, yet there is always a tower in evidence. Often it is a front tower rising from the ground, but a more inexpensive tower supported on brackets near the peak of the gable and extending a respectable distance above it is a common substitute. No two towers are exactly alike. 23

Sometimes the corners of the church are beveled and windows added to eliminate the dark corners in which Negroes sometimes believe that evil spirits lurk. A recent change in church construction that is limited to Negro churches is the use of two towers, one at either corner of the front of the church. (97) How or why this change is taking place, the author has been unable

to determine but it has taken place in the last twenty years.

Characteristics of settlement: fields. While the arpent survey system dating from the French and Spanish period of domination remains in use along the Mississippi River, there is little, if any, evidence of it in the landscape today. It is true that the property lines of a number of plantations along the Mississippi still conform to the lines of this old survey, but this condition is not significant in the landscape. The front lands are cleared and in cultivation for miles. Frequently, no markers exist to distinguish between property holdings that involve not one, but several sections of land along the front. Further, fields tend to be highly irregular in shape due to the problems of drainage and the uneven clearing of land. Field sizes also vary for those reasons and in relation to farm size and field use. It will be noted that the small fields of the earliest period of settlement were

24 The author has discussed the problem of field sizes in her master's thesis and the reader is referred to that source if further information is desired. See Yvonne Phillips, "Land Use Patterns in Louisiana," (unpublished Master's thesis, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, 1950).
replaced by the large fields of the ante-bellum plantation system that were to remain characteristic of the Tensas Basin throughout its development.

The matter of field size becomes significant in studying the maps related to the number of cultivated fields and pastures per twenty rural dwellings.\textsuperscript{25} The largest number of fields and pastures per twenty rural dwellings in Louisiana are found in the area between the Teche and the prairies where fields are generally small. The larger fields found in the Tensas Basin result in fewer being recorded for each dwelling. It should also be kept in mind that only those fields fronting on the road followed by the survey party were recorded, and hence, the number of fields is no indication of the total number on each farm unit.

The map showing cultivated fields is indicative of those areas most intensively cultivated and settled. Again, it should be noted, however, that no attempt was made to distinguish between settled and unsettled areas. Parts of interior Madison, Tensas, and Concordia parishes simply are not farmed. This is revealed by the smaller numbers of cultivated fields indicated on the map in

\textsuperscript{25}See Maps XVI and XVII, Appendix A.
those areas.

In comparing cultivated fields with pastures, it will be noted that in the northern part of the Basin where the number of cultivated fields declines, pastures are more numerous. Pastures also tend to be more numerous in the interior of the Basin on the more poorly drained lands. This fact bears out the observation made earlier in this paper as to the location of pastures versus cotton lands. The map of the distribution of pastures further bears out the concentration of cattle-raising in the northern part of the Basin. In studying the map, the extensive distribution of pastures on Macon Ridge as compared to that in the Basin may prove misleading. Much of the land shown as pasture on Macon Ridge is actually fallow land[^26] that may be used for temporary grazing but it is not developed pasture comparable to that found in the Basin.

Two additional maps based on survey data are available at this time—the number of gardens and the number of orchards per twenty rural dwellings.[^27] The distribution of gardens indicates that there is a strong

[^26]: See Map XX, Appendix A.
[^27]: See Maps XVIII and XIX, Appendix A.
areal associations between the continued emphasis on cotton culture and the occurrence of gardens. While fewer gardens are planted now than formerly when every family had its garden, the largest numbers of gardens still occur in the predominantly plantation areas. Newcomers and those engaged in cattle production rarely concern themselves with gardens.

The map showing number and distribution of orchards is misleading in that the occurrence of a single peach tree in the front yard of a house was recorded as an orchard. Hence, one or two fruit trees will carry the same weight as a large commercial orchard in determining the density of concentration. The map gives no indication of the fact that the Tensas Basin is one of the principal commercial pecan-growing areas in the state. It is one of the oldest, as well.

Summary. The events of the period from 1930 to 1950 which are still in process of altering the landscape of the Tensas Basin have their background in several economic and general social conditions. A wider variety of changes occurred during this period than during any previous one in the history of the Basin. At one and the same time, there occurred an unprecedented trend toward small family-sized farms and
another movement toward larger corporate landholdings which took cognizance of the fact that almost any type of husbandry tends to be big business today. The resources of a single individual are rapidly becoming insufficient to insure profitable operation unless other sources of income can be relied upon. To this extent, the exploitation of petrolierous wealth, both within and beyond the Tensas Basin, is at least indirectly responsible for certain landscape alterations at the present time. If present trends are continued, the process of landscape change is likely to be accelerated barring an economic crisis in the near future.
Evidence has been presented to indicate that certain over-all patterns of landscape succession have become apparent through the treatment of the various sequences of occupance in the Tensas Basin. The initial period was one of empirical adjustment based on two significant sets of factors. First, the pattern of empiricism was dictated by the natural complex of the wilderness in which settlement took place. The early pioneers were familiar with the wilderness and frontier conditions; but the alluvial valley of the Mississippi and the swamplands of the Tensas Basin were unlike their former places of habitation. There was no exact counterpart in their previous experience to the problems facing settlers in the Tensas Basin.

Secondly, the force of the cultural epoch in which settlement took place demanded an empirical approach to the settlement of the Basin. Settlement took place under uncertain international and national political conditions that directly affected the welfare of the Basin settlers. The triangle of French, Spanish,
and American relationships and negotiations made the settler's hold on his land precarious for a number of years. The tangled web of land-ownership was not solved for many years after the Louisiana Purchase.

The initial period of settlement was truly a transitional one on a nation-wide scale as symbolized by the Louisiana Purchase. Further, it was transitional in terms of the technological advances that had developed and that were to appear in the near future. The invention of the cotton gin, possibly more than any other single factor, made settlement practicable and was responsible for the basic pattern of the Tensas Basin landscape. The manifold uses of the principle of the steam engine also had an impact on the cultural landscape of the Basin.

These and other conditions, that might be termed agents of landscape succession, were the circumstances under which the fundamental pattern of settlement began to develop. This hard core of the pattern of the cultural landscape, characteristic of the Basin even today, experienced modifications throughout the nineteenth century, but no major changes in the landscape occurred that were not predicated to a large extent on the original pattern. The Civil War was the first
event which seriously threatened to destroy the entire pattern of settlement as it had been established, but it was to prove no more disastrous than events of more recent times. The Civil War altered the landscape through physical destruction and through the economic ramifications of the conflict which were serious and far-reaching. The major positive result of the Civil War was the introduction of a new agent of landscape succession—the share-cropper system. It, however, did not lead to a new pattern of settlement predicated on a basis other than the plantation system and the production of cotton. Today, long after evidence of physical destruction, except in a negative form, has disappeared, the landscape reveals a pattern of settlement dictated by the economic necessities of the post-bellum period.

The twentieth century has been an eventful one for the Tensas Basin. Alterations in the landscape have proceeded apace. What were, for the Basin, startlingly new landscape elements and complexes were introduced and made integral parts of the Basin landscape—some for brief periods and others for what appears at the present time to be a long-lived existence. As agents of landscape succession, the lumber and railroad industries cannot be over-emphasized.
The conclusion seems inescapable that, for the Basin, at least, econo-technical factors, set in a framework of cultural heritage and general social conditions, have played the major role in determining landscape succession. A technological improvement—the cotton gin—made possible the existence of the plantation system upon which the pattern of settlement in the Basin developed. While the Louisiana Purchase was the immediate "open sesame" to settlement, this transaction was dictated largely by economic considerations.

