

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USD/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

Rosedown Plantation, West Feliciana Parish, LA

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

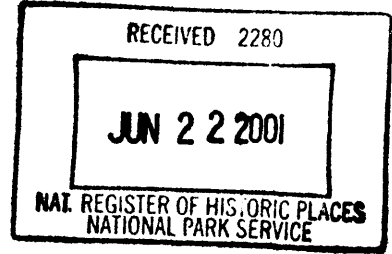
National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

765

Historic Name: Rosedown Plantation

Other Name/Site Number: Rosedown Plantation State Historic Site



2. LOCATION

Street & Number US HWY 61 and LA HWY 10

Not for publication: NA

City/Town St. Francisville

Vicinity: NA

State: Louisiana Code: LA County: West Feliciana Code: 125 Zip Code: 70775

3. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria.

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

Nationally: X Statewide: Locally:

Jonathan Fricker Deputy SHPO Dept. of Culture, Recreation and Tourism

June 18, 2001 Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of Commenting or Other Official/Title

Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

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4. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is:

- Entered in the National Register
Determined eligible for the National Register
Determined not eligible for the National Register
Removed from the National Register
Other (explain):

Signature of Keeper: Sarah D. Pope
Date of Action: 8/7/01

5. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property
Private:
Public-Local:
Public-State: X
Public-Federal:

Category of Property
Building(s):
District: X
Site:
Structure:
Object:

Number of Resources within Property
Contributing
6
1
4
11

Non contributing
14 buildings
sites
1 structures
objects
15 Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: 0

Name of Related Multiple Property Listing: NA

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6. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic: domestic	Sub: single dwelling/secondary structure
landscape	garden; street furniture/object
Current: recreation & culture	Sub: museum

7. DESCRIPTION

Architectural Classification: Federal, Greek Revival

Materials:

Foundation: brick
Walls: weatherboard
Roof: asphalt
Other:

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Describe present and historical physical appearance.

SUMMARY

The focus of the Rosedown Plantation nomination is an antebellum estate with a grand “big house” at the end of a 660-foot oak allee, roughly eighteen acres of ornamental gardens, and several dependencies. The most notable dependencies are three latticed summerhouses and a Greek temple style doctor’s office. The two-story main house, reflecting the transitional Federal-Greek Revival taste, has a documented date of 1835. A one story Grecian wing was added to each side c.1845. The extensive pleasure gardens combine two very different trends – the axiality of the Baroque and winding paths in the picturesque tradition. Rosedown is located near the intersection of US HWY 61 and LA HWY 10 on the edge of St. Francisville in West Feliciana Parish. The setting is peaceful and secluded despite the proximity (about a half mile) to these well-traveled highways. At its height, Rosedown Plantation encompassed 3,455 acres. Over the years this acreage has been subdivided, and today’s Rosedown is only 374 acres, all of which is included in this nomination. In November 2000 the Louisiana Office of State Parks purchased Rosedown and re-opened it as a State Historic Site.

Almost as famous as the establishment of Rosedown by Daniel and Martha Turnbull is a massive several year restoration of the property in the late 1950s and early 1960s by Mr. and Mrs. Milton Underwood of Houston, Texas. Ralph Ellis Gunn of Houston was the landscape architect, and George M. Leake of New Orleans the architect. The property remained meticulously preserved until the 1990s when a subsequent private owner removed important garden statuary placed there in the 1850s. Despite this notable loss, Rosedown retains the vast majority of its original character (both the gardens and the buildings) and hence easily conveys its national significance in architecture and landscape architecture.

The numbers on contributing/non-contributing given on page 2 are quite misleading as an indicator of Rosedown’s integrity. The fifteen non-contributing resources are spread over 374 acres, are almost all traditional in character, and none are large in scale. All but one was built during the late 1950s-early 1960s restoration. Most importantly, within the eighteen acre “heart” of Rosedown there are only four non-contributing resources, and they are “historic” in appearance. Two are reconstructions, one is a traditional looking small building, and one is an 1850s wing removed from the main house.