The rapid introduction of decidedly new elements and complexes in the landscape of the Basin in the last fifty years are largely economic in origin. The coming of railroads and the exploitation of hardwood forests are jointly responsible for the development of a distinctive landscape sequence totally disassociated from earlier patterns of settlement. Even natural disasters have played a major role in the sequence of landscapes. Floods were a problem from the beginning of settlement, and the boll weevil ranks as an economic problem of the first order.

The economic crisis of 1929 and 1930 was sufficiently serious to make itself felt in the landscape but the problems of settlement were intensified
further by an unprecedented surge of governmental planning and regulation that were as disruptive for the natives of 1930 as Reconstruction had been for the natives of 1870.

While the closer perspective with which it is possible to view the present landscape sequence in the Tensas Basin may be in part responsible for the awareness of the multiplicity of factors affecting landscape evolution, it is nevertheless true that landscape succession has become an increasingly complex problem to analyze. The number of forces as well as the diversity of forces—some of which are diametrically opposed to the others in their consequences—has reached an intensity without parallel in the development of earlier sequences of occupance. The various forces—economic, political, natural, and general cultural factors—that have conditioned landscape succession in the Tensas Basin are operating simultaneously today in a fashion that seems to make each function as a catalyst on the others.

As indicated in the introduction to this paper, the ramifications of this settlement succession study necessitated that the initial attempt to arrive at some understanding of the present landscape, and the bearing of past landscapes upon it, be a rather
generalized one. Problems of the various landscape sequences are so broad that any one of the stages of landscape development constitutes a major topic for study.

While acknowledging the limitations of the study, it is felt that this paper has achieved several worthwhile objectives. The present landscape of the Tensas Basin has been clarified in terms of the forces conditioning its existence and its relationship to past landscapes. Elements and complexes in their original forms have been related to their current counterparts. In general, it is maintained that the objectives as set forth in the initial paragraph of this paper, have been substantially realized. Further, this study has pointed out and suggested an approach to those problems of landscape succession in the Tensas Basin which require further study.
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APPENDIX A

MAPS
MAP 1
GENERAL LOCATIONAL MAP
OF
LOUISIANA
MAP 1
GENERAL LOCATIONAL MAP
OF
LOUISIANA
SETTLEMENT IN THE TENSAS BASIN ABOUT 1803

Each dot represents one known settlement.

Scale - Miles

0 10 20
TRAILS AND ROADS
IN THE
TENSAS BASIN
1820

SCALE - MILES
0 10 20
TRANSPORTATION IN THE TENSAS BASIN 1860

ROADS AND TRAILS
RAILROADS

SCALE - MILES

10 0 10 20
TRANSPORTATION IN THE TENSAS BASIN 1885

ROADS
RAILROADS

SCALE - MILES
0 10 20
TRANSPORTATION IN THE TENSAS BASIN 1910

ROADS
RAILROADS

SCALE - MILES
0 10 20
TRANSPORTATION IN THE TENSAS BASIN 1930

DIRT ROADS
GRAVEL ROADS
RAILROADS

SCALE - MILES
0 2 4 6 8 10 20
MAP IX

THE TENSAS BASIN

DISTRIBUTION OF THE OPEN PASSAGE HOUSE

0-1%  
10-20%  
20-30%

SCALE - MILES
0 10 20
THE TENSAS BASIN

DISTRIBUTION OF THE
BUILT-IN PORCH
HOUSE TYPE

0-10%  
25-40%  
50-75%  
10-25%  
40-50%  

SCALE - MILES
0  10  20

MAP X
MAP XI

THE TENSAS BASIN

DISTRIBUTION OF THE
SHOTGUN HOUSE

SCALE - MILES

0-10% 10-25%

25-40% 40-55%
MAP XII

THE TENSAS BASIN

DISTRIBUTION OF THE BUNGALOW

SCALE - MILES

0-5% [ ]
6-15% [ ]
16-30% [ ]
31-45% [ ]
46-65% [ ]
THE TENSAS BASIN
DISTRIBUTION
OF
LOG OUTBUILDINGS

EACH DOT REPRESENTS ONE BUILDING
MAP XIV

THE TENSAS BASIN

NUMBER OF HIP-ROOF BARNs PER TWENTY RURAL DWELLINGS

SCALE - MILES

0 10 10 20

0 [ ]

1 [ ]

2 [ ]
THE TENSAS BASIN
RURAL DWELLINGS WITH
FOUR OR MORE BARNs

LESS THAN 1% [□ □]
1-3% [□□□□]
4-5% [□□□□□]

SCALE - MILES
10  0  10  20
MAP XVI

THE TENSAS BASIN

NUMBER OF
CULTIVATED FIELDS
PER
TWENTY RURAL DWELLINGS

0-5 [□□□□□]
6-10 [□□□□□]
11-15 [□□□□□]
16-20 [□□□□□]

SCALE - MILES
10 0 10 20
THE TENSAS BASIN

NUMBER OF PASTURES PER TWENTY RURAL DWELLINGS

0-5

6-10

11-20

21-30

SCALE - MILES
10 0 10 20
MAP XVIII

THE TENSAS BASIN

NUMBER OF GARDENS
PER
TWENTY RURAL DWELLINGS

SCALE - MILES
0 10 20

0-2
3-5
6-10
11-15
16-20
THE TENSAS BASIN

NUMBER OF ORCHARDS PER
TWENTY RURAL DWELLINGS

0-3% [ ]
4-7% [ ]
8-11% [ ]
MAP XXI
JEWLIGHT COMMUNITY ABOUT 1890

CENTER

USE

LANDING

BRIDGE

DIRT RIVER ROAD

APPROXIMATE LIMIT OF CULTIVATION

CULTIVATED FIELDS

WOODLAND & SWAMP

COTTON GIN

SCALE: 1" = 10,000'
MAP XXV
THE HAPAKA COMMUNITY ABOUT 1860

LEGEND
- - PROPERTY LINE  □ BARN LOT  ● BLACKSMITH SHOP
= = RIVER ROAD  □ BIG HOUSE
- - - BOAT LANDING  □ NEGRO CABIN

APPROXIMATE SCALE: 1" = 1000'

RICHLAND PLANTATION

RICHLAND

HAPAKA PLANTATION

WHITE CEMETERY

NEGRO CEMETERY

STEELIA PLANTATION

EAST RICHLAND

EAST HAPAKA PLANTATION

APPROXIMATE SCALE: 1" = 1000'
MAP XXVI
THE HAPAKA COMMUNITY 1912

LEGEND

- PROPERTY LINE
- WHITE RESIDENCE
- NEGRO CHURCH
- RAILROAD
- NEGRO CABIN
- STORE
- DIRT ROAD
- SECTION HOUSE
- BLACKSMITH SHOP
- FOOT BRIDGE
- BARN
- COTTON PLATFORM

APPROXIMATE SCALE: 1” = 1000’
MAP XXVII
THE HAPAKA COMMUNITY 1930

LEGEND

- PROPERTY LINE  [WHITE RESIDENCE  [CHURCH
- RAILROAD  [NEGRO CABIN  [STORE
- DIRT ROAD  [SECTION HOUSE  [ STOCK PEN
- GRAVEL ROAD  [BARN  [COTTON PLATFORM

APPROXIMATE SCALE: 1" = 1000'
MAP XXVIII
THE HAPAKA COMMUNITY - 1950

LEGEND
- PROPERTY LINE
- RAILROAD
- DIRT ROAD
- GRAVEL ROAD
- HOG OR BARBED WIRE FENCE
- GATE
- STILE
- NEGRO CABIN
- WHITE RESIDENCE
- SHED
- BARN
- SECTION HOUSE
- CHURCH
- STORE

SCALE: 1" = 300'
This house is one of the oldest in the Basin. It was built about 1820 or 1825. Note the home-made brick pillars and walls beneath the first floor. The house has central hallway and two chimneys on each end of the house. (One mile north of Clayton, October, 1951).

This close-up view of the house in the previous picture shows details of construction including chimney, horizontal board construction, and ornamentation of the eaves. (One mile north of Clayton, October, 1951).
Another close-up of the same house shows the brick pillars beneath the first floor. (One mile north of Clayton, October, 1951).

The Oneonta Plantation house dates from the antebellum period. It is now occupied by Negroes. Not the central hallway, horizontal board construction, and porch railing. The house has two chimneys, one at each side of the house. (South of St. Joseph, March, 1952).
A rear view of Oneonta shows the kitchen and dining room appendage. It was built at a time later than the main house and is of brick construction to lessen the danger of fire. (South of St. Joseph, March, 1952).

This is another rear view of the kitchen appendage at Oneonta. The rear room has been torn away. The wooden enclosure at the left is a cistern. (South of St. Joseph, March, 1952).
The Adams house in Tallulah is one of the two houses in Madison Parish to survive the Civil War. Note the break in the roof which is characteristic of the log cabin derivatives. (Tallulah, Summer, 1950).

The house dates from the antebellum period. Note the break in the roof, horizontal board construction, and the two cisterns beneath the house. (Frogmore, Summer, 1950).
The Winter Quarters Plantation house dates from the antebellum period. It has had many additions and is a rambling structure. It has two appendages in the rear that are not visible in this picture. Placement of the chimneys indicates additions to the original house. (Near Newellton, Summer, 1950).

The Marcellis house was built in the summer of 1849. It originally had shutters on the windows, but the original form is preserved. The kitchen is attached on the right. Note the roof with beveled ends. (Como, October, 1951).
This is the front entrance to the Marcellis house. The original doors were double ones. When the single door was added, the extra space was walled in. Note the vertical boards enclosing the area beneath the house. (Como, October 1951).

A view of the Marcellis houses shows the kitchen ell to the right of the house which is not in use today. (Como, October, 1951).
This view of the Marcellis house shows the form of the roof and the placement of the chimneys. (Como, April, 1951).

The Delta Bridge Plantation house, built in the 1850's, originally had a roof like that of the Marcellis house. The roof was changed in the 1890's when the roof was raised and a third floor added. The house originally had two stories. The first floor is of brick. (West of St. Joseph, October, 1951).
The overseer's house at Delta Bridge is now used for hay storage. It was a smaller replica of the big house in its original form. Note the form of the roof and the wooden window blinds. The front porch has been torn away. (West of St. Joseph, October, 1951).

This is a rear view of the Delta Bridge overseer's house. Central hallway has been walled in and the small window in the center added. A double row of slave cabins extended back from the house. (West of St. Joseph, October, 1951).
The Burns Plantation house was built in 1854 by a settler from Illinois. The house has a large rear appendage and central hallway. Note the beveled ends of the roof. (Waterproof, March, 1952).

The Cross Keys Plantation house dates from the antebellum period. The front porch has been altered to make the house appear to be flush with the ground. Right end of the house was added at a time later than the original date of construction. The right chimney marks the beginning of the addition. Note the fence surrounding the house and the stile to the right. (South of St. Joseph, March, 1952).
The Ellis house on Bayou Vidal dates from the antebellum period. Note the three front doors. The right room was added to the original building—the right chimney was originally on the outside of the house. (South of Tallulah, June, 1952).

An antebellum house, built in the 1850's, illustrates the architectural detail of the houses built just prior to the Civil War. The house originally had a double stairway rising to the second—actually the first—floor. The house is now used as an office building. (St. Joseph, March, 1952).
The Crescent Plantation house, one of the two houses in Madison Parish to survive the Civil War, stands in substantially its original form. (Southeast of Tallulah, Summer, 1950).

This is a side view of the Crescent Plantation house showing the rear appendage and gallery. (Southeast of Tallulah, Summer, 1950).
The Arlington Plantation house of antebellum construction was originally a one-storied building. The first floor is of brick and was added to the original house. Originally, there was a picket fence surrounding it. (Lake Providence, Summer, 1950).

The Gossypia Plantation house stands in its original form. Note the picket fence surrounding the house. (North of Lake Providence, Summer, 1950).
The Warfield house, of brick construction, dates from the antebellum period. Note the unusual placement of the appendage. (Readland, Arkansas, June, 1952).

The Wavertree Plantation house was built as a replica of Rosalie at Natchez. It was occupied until about a year ago but is now vacant. The plantation is still in operation. The galleries run entirely around the house. (Southwest of St. Joseph, October, 1951).
A rear view of Wavertree shows the kitchen appendage, cistern, and more recent water tank. (Southwest of St. Joseph, October, 1951).

This is another view of the kitchen appendage at Wavertree. The walls of the main house are plastered in a manner to resemble marble. (Southwest of St. Joseph, October, 1951).
This Negro dwelling is of antebellum construction. Note the break in the roof near the peak, the horizontal board construction, and the horizontal pole fence. (South of Vidalia, Summer, 1950).

The East Clifton Plantation house, on Bayou Vidal, was built in the 1870's as a duplicate of one that had burned during the Civil War. The original house was built by a settler from Michigan. Note the form of the roof. (South of Tallulah, Summer, 1950).
This is a house on False River involving the same roof form as the two previous houses pictured. However, this house, in the French culture area, is of half-timbered construction. (New Roads, April, 1951).

This is a house involving story-and-a-half construction and a false gallery. (Black River, Summer, 1950).
This story-and-a-half built-in house dates from the antebellum period. Note the picket fence in the foreground. The old river road once ran along the side of the fence where the slight rise can be noted. (Bayou Macon, east of Winnsboro, April, 1951).

This is another house with a false gallery. Note the placement of the kitchen appendage and the remains of the picket fence. (Black River, Summer, 1950).
This tenant house involves a rear appendage attached in a way typical of part of the French culture area in Louisiana. Note board-and-batten construction. (Black River, Summer, 1950).

This house, dating from the antebellum period, is now owned by Negroes. Note the side placement of the central hallway and the built-in construction. The house has a painted front. (Waterproof, June, 1952).
This plantation house was built in 1872 and involves the false gallery. The right chimney has been torn away. The house once had a porch on the right like that on the left. (Newlight, April, 1951).

This is a side view of the house shown above showing the rear appendage. (Newlight, April, 1951).
This house with a false gallery is very similar to those found on Macon Ridge and southwestern Tensas Basin. (East Baton Rouge Parish, Pride, March, 1951).