THE OVERALL SETTING

Unlike the typical Louisiana plantation, Rosedown is not located on the Mississippi River or a bayou. The Mississippi, several miles away, is characterized by towering chalk cliffs as it meanders through West Feliciana. The cliffs are part of a band of loess which stretches from Memphis to Baton Rouge, producing soil deposits of great depth and fertility. This yellowish soil, coupled with abundant rainfall, enabled West Feliciana to become an agricultural giant in the antebellum period -- one characterized chiefly by large plantation units.

The remaining Rosedown acreage (the 374 acres purchased by State Parks in 2000) is an irregularly shaped parcel of land much deeper than it is wide (see attached property plat). Alexander Creek forms one side boundary (the eastern boundary), while Gasper’s Branch is the boundary for most of the west side. An access road begins at LA HWY 10 and continues past the main complex to the rear of the property, for a total distance of about one-and-a-half miles. For the most part the approach road is straight and tree-lined, which contributes to the overall feeling of an estate. One drives for about one-half mile, with meadows to

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each side, before the oak allee entrance appears off to the right. The lane is paved up to and past the oak allee entrance and then changes to gravel toward the rear of the property.

While the surrounding countryside is on the whole gently rolling, most of the Rosedown acreage is flat, although the ground falls off notably at the rear of the main complex (toward Alexander Creek). The acreage on both sides of the approach road consists of open grassy fields, as is true of the land across from the allee, and most of the extensive acreage at the rear. None of the Rosedown acreage is under cultivation, nor has it been for some time. (The Underwoods ran an extensive cattle business on the property.)

Regrettably, nothing survives at Rosedown to represent the working side of the plantation – the cotton agriculture and the enslaved people from Africa who made it all possible. The location of the quarters area is not known at the present time. One presumes that during the historic period most of the flat land that one sees today in the remaining Rosedown acreage would have been in agricultural production.

For ease of identification and understanding, the resources at Rosedown can be grouped into five clusters: a ticket office at the entrance on Highway 10, a maintenance area just south of the main complex, the main complex, a visitor services area with parking lot immediately north of the main complex, and four buildings at the rear of the property, all at some distance from the main complex.

METHODOLOGY

While the extraordinary importance of Rosedown was long recognized by the preservation community and the Louisiana Division of Historic Preservation, previous private owners had not been interested in the National Register. This situation changed with the recent acquisition of the property by the State of Louisiana. The Office of State Parks immediately requested that the Division of Historic Preservation address this glaring omission to the state's roster of Register properties. The fieldwork and preparation of this nomination was undertaken by the Division staff. Suzanne Turner, a landscape architecture historian whose specialty is antebellum plantation gardens, provided the description and analysis of the gardens. (Ms. Turner, a retired LSU School of Landscape Architecture professor, has written and spoken extensively on plantation gardens and has consulted with the National Park Service on designed landscapes and the National Register.)

THE ROSEDOWN LANDSCAPE

The landscape of Rosedown Plantation originally included the typical components of cotton plantations of the mid-antebellum period in the South – agricultural acreage planted with the cash crop, fields of fodder crops, pastureland for cattle, stables for horses, yards and pens for poultry and other farm animals, slave quarters (where slaves typically had their own individual garden plots), a kitchen garden, an orchard, and the pleasure, or ornamental, gardens adjacent to the main plantation house, or the “Big House.” What distinguished the landscape of Rosedown, however, were its pleasure grounds, which were larger in scale than most of the region, and were highly refined in both their design and plant collections. These gardens were primarily the responsibility and passion of Martha Barrow Turnbull, the mistress of Rosedown Plantation. And because of Martha's careful record-keeping over the course of her life at Rosedown, we not only have the actual garden as evidence of her life's work, but her garden diary that reveals much about the labor required to keep such a garden from season to season. The story of the garden's planting and management was recorded by Martha from her first entry written in 1836 until the last entry in 1895, a year before her death at the age of 87. (She had been a widow since 1861.)