This house, dating from the 1880's, shows the partial remnants of a false gallery. (East of Winnsboro, Summer, 1950).
This house dates from the 1890's. It involves building features characteristic of earlier periods but the front ell with bay windows is typical of houses built around the turn of the century. (Lake St. Joseph, near Newellton, Summer, 1950).

This is an adaptation of the midwestern house type which was typical of the better houses built around the beginning of the twentieth century. (Southeast of Tallulah, June, 1952).
This tenant house on Bayou Vidal was built about 1900. Note the form of the roof. To the extreme left can be noted a cotton gin. (J. H. P., Quimby, photograph taken about 1918).

A single log pen tenant house, involving board-and-batten construction and eliminating the break in the roof was built about 1920. (J. H. P., Quimby, photograph taken about 1925).
This house, built about the turn of the century, involves the semi-pyramidal roof and porch attached in a manner not employed before about 1890. The house has been covered with composition siding. (Newlight, April, 1951).

An abandoned single log pen tenant house is a common sight in the Tensas Basin today. Note the board-and-batten construction. (Black River, Summer, 1950).
A chimney is all that is left frequently to mark the former site of a tenant house. Stile is the type that ranks second in extent of use in the Tensas Basin. (Black River, Summer, 1950).

This is a shotgun house of board-and-batten construction. Note the plantation bell, stile, and "Vee" barn on the right; and the shed for storing machinery on the left. (Wavertree, October, 1951).
This is another shotgun house with a rear appendage and covered with composition siding. Note the attached porch in contrast to the house in the previous picture. Also note fence typical of many Negro dwellings. (West of Frogmore, Summer, 1950).

A row of shotgun houses which front along the levee south of Vidalia. (Deer Park, Summer, 1950).
This photograph of a shotgun tenant house of board-and-batten construction shows a typical assemblage of small, make-shift outbuildings in association with it. (Deer Park, Summer, 1952).

This shotgun house has a side appendage. Note the "big house" in the rear with a chimney for every room. Note picket fences. (South of Vidalia, Summer, 1950).
These shotgun houses are covered with composition siding and have both front and back porches. Note the small, shed-like barn and the field infested with palmetto. This is a new ground farm in the backswamp. (Near Newlight, April, 1951).

This tenant house of recent construction is one of the present forms of the log cabin derivatives. (Stamboul, south of Lake Providence, Summer, 1950).
This is a small farm assemblage in East Carroll Parish. The house is of board-and-batten construction. Note the windmill, an oddity in the Basin. (South of Lake Providence, Summer, 1950).

This is an F. S. A. farm house in East Carroll Parish. (Transylvania, Summer, 1950).
This composite photograph shows the typical F. S. A. farm assemblage with chicken house, barn, and dwelling. (Transylvania, Summer, 1950).
Tenant houses, log cabin derivatives, are of board-and-batten construction. They extend in a line for about a mile on Ashley Plantation. They have been built recently in this fashion to house Negroes formerly scattered throughout the plantation. (North of Tallulah, June, 1952).

The Hapaka Plantation house illustrates the extent to which renovation can make the original form of a house unrecognizable. It was originally a double log pen of horizontal board construction with a central hallway and a front porch, and was typical of those built before the Civil War. (Quimby, June, 1952).
Pecan Grove Plantation is devoted entirely to livestock. The house was originally like that shown in photograph 37 and was oriented toward Tensas River. What was the rear of the house is now the front and is oriented toward the paved highway. Note the bungalow in the center, the double-roof barn, and the fence. (Newlight, April, 1951).

Another view of Pecan Grove Plantation shows other outbuildings in the assemblage and the horizontal board fence. (Newlight, April, 1951).
An old smokestack on Mound Bayou is all that remains of an early cotton gin. (Newlight, April, 1951).

Another smokestack marks the former site of a cotton gin on Tensas River. To the right is the barn dating from the antebellum period. (Tensas Bluff, Summer, 1950).
A close-up view of an old smokestack of a cotton gin. (Newlight, April, 1951).

A barn dating from the antebellum period is large in size like many built at the time. Sheds are attached on both sides and at the back. (Tensas Bluff, Summer, 1950).
This barn, built before the Civil War, is of brick construction. (Lake St. Joseph, near Newellton, Summer, 1950).

A barn and cotton gin on Bayou Vidal dates from the antebellum period. Note the size of the supporting timbers. The building was razed in the 1930's. (E. P. C., Quimby, photograph taken about 1930).
The barn and cotton gin on Helena Plantation was built before the Civil War. Sheds extend on both sides of the building and in the back. (Southwest of St. Joseph, June, 1952).

A close-up of the cotton gin at Helena shows the brick walls around the boilers. (Southwest of St. Joseph, June, 1952).
Another close-up view of the cotton gin at Helena. (Southwest of St. Joseph, June, 1952).

The cotton press at Helena. The gin is not in use today. (Southwest of St. Joseph, June, 1952).
A cotton storage house which dates from the 1870's was located near the former site of a cotton gin. Note the attached sheds on the building. (Newlight, April, 1951).

This barn was built about 1900. The attached shed at the left was added about 1930. (South of Tallulah, Summer, 1950).
This barn has sheds on two sides. They have been walled in as indicated in the photograph. (Frogmore, Summer, 1950).

This barn began as a small log crib; it was built in the early 1930's. The other parts of the building were added at later times. (North of Newellton, Summer, 1950).
This composite photograph shows a large log barn with attached sheds and the surrounding barn lot. Note the horizontal board fences, the cattle chute, and the Brahma cattle in the field. (Deer Park, Summer, 1950).
A close-up view of the barn in the previous picture shows the log construction and the central passage. (Deer Park, Summer, 1950).

Another view of the barn at Deer Park shows the feeding trough at the edge of the shed. (Deer Park, Summer, 1950).
This "Vee" barn has a cattle chute to the upper level where livestock can be sheltered in flood times. (Black River, Summer, 1950).

This double-roof barn was built about 1945. It is a barn type that is being built in increasing numbers in the Tensas Basin. (Quimby, Summer, 1950).
This barn is used for hay storage and was built in 1950. (North of Newellton, Summer, 1950).

This large shed was built to house farm machinery. It is typical of many that have been built with the increased use of machinery in farm operations. (South of Tallulah, Summer, 1950).
The hip-roofed barn is one of the small types that is found on F. S. A. farms on Macon Ridge. (South of Delhi, Summer, 1950).

This hip-roofed barn is the larger type that is found in the Tensas Basin. They are found on large land-holdings devoted to livestock. (Quimby, Summer, 1950).
This composite photograph shows an assemblage that is becoming characteristic of the Tensas Basin. Note the silos and the aluminum gate. The cattle shed extends back to the levee where cattle are pastured. (Quimby, Summer, 1950).
The outbuildings on Pinch-Em-Easy Plantation are whitewashed. The building in the left foreground was formerly a commissary. Note the Tennessee fence and the aluminum gate. (South of Tallulah, Summer, 1950).

The commissary at Balmoral was torn down in 1952. (North of Newellton, Summer, 1950).

This country store in East Carroll Parish was photographed on Saturday. (Alsatia, Summer, 1950).
This new country store indicated the influence of a livestock economy in the Tensas Basin. (South of Lake Providence, Summer, 1950).

This warehouse for rolling stores is an element in the landscape that has appeared since 1920. (Waterproof, Summer, 1950).
A typical rolling store serves rural customers.
(South of Vidalia, Summer, 1950).

This house, dating from the antebellum period, was the slave hospital on Helena Plantation. Note that the back porch has been walled in with board and batten.
(Southwest of St. Joseph, June, 1952).
Wesley Chapel, in Tensas Parish, is presumably the oldest white church in the Tensas Basin. (West of St. Joseph, June, 1952).

A Negro church with an unusual cross on the steeple. (West of Frogmore, Summer, 1950).
Camp Green Pastures is a Negro church and school. Its original horizontal board walls have been covered with composition siding. (Quimby, June, 1952).

Many Negro churches in the Tensas Basin today are having two front steeples added as the illustration shows. (South of Tallulah, Summer, 1950).
This rural church for Whites is typical of those that have been built since 1930. (West of Newellton, Summer 1950).

This view of a backswamp area in the Tensas Basin was once a cultivated field but has been allowed to return to forest and palmetto thickets. (Tensas River, west of Newellton, Summer 1950).
This field has been newly cleared for cultivation and is known as "new ground." Note the horizontal board fence. (Black River, Summer, 1950).

This farm scene is one of over thirty years ago. (J. H. P., Quimby, 1915).
This corn field in East Carroll Parish is situated between the levee along the Mississippi and the backswamp. (North of Lake Providence, Summer, 1950).

A corn field near the backswamp. It is unusual to see corn shocked in the Tensas Basin. (West of Newellton, Summer, 1952).
The growing of corn and soy beans together has become a common practice since 1930. (Canton Plantation, near Newellton, Summer, 1950).

A typical field of cotton ready to be picked. (Delta Bridge, October, 1951).
This backswamp cotton field has cotton just coming up. The truck in the foreground is used to take water to the field workers. (North of Lake Providence, Summer, 1950).

This shed is a typical one found scattered throughout cotton fields for storage of cotton sacks and cotton. Note the cotton weighing device at the right. (Frogmore, Summer, 1950).
Cotton is weighed in the field as each worker fills his bag. (Frogmore, Summer, 1950).

A typical cotton gin at ginning time. (Crowville, Summer, 1950).
Another cotton gin of the type now used in the Basin. (Newellton, Summer, 1950).

The use of wagons and horses to haul cotton to the gin is fast disappearing. (Crowville, Summer, 1950).
Cotton which has been processed at the gin is loaded on trucks to be taken to the railroad for shipment. (Crowville, Summer, 1950).

A typical commercial pecan grove in the Tensas Basin. (Stamboul, south of Lake Providence, Summer, 1950).
A rice field in East Carroll Parish. Note the contoured fields. (North of Lake Providence, Summer, 1950).

Baling hay in an alfalfa field. (North of Newellton, Summer, 1950).
It is a common practice to harvest the Johnson Grass along the highways for hay. (South of Lake Providence, Summer, 1950).

Brahma cattle have been recently introduced to the Basin landscape. (Deer Park, Summer, 1950).
Herds of Hereford cattle are a common sight in the Tensas Basin today. The flat-topped shelter in the background is covered with cane to protect the hog-wallow from the sun. (Newlight, April, 1951).

This group of cattle are awaiting sale at an auction barn. (Tallulah, March, 1951).
The cattle chute at Pecan Grove Plantation. (Newlight, April, 1951).

The auction barn at Tallulah. (March, 1952).
This sign is symbolic of the transformation that is occurring in the Tensas Basin based on the development of a livestock economy. (North of Tallulah, Summer, 1950).

The silo is another element of the landscape that was introduced with the coming of the livestock economy. The land is used as a pasture as well as a pecan grove. Note the horizontal fence. (South of Lake Providence, Summer, 1950).
Large herds of hogs are grown in the Basin today. (Newlight, April, 1951).

A pasture where hogs are kept. Note the pig pens in the background. (West of Newlight, October, 1951).
This flour mill once operated on the basis of wheat production in East Carroll Parish. (South of Lake Providence, Summer, 1950).

The flour mill shown above has been converted to a grain elevator. (South of Lake Providence, June, 1952).
A rice pumping station on Lake St. John as it existed about 1920. (J. H. P., Lake St. John, 1921).

Grain elevator at Newellton that was used for rice storage in the 1920's. (J. H. P., Newellton, 1915).
A small syrup mill of the type once extensively used in the Basin. (Near Newlight, October, 1951).

Another view of the syrup mill pictured above. The mill is still in use but needs to be repaired and cleaned before the pans can be put in place. The farm on which this mill is found has been farmed by Negroes since the 1920's. At this mill, they make 1,000 gallons a year for sale. (Near Newlight, October, 1951).
The block to which the horse is attached to grind the cane for the syrup mill in the previous pictures. (Near Newlight, October, 1951).

Fishing nets may be seen along any of the major streams in the Basin. (Black River, Summer, 1950).
A logging truck on a typical road in the Basin. (Newlight, April, 1951).

Timber is stock-piled during the summer months so that the lumber mill may operate through the winter when it is too wet to bring logs out of the swamp. (Tallulah, Summer, 1950).
Logs are brought into the lumber mill by rail and stock-piled. Note plank road. (Tallulah, Summer, 1950).

A closer view of the stock-pile of timber. (Tallulah, Summer, 1950).
Small sawmills have been abandoned frequently as the supply of available timber has been reduced. (South of Vidalia, Summer, 1950).

The lumber mill at Tallulah is one of the largest in the Basin. (Tallulah, Summer, 1950).
As this sign indicates, lumber companies have adopted the practice of selling off their cut-over lands. (Tallulah, Summer, 1950).

Discoveries of natural gas in the Tensas Basin are making this scene a more common one. (Holly Ridge field, Summer, 1950).
This vertical board fence, bound together with wires, encloses a wooded area where hogs are allowed to range. (Black River, Summer, 1950).

The field is used for pasture. A drainage ditch is being dug in the foreground. Note the bee hives in the background. (Newlight, April, 1951).
The Tennessee fence encloses a barn lot on a plantation devoted to livestock production. In the foreground is a hollowed-out log that is used as a trough. (Pinch-Em-Easy Plantation, Summer, 1950).

A pasture enclosed by a barbed-wire fence and involving an unusual substitution for a stile over the fence. (West of Clayton, Summer, 1950).
The pasture is enclosed with a fence of hog wire. Note the stile. (Newlight, April, 1951).

A steamboat and houseboat on Black River. (Summer, 1950).
A barge and tugboat on Black River. (Summer, 1950).

The bridge across Mound Bayou at Tensas River. Note the gauge on the tree at the left, used to measure height of water at flood time. (Newlight, April, 1951).
Tensas River at low water level. (October, 1951).

Tensas River at high water level. (Newlight, April, 1951).
Bayou Macon, west of Lake Providence. (Summer, 1950).

Crockett's Ferry on Tensas River. (Summer, 1950).
A close-up of Crockett's Ferry being pulled across the river. (Summer, 1950).

A footbridge across Bayou Vidal. (J. H. P., Quimby, 1918).
Footbridge across Brushy Bayou. (Tallulah, June, 1952).

Footbridge across Brushy Bayou. (Tallulah, March, 1951).
Old hitching post at Crescent Plantation. (Summer, 1950).

Horse-drawn sled formerly widely used in the Basin. (Vidalia, Summer, 1950).
Wagons were once widely used for family travel in the Basin. (Alsatia, Summer, 1950).