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The weather so much like Spring, I am spading, cleaning walks & making a new asparagus bed.

February 27, 1838, The Garden Diary of Martha Turnbull

Today there are no standing structures to represent the agricultural history of the plantation, but the main house and its 18 acre ornamental garden are largely intact along with three gazebos, or summerhouses, a hot-house and other dependencies. The remarkable survival of so much original fabric is, in part, a result of the carefully planned and executed restoration of the property by the Underwoods. The Underwoods hired Houston landscape architect Ralph Ellis Gunn to restore the gardens. Many of Gunn's drawings survive and help document the conditions that existed in the garden at the time of the Underwoods' purchase.

A hallmark of Rosedown's gardens since their creation in the 1830s has been the continuity of care throughout Martha Turnbull's long life and through the following two generations of her family. After her death in 1896, the garden was cared for by her only surviving child, Sarah Turnbull Bowman. (One son died at the age of seven from yellow fever. The eldest son, William, drowned in 1856 not long after his marriage.) Sarah and James Bowman's four unmarried daughters (the couple had ten children) inherited Rosedown at Sarah's death in 1914. James Bowman died in 1927 and the eldest unmarried daughter Corrie died in 1929; this left Isabel, Sara and Nina Bowman to live in and manage Rosedown and its gardens. These sisters opened Rosedown to the public for tours and also sold camellias, azaleas, and other plants propagated from the original garden plants as a means of supporting themselves and paying for maintenance of the gardens. Nina was the last of the three to die, and in 1955 her nieces and nephews inherited Rosedown and put it on the market.

Origin of Garden Design

When Daniel Turnbull married Martha Barrow in 1828, they travelled to Europe for their wedding trip. (According to tradition, Rosedown was named for a play they saw en route.) Documentation for this trip does not survive, so we do not know exactly what sites the couple toured. Given Martha's penchant for gardens, however, we can assume that they saw some of the major gardens on the continent, perhaps Versailles and Vaux-le-Vicomte, as well as some of the outstanding villa gardens of the Italian Renaissance.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, there were two stylistic currents in European garden design – the formal and geometric layout derived from the Renaissance and expanded in scale by the work of Andre Le Notre in seventeenth-century France; and the more current and popular romantic picturesque tradition which imitated the forms of nature, employing curvilinear lines and naturalistic groupings of trees and shrubs, introduced in eighteenth century England by Capability Brown, Humphrey Repton, William Kent and others. The gardens at Rosedown would include elements from both traditions, although the overall plan of the garden is dominated by the axiality of the major organizing lines. When one walks in the shaded portions of the garden, however, the curved lines of the paths and the spatial experience are more akin to the English picturesque tradition.

Although her garden diary contains a wealth of horticultural evidence in terms of plants being propagated and grown in the garden, Martha does not comment on the design and laying out of the garden. How the actual design originated remains a mystery. One published account written by a granddaughter states that the Turnbulls engaged the services of a Parisian landscape gardener from the school of Le Notre to accompany them to Louisiana and supervise the laying out of the grounds. This is not corroborated by any documentation. Martha Turnbull had travelled extensively in America and in Europe, and could have laid

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out the gardens herself, based on the designs she had observed, although it would be unusual for a laywoman to compose and create such a large and sophisticated garden without the assistance of an experienced professional.

Description of Garden Plan

The Big House was located on one of the highest points of the site, near the edge of a bluff. Behind the house and to the south is a small pond or reservoir that appears to be constructed and not natural, but the date of construction is not known. During the restoration, an 1850s wing of the main house, in which Miss Nina Bowman had lived, was separated from the house and moved a few yards back to the bluff edge overlooking the reservoir.