Railroad building in East Carroll Parish. (Milliken, J. H. P., 1905).
A typical railroad station that was built about the turn of the century. (J. H. P., Newellton, 1915).

This dirt road was the highway between Newellton and Tallulah until 1929. (E. P. C., Quimby, 1920).
The road shown in the previous picture was abandoned in 1929 when a gravel road was built along a shorter route. This picture shows part of the abandoned river road along Bayou Vidal. (E. P. C., Quimby, 1931).

This abandoned river road along Bayou Macon is indicated by the slight difference in the level of the land. (West of Newlight, Summer, 1950).
A gravel road which is typical of those built in the late 1920's and early 1930's. (E. P. C., North of Newellton, 1933).

A modern gravel road has by-passed an earlier route. The old bridge was originally a railroad bridge that was used as a highway bridge after the railroad was abandoned. (West of St. Joseph, Summer, 1950).
Indian mound in East Carroll Parish. (North of Lake Providence, Summer, 1950).

Levee along the Mississippi with dry barrow pit. (South of Vidalia, Summer, 1950).
A cistern to which a pumping system has been added. The domed brick base dates from the 1850's. (Delta Bridge, Summer, 1951).

The cistern house at the Ellis house on Bayou Vidal. It is no longer in use. (South of Tallulah, June, 1952).
In the late nineteenth century, pumps took the place of cisterns in the Basin. (West of Newlight, Summer, 1950).

Another type of pump which is widely used in the Basin. Note tenant house assemblage in the background. (E. P. C., Quimby, 1931).
A make-shift pump. Note typical gate in the background. (Tensas Bluff, Summer, 1950).

In addition to pumps, water tanks have been in use for about the last sixty or seventy years to collect rain water. (Near Waterproof, June, 1952).
A plantation bell was an indispensible part of every plantation during the nineteenth century. They are still seen in many places but are not used, as a rule. (Near Waterproof, June, 1952).

The entrance to the old family cemetery of the Newell family on Newell's Ridge is an unusual marker in the Tensas Basin. (Near Newellton, Summer, 1950).
APPENDIX C
CASE STUDIES
APPENDIX C

PART I

THE NEWLIGHT COMMUNITY

Newlight, Louisiana is a plantation community located in northeastern Tensas Parish on the Tensas River at its juncture with Mound Bayou. Although the locality is indicated on the official state map as a town, the title is one of courtesy only. It is characteristic of river plantation areas of Louisiana that the plantation cores become well-known as rural centers and are referred to in such a way that strangers to the area mistake them for urban nuclei. Newlight today is difficult to bound because settlement is almost continuous in all directions from it and merges with centers of other recognized rural communities. In the past, Newlight was an oasis of cleared and settled land on the natural levee of the Tensas.

Historic Newlight. The settlement at Newlight dates to pre-Civil War days. Settlers along the Tensas reached the area via the river and started plantations

1See Map II, Appendix A.
at Newlight, Tensas Bluff, Quebec, and others in the 1840's and 1850's. These early plantations universally suffered the fate of the celebrated Frisbee tract, (about thirty miles north of Newlight) with the coming of the Civil War—the settlements were abandoned and no evidence of occupancy from that period remains at Newlight.

Following the Civil War, a new period of settlement at Newlight began in the 1870's. At Newlight, R. B. Lynch bought 10,000 acres of land and established his plantation on the site of the earlier settlement. At this time, Newlight was the only open land on the Tensas River between Quebec and Clayton. Thus, it achieved considerable prominence in the back-country. In 1872, Lynch built the house (37) located at the ferry which he also established.\(^2\) He constructed a cotton gin and a cotton storehouse, (72) as well as other outbuildings. This became the center of Newlight Plantation as the entire area was known.

The original house occupied by Lynch (37) has today the original timber throughout. Only the steps and the roof have been replaced. One chimney has

\(^2\)See Map XXI, Appendix A.
been removed. (38) The house originally had two side porches similar to the one that can be seen on the left of the house. The open passage has been retained to the present day with two rooms on each side of it. The large rear appendage (kitchen and dining room) is a later addition built to accommodate a larger family. Originally, the family ate in the open passage and a very small room connected to the house by a walkway served as the kitchen. Two-foot-square cypress timbers, hewn by hand, were floated down the river from the abandoned house site on the Frisbee tract to be used to support the house. It is elevated above the ground some two feet by concrete piers. When these were placed beneath the house some few years ago, the building was lowered about a foot. The original cypress logs used as supports were removed.

The false gallery (37) was constructed by Lynch when he built the house; and the present occupants feel that the protection the false galleries afford the porch is the reason for the well-preserved condition of the original porch floor. In all likelihood, Lynch had observed false galleries during the period of his life just prior to his arrival at Newlight when it is known that he spent some time on the Gulf Coast and
Pearl River. In any event, the big houses of all four plantation centers were replicas of this first house, and all were built by Lynch.

The houses occupied by Negroes were single log pens similar to those seen throughout the Basin. All houses were located along the streams and were fairly regularly spaced. The banks of the Tensas are steep, and the river road and houses are located on the crest of the natural levee.

On Map XXI, three plantation centers are shown but the entire area covered by the map was known as Newlight Plantation originally. Later Lynch subdivided his property among his sons and built each of them a house like his own. In fact, he turned over his own house to one of them and in 1878 built a duplicate at the junction of Mound Bayou and Tensas River which became the family center although the older site at the ferry retained the name Newlight. This is the explanation for the location of the family cemetery being located on Mound Plantation. The other cemetery shown on the map in association with a church is for Negroes.

Remnants of the old plantation gins that Lynch built are still to be seen. Altogether there were
three gins and parts of two remain. (62, 64, 72) The gins were wooden structures and associated with them were wooden cotton storehouses where cotton was placed until it could be ginned or shipped. The storehouse that stands today is used as a barn. (72) The smokestacks of these gins were made from bricks manufactured on the plantations. (62, 64)

In addition to the gin and the big house, the other buildings in the plantation center included a smoke house, blacksmith shop, barns and sheds, chicken house, pig pen, well or cistern house, grist mill, syrup mill, brick kiln, and perhaps a small commissary. The plantation was almost entirely self-sufficient.

Newlight today. The Newlight as described remained substantially the same from the time of its establishment to the early 1900's. The extent of land under cultivation gradually decreased so that today less land is cleared than formerly.³ Only a small part of Mound Plantation is still in the hands of the Lynch family.

Two significant things have happened to the property. While much of the land is still in the hands

³See Map XXII, Appendix A.
of private owners, land syndicates have bought up large amounts of land and operate it in connection with their other holdings in the Tensas Basin. Secondly, as a result of governmental activities, such as the P. S. A. farm, larger landholdings since the 1930's have been broken up and made available in eighty and one hundred sixty acre plots. There is, as a result, the occurrence of a small landholder class at Newlight. At Newlight, this class is Negro, and Negroes as independent operators also rent small farms. The north bank of the Tensas at Newlight is operated almost entirely by Negroes. This makes a considerable difference in the appearance of the two sides of the river. In the area occupied by Negroes, the houses are closer together and less well-kept. They are surrounded by poorer fences, often make-shift, and small run-down outbuildings. Most of the Negroes still plant cotton and own only a little livestock. Here shotgun houses are in evidence and also some bungalows are interspersed with the older single and

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4 See Maps XXII and XXIII, Appendix A.
5 See Map XXIV, Appendix A.
double log pens. The total number of dwellings is increasing.

On the south bank, most of the land is fenced, and the area under cultivation has been substantially reduced to make way for pastures. Fields are much larger and all operations are highly mechanized. Fewer Negroes are needed for labor; and as a result, abandoned houses rapidly falling apart are a common sight.

Thus, two opposed types of landscape are developing—one with small fields, more, newer, and smaller outbuildings, and largely row crops; and the other with larger fields than ever before, increased emphasis on stock and pasture, mechanization, fewer but better houses, more and larger outbuildings, and a decline in private individual ownership.

At Newlight, Pecan Grove Plantation is operated for stock-raising by a group of Texans under the title of McKinney Enterprises. It is largely in pasture for hogs and Hereford cattle. Large barns and many of them, excellent fences, and a general appearance of prosperity are a striking contrast to the surrounding countryside. The Tennessee fence and the horizontal board fence have been introduced and all buildings are painted or stained. The big house, one of those originally built by Lynch,
has been remodelled and bears very little resemblance to the original structure. In general, the plantation now resembles a ranch or stock farm far more than it does a plantation in the traditional sense. It would seem that Pecan Grove and other places like it are the coming order in the Tensas Basin. (60, 61, 118, 120, 124, 143, 146)

It will be noted that a considerable amount of land is in the hands of lumber companies. Furthermore, most of the woodland owned privately has been leased for thirty to fifty years by the lumber companies. As many as three cuttings have been taken from the land so that most of the timber in the area today is third or fourth growth. The Fisher-Hurd Lumber Company holds most of the land around Newlight. Timber was taken out before and immediately after World War I via the river for as late as the war there were no good roads connecting Newlight with other areas. Logging trucks are now a common sight on the highway but large amounts of timber are still barged down the river. (134)

At Newlight, the lumbering phase of its history has made no marked imprint on the landscape--Newlight could never be mistaken for a logging community. Most of the people engaged in various phases of lumbering
have been transients in this part of Tensas. To be sure, house types introduced into the Basin following the sawmills are found at Newlight, but these were not built by anyone connected with sawmills but adopted from them by natives.

The present roads at Newlight are a recent development. Not until World War I was Newlight connected by road with any other part of the Basin. This early dirt road was an extension of the old river road and was actually nothing more than a trail through the swamp. The first gravel road was built from 1929 to 1932 along the route of the present highway from Mound Bayou east. (149) West of the bayou, the road followed the bayou south and southeast. The remnant of this part of the road is shown on the map\(^6\) as a dirt road still in use locally to reach houses built along it. The road on the north side of the river is also a local dirt affair. (151) The hard-surfaced road and gravel road which joins it were developed as late as 1939-1941. The road was hard-surfaced only two years ago.

The power line which serves Newlight is also a recent addition made possible by the rural electrification

\(^6\)See Map XXII, Appendix A.
program. It has been built since 1935. There is still no telephone service to the locality, and the only railroads in the area are spurs constructed by lumber companies to get out logs.

Some aspects of the older order which are no longer extant at Newlight but which can still be found in other parts of the Basin are the smokehouse, the brick kiln, syrup mill, and grist mill. One blacksmith shop remains and a commissary serves the Negro residents who still hunt, fish, and trap to supplement their income. Hunting is a sport which brings many Whites to Newlight in season, and some hunters own or rent small camps in the woods.
APPENDIX C

PART II

THE QUIMBY COMMUNITY

The Quimby Community is located on Bayou Vidal on the boundary between Madison and Tensas parishes.¹ The name, Quimby, is one which did not come into existence until the railroad was built through the area; hence, it is not technically correct to use the name to refer to the area before that time. The name, however, was chosen because it is the only one in the area which is usually shown on maps of the state.

The Quimby area was first settled when John Perkins acquired land there early in the nineteenth century. Perkins first acquired land near Vidalia in 1806 and 1807; and, after 1809, he became a resident of Louisiana.² In 1815, Perkins began acquiring land in what is now Tensas Parish on Bayou Vidal. His acquisitions were completed about 1840. By that time, he had accumulated 17,500 acres in the

¹See Map II, Appendix A.

area around Bayou Vidal known collectively as the Somerset Estate. It included Homestead, Via Mede, Back Land, Wildwood, and Hapaka plantations.\(^3\) For the time, Somerset was a highly developed plantation by 1860.\(^4\)

Perkins' main residence was several miles below Hapaka nearer the center of his holdings at a place that came to be known as Somerset Landing. However, Perkins also built a house at Hapaka. It was a double log pen of horizontal board construction with a central hallway. The roof was broken by three dormer windows; and there was a small attached kitchen at the left rear of the house.

The map of the period indicates only those elements of the landscape of which there is reasonable certainty; and the landscape was undoubtedly more complex than is indicated. The cotton gin which Perkins built was used until about 1900 and remained standing and in use as a barn until the 1930's. (67) Other settlements had also taken place in the area by 1860.

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\(^3\)See Map XXV, Appendix A. Hapaka Plantation was located on both sides of Bayou Vidal but it was operated as a unit at this time.

\(^4\)The estate was valued at $600,000 in 1857. Calhoun, *op. cit.*, p. 74.
and their general outlines are indicated on the map.

The Hapaka house survived the Civil War and was used by Grant's armies as headquarters for a time and as a supply depot. Perkins, however, had ceased living there some time before. He had never resided there except for short periods of time at best. Before the Civil War, he returned to Natchez, built The Briers and resided there for a time, and remained in Natchez until his death in 1866.

The Somerset Estate was willed to Perkins' daughter-in-law and grandchildren. Perkins' son, John, lived at Hapaka and operated the plantation until his death in 1885. Thereafter, the entire area became more or less inactive until the railroad was built through the area and a station called Quimby established on Richland Plantation. The coming of the railroad and the lumber industry revived the area. Hapaka Plantation was leased by various individuals for farming, but the Hapaka house remained unoccupied until

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5 Most of the other buildings in the area did not escape. The river road along Bayou Vidal was the line of march for federal armies. Perkins' son, John, burned the main house on Somerset to prevent its use by federal armies.

6 See Map XXVI, Appendix A.
the 1930's. From time to time, the heirs of the Somerset Estate sold off parts of the land and today none of the estate is held by Perkins' heirs.

Steelia and Richland plantations were the most active at the turn of the century and their operators experienced prosperity based on lumbering. Land was opened that had not been cleared since the Civil War. A network of railroad spurs and corduroy roads spread through the surrounding forest bringing timber to the station at Quimby. New houses were built; some were the old log pen types, (43, 44) but others were shotguns. Almost all of the new houses involved board-and-batten construction. A large number of the new houses were oriented toward the railroad, especially the shotgun houses that were temporarily erected for the duration of lumbering activity. The number of dwellings during this period varied constantly due to the practice of moving the houses from one place to another as they were needed by the lumbering crews.

At this time, the principal route of movement was the railroad because the roads were impassable a large part of the year. (163) Small steamboats had formerly plied the bayou at times of high water but this was made impossible by the construction of both
road bridges and railroad trestles. A small footbridge also spanned the bayou, (155) as they do in many places in the Tensas Basin. A gravel road was built through the area in 1929 and paved in the 1930's. It caused the old river road to be abandoned (164) and brought about a re-orientation of buildings in the area.