The Big House and its 18 acre landscaped garden are approached from the entry lane through a handsome Greek Revival wooden gate. (The earliest documentation for the gate is a photo dated 1913. The present gate is a flawless reproduction of the original dating from the restoration, per on-site investigations by the Division of Historic Preservation.) The organizing element of the plan is a 660-foot long central allee of live oak trees which were either planted from seed or transplanted from the nearby woods as small trees. In the initial years, these trees would have been quite formal and regular in their appearance; it is only after the first thirty years or so that live oaks become more sculptural and irregular in their forms, and annual pruning can delay this even longer. So during the peak of the garden's existence, from the 1850s to the early 1860s, the allee would have appeared as a very ordered avenue of symmetrically shaped evergreen trees. (Martha Turnbull in her diary referred to it as "the Avenue.") To either side of the allee is a large garden (described below).

Triming (sic) the trees in the yard, a storm & rain again too wet to work.

June 22, 1850, Martha Turnbull's Garden Diary

The geometry and axiality of the allee were accented by eight white marble life-size Italian sculptures which the Turnbulls imported from Europe in the 1850s. Resting on brick pedestals, these sculptures were located at the edges of the large gardens flanking the allee, between these gardens and the oaks, so that they accented the sides of the view down the allee without dominating the view. The statues were repeated where the allee branched off the oval forecourt to the main house, two on each side. A pair of large urns marked the terminus of the allee and the forecourt. Both the sculptures and the urns were removed within the last few years before the state of Louisiana purchased the property. The oval forecourt is bounded on the house side by a series of iron bollards painted white. (These appear in 1913 photos.) Between the allee and the house is a diamond-shaped parterre that was planted in privet in the nineteenth century and is today planted in clipped dwarf yaupon with two tall water oaks flanking the house's front façade.

Sewed Pinks, Sweet Williams – Coreopsis – Snapdragon seed &c.

September 4, 1850, Martha Turnbull's Garden Diary

On either side of the main house are gardens of a detailed scale; these may have been the earliest areas developed by Martha. On the south side is what Martha referred to as the "Flower Garden," which is today planted with varieties of roses since it is the most open and sunny area in the garden. In this portion of the garden, Martha probably planted annuals and perennials that were valued for their seasonal blooms. It probably included a great variety of plants rather than the mass plantings of single plant types that are presently shown. The garden is shaded by a very large live oak.

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The layout of the Flower Garden combines rectangular forms and irregular, curved paths. The design remains the same conceptually as that documented by Richard Koch in the 1930s, although Gunn did add some paths. In a report dated September 10, 1959 Gunn noted that the flower garden was “completely overgrown with seedling shrubs, trees and weeds” and that only the “most obvious paths have been cleared.” He determined the design pattern by “the location of existing walks and the location of certain plants which suggest that a walk went between them.” He then adjusted it some to accommodate the growth of “remarkable horticultural specimens” such as the live oak and added paths “to allow better use and maintenance of the area plus visual enjoyment.”

Tried to clean walks, but too wet—killed my Corn, Potatoes & stuck my peas—put all my vegetables in the Hot bed.

February 1, 1850, Martha Turnbull's Garden Diary

The Flower Garden is ornamented with an elaborate latticework gazebo and a subterranean hot house for over-wintering tender container plants and seedlings. Near the hot house is a brick garden shed which was connected to a greenhouse. The greenhouse does not survive; its footprint was used as the basis of a terrace with a central fountain added by Gunn as part of the garden restoration.

On the north side of the house, some of the more utilitarian aspects of the household were sited, including the kitchen and a storage shed. It is not known where the kitchen garden was originally located. It would have been quite large based upon the numbers of vegetables being grown for the household as recorded in Martha's diary. Today, a small replica of a kitchen garden is located behind the kitchen (also a reproduction).

Made two Strawberry beds & planted them down. Sewed Carrots, Parsnips, Salsify-Turnips-Leeks Onions Beets Spinage (sic) &c. . . I have no Tomatoes (sic), snap beans, Arbor beans &c to eat.

September 2, 1855, Martha Turnbull's Garden Diary

A tall brick wall is all that survives of the large conservatory in which Martha propagated and protected many of the plants that would grace her garden in the warm summer months. Today this wall serves as a backdrop for a sculpture of Eve and a parterre that surrounds the sculpture, added during the garden restoration by Gunn. In her diary, Martha mentions both an orangerie and a greenhouse; this conservatory was probably what Martha called the orangerie.

William renewed & arranged the whole of Plants in Green house & put the roses in the ground -- some beautiful blooms.

February 13, 1846, Martha Turnbull's Garden Diary

We have spaded all the Garden today -- the first time Set out the Orangery today. 6 cleaning & trimming (sic) our Orchard over the creek. Done all other trimming (sic) & putting out cuttings -- set out all the flowers that were sowed in October.

January 4, 1849, Martha Turnbull's Garden Diary

The largest gardens at Rosedown are those flanking the allee (generally referred to as the North

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Garden and the South Garden). Through each of these wind sinuous paths lined with plantings of evergreen and deciduous shrubs. Each of these gardens has a latticework gazebo, or summerhouse, as a central feature. Their placement across from each other (see map) implies a cross-axis, and in the early years one could have seen one gazebo from the other; however, there was no path, line of trees, etc. re-enforcing the axis (as would be the case in a true cross-axis). Fountains with circular basins were added on either side of the gazebo in the North Garden during the Underwoods' restoration project. These two fountains are on the same axis as the two summerhouses, re-enforcing the implied cross-axis previously described.

Within the north and south gardens survive many of Martha's original plantings, along with literally hundreds of seedlings of the camellias she planted. (Hers was one of the earliest camellia collections in the Deep South.) The major trees in these gardens (crape myrtle, cypress, pines and oaks) probably date from Martha's lifetime, and most of the mature shrubs do as well. Notable are very large *Osmanthus fragrans* (sweet olive), *Osmanthus fortunei*, pines, and cryptomeria, as well as the "hip gardenia," which has become one of the signature plants of Rosedown. Many of the plants that line the paths, such as moss roses, and cover the ground, such as ardisia, were propagated from original plantings during Gunn's restoration. Fully one-third of the woody plant materials in the North and South Gardens may date from the nineteenth century.

I Propogated (sic) 7 white Moss Roses & put them out through the ground with Lime, Manure, & Woodearth well mixed to the roots - & so soon as done it gave us a fine rain for it was too hot. I took up also all the Roses on the Avenue.

November 6, 1852, Martha Turnbull's Garden Diary

We had 50 Japonicas (camellias) to come up from seed - it is good to keep the ground around them covered with leaves to keep in the moisture.

May 1854, Martha Turnbull's Garden Diary

The Garden Restoration/Evaluation of Garden's Integrity

The overall layout of the garden, its organizing features, architectural structures, and a significant portion of the original plantings survive in remarkably pristine condition. Certainly there have been changes made to the garden over the course of its one hundred-and-seventy-year existence, but the most noticeable change has been the growth and maturation of the trees and shrubs within the garden, creating a dense canopy in much of the North and South Gardens, and leading to the shading out of more sun-loving species. Much of the garden's authenticity can be traced to the philosophical and practical approach taken by landscape architect Gunn as he went about the daunting task of "uncovering" the garden after over a half-century of marginal maintenance and unchecked growth due to the Bowman sisters' modest resources.

The process that guided Gunn's initial site reconnaissance and decision-making was very progressive for the time, and parallels, for the most part, the "best practices" recommended for the preservation of historic designed landscapes today. A report submitted by Gunn to the Underwoods in March 1960 explicitly records his approach. He first completed "as found" plan drawings or "existing conditions" surveys for all major parts of the garden, identifying the principal plant materials and planting masses. This, in and of itself, is a major undertaking for roughly eighteen acres of heavily planted ornamental gardens. Gunn stated that his conceptual approach to the restoration would be based on four factors:

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1. The owner's expressed desire to preserve the feeling of the Garden as it is now and not make any drastic changes in layout or planting.
2. To bring to completion the work started in February, 1957, of removal of excessive seedling plants; camellias, indigofera, ligustrum, etc., that were allowed to grow during periods of neglect. To salvage as many of these seedlings as practical for use in other areas.
3. To supplement the existing planting where gaps are apparent and to re-introduce plants that were used in the Gardens in past years to assure blooming and berrying of trees and shrubs throughout the year.
4. To give access, for those visitors who are particularly interested, to those old horticultural specimens (such as sweet olives, quince, camellias) by opening unpaved paths through the larger areas. These paths would be defined only by the arrangement of the planting as indicated in the drawing.

(Gunn, March 1960, "Report on the proposed restoration of the South Garden, Rosedown Plantation")

To summarize, the following are the major changes made during the Gunn restoration:

1. All original paths were bordered, compacted, re-graded, and re-surfaced with gravel.
2. Approximately 20% of the present paths in the North and South Gardens (see attached layout map) date from the restoration (added to provide access to outstanding and mature plant specimens, as noted above).
3. The front parterre was replanted, using dwarf yaupon instead of the original privet, but based on the original diamond shape; footpaths were surfaced with brick; and new oaks were planted within this garden.
4. The area in front of the conservatory wall was designed as a parterre featuring a sculpture of Eve as a focal point.
5. Fountains with circular pools were added to flank the summerhouse in the North Garden, and two small fountains were added to the Flower Garden.
6. The footprint of the greenhouse adjacent to the garden shed was designed as a brick terrace with a central fountain.
7. A dolphin fountain with a circular basin was added northwest of the main house, on axis with the gazebo in the Flower Garden.
8. Minor adjustments were made to the layout of the Flower Garden. The adjustments are identified as minor because they were few in number and conceptually true to the distinctive historic layout, which combined rectangular forms with sinuous paths.

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For many years, Gunn's plans were used to manage the landscape under the direction of site manager Ormond Butler. As tourism increased, and the canopy became denser, some changes in specific plant selections were made in order to either adapt to the changing microclimates or to extend the blooming season for year-round visitation. In some cases the use of mass plantings of plant varieties not available during the nineteenth century (dwarf azaleas, multiflora roses) resulted in a more "showy" and "colorful" effect than would have been experienced during Martha Turnbull's lifetime, but the differences are subtle and fairly insignificant when compared to the overall feeling of the garden, which is still very faithful to the original intent of the plan.

The most serious threat to the garden's design integrity is the loss of the marble sculptures that lined the central axis for all of the garden's lifetime save the ten or so years of the most recent owner's tenure. This is a serious loss for two reasons: (1) It leaves the allee without the feature that distinguished it from other allees across the Deep South; and (2) it leaves the garden's central axis without its most specific reference to the gardens of Versailles. The loss of the two urns at the entry to the front parterre is less critical but still a significant missing element.

In evaluating the integrity of the gardens of Rosedown, the most significant features of the garden's personality survive intact – the sophisticated plan combining axial geometry with winding picturesque walks through landscaped garden spaces and the plant collection as established by Martha Turnbull, relying upon flowering evergreen shrub species (camellia, azalea, osmanthus, banana shrub), small flowering trees (dogwood, redbud, saucer magnolia), and large canopy trees native to the regional forest (live oak, cypress, pine, Southern magnolia).

THE BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES (MAIN COMPLEX)

Note: Buildings/structures are contributing unless noted otherwise.

The "Big House"

On November 3, 1834 Daniel Turnbull wrote in his journal, "Commenced hauling timber cypress for house." From another entry we learn