The economic difficulties which occurred from 1927 to 1935 following the decline in lumbering caused a reduction of activity in the Quimby area. The number of buildings of all types sharply declined although there was some building. East Hapaka Plantation was purchased from the Perkins heirs and buildings, including a commissary, (88) were erected on the property. On Steelia, a bungalow was erected; but most of this building was done about 1925 before disaster struck.

The construction of the levee along the east bank of Bayou Vidal made virtually useless the major part of the land east of the bayou and brought bankruptcy to most of the landowners there. Since the land east of the levee could no longer be farmed, the owner of East Hapaka began using the land for pasture and slowly built up a herd of cattle. A little later, Steelia was purchased by a newcomer from
Arkansas, and its new owner developed the plantation into a stock farm as an adjunct to his several other properties in the Basin. (84, 85) Hapaka changed hands several times during the 1930's but was finally bought about eight years ago by a man who renovated and occupied the old Perkins house. (59) He is, in general, developing the plantation as a combination cotton and livestock farm. Large amounts of land are being cleared and developed.

The development of a livestock economy has brought about the rejuvenation that the Quimby area badly needed for almost twenty years. Today, the area supports fewer people, but it reveals an unprecedented appearance of prosperity that cotton production never equalled.

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8See Map XXVIII, Appendix A.
APPENDIX D

THE NEWELL MEMORIAL
APPENDIX D

THE NEWELL MEMORIAL

Edward Drumgould Newell
1810-1888

This memorial was erected in grateful appreciation of a revered ancestor by his namesake and grandson, Dr. Edward Dunbar Newell, of Chattanooga, Tennessee. He was one of the largest cotton planters in Louisiana, and was inventor of the Newell screw cotton-bale press.


He and family moved to Clarksville, Montgomery County, Tennessee, about 1830. He and his brother Dr. Thomas Newell left Clarksville in a flat-boat with slaves and floated down the Cumberland, Ohio and Mississippi rivers, to Grand Gulf, Mississippi, where they established a mercantile business.

In 1832 guided by Indians he and his brother explored the forest in what is now known as Newell's

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Ridge and entered about 10,000 acres of government land. He erected his home on Cypress Plantation. In 1834 he married at Port Gibson, Mississippi, Celia Ann Dorsey, grand-daughter of Nathan Dorsey of Baltimore, and daughter of Samuel Dorsey of Port Gibson, Mississippi.

Of this marriage there were: John David Stokes, who married his first cousin Nannie Newell; Annette, who married Captain Udolpho Wolfe; Edward Henry, who married Catherine Wade, of Prospect Hill, Jefferson County, Mississippi; Ann Elizabeth, who married her first cousin, Edward T. Newell; Tensora Ellen, who married Louis Buckner of Natchez, Mississippi and Lula Newell, who died quite young. Celia Ann, his wife, died September 4, 1856 at Cypress Plantation.

He married secondly, Elizabeth Nugent Moody, a widow, of which marriage there was one issue, a girl, Aphra Boyd, who died in childhood. His third wife was Jennie Yates, of Schenectady, New York and their children were: Mrs. Josie N. Fultz, wife of John D. Fultz; Robert Yates, who married Bessie Young, Edgar Farrar, who married Belle Young and Jennie who died in childhood.

He served in the Louisiana Senate and was a member of the Secession Convention of Louisiana. In
1875 with his two sons Captain J. D. S. Newell and Edward H. Newell he founded the town of Newellton.

The following
Are buried in this cemetery
Bill Chase, beloved and faithful slave, the last burial in this cemetery.
APPENDIX E

GLOSSARY
GLOSSARY

Arpent: an old French measure of land, used both as a linear measure and as an areal one. It is the equivalent of .846 acres or, as a linear measure, roughly 192 feet.

Batture: that part of the channel of a stream between the crest of the natural levee and the channel proper which is above water level during low stages.

Black Code: a code first put in force by Bienville in 1724 which provided for the protection and discipline of Negroes. It regulated such things as marriage, sale and manumission of slaves, corporal punishment; required religious instruction; prohibited work on Sundays; forbade carrying of weapons, and the like.

Double Log Pen: originally, a house or cabin constructed of logs, two rooms wide with sideward-facing gables and usually a central hallway or passage. Used generally to refer to houses of this type, whether constructed of logs or not, whose origins are found in the log cabin.

False Gallery: an extension of the roof around a porch (gallery) extending out beyond the porch floor by two to four feet.

French Louisiana: that part of the state of Louisiana settled predominantly by people of French cultural background in contrast to those areas of the state settled primarily by Anglo-Saxons. French Louisiana essentially involves that part of the state from Lake Charles northeastward to Red River at about the line between Rapides and Avoyelles parishes; thence down the Red and Mississippi rivers to Baton Rouge, and from Baton Rouge eastward to the Rigolets, excluding all but the extreme southern fringe of the Florida Parishes.

Log Pen: originally, a house or cabin constructed of logs and consisting of one room or pen with sideward-facing gables. Used generally to refer to houses whose origins can be traced to the log cabin.
Log Pen Derivative: any house type which has its origin in one of the log cabin types. Usually horizontal boards or board-and-batten is used in its construction instead of logs.

Open Passage: the central hallway or passage between the two rooms of a double log pen or derivative. Originally not enclosed on two sides.

Riving Mill: a small shop or shed in which logs are cut with small hand tools (rived) into boards, staves, shakes, shingles, pickets, and the like.

Shotgun house: a folk type first introduced into the Tensas Basin about 1890 with the advent of lumbering. It is one room wide and one or more rooms deep with frontward-facing gable and typically constructed of board-and-batten. Supposedly so called because a shot fired through the front door will pass through the house and out the back door.

Tennessee Fence: a board fence with horizontal boards along the top and bottom of the fence and boards crossed diagonally between the fence posts. So called because of its extensive use in Tennessee in conjunction with horse-raising. Preferable to barbed-wire fences because it will not injure livestock.

"Vee" Barn: a barn with a frontward-facing gable and a simple inverted "V" roof. May have sheds attached at the sides.
VITA

Yvonne Phillips was born at Newellton, Louisiana on January 6, 1926. Her elementary education was received in Newellton and Tallulah, Louisiana. She attended high school in Hot Springs, Arkansas and was graduated from Fair Park High School in Shreveport, Louisiana, in 1943. She received a B. A. degree in social science from Northwestern State College of Louisiana at Natchitoches, Louisiana in 1947. In 1947, she was awarded the Louisiana State University Graduate Scholarship from Northwestern State College. From 1947 to 1949, she taught at Northwestern State College as an Instructor of Social Sciences. Obtaining a leave of absence, she attended Louisiana State University from June, 1949 to June, 1951 and received her M. A. degree from that institution in 1950. Her Master's thesis was entitled, "Land Use Patterns in Louisiana." At present she is employed as an Assistant Professor of Social Sciences at Northwestern State College. She is a member of Kappa Delta Pi, Phi Kappa Phi, and Phi Alpha Theta honor societies and is a fellow to the Association of American Geographers and the American Geographical Society.
Candidate: Yvonne Phillips

Major Field: Geography

Title of Thesis: Settlement Succession in the Tensas Basin

Approved:

Fred Kriffen
Major Professor and Chairman

Richard J. Carroll
Dean of the Graduate School

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

William G. Haag

L. J. Lator

Robb Wend

E. H. H. Lighthill

Richard Carroll

Date of Examination:

December 19, 1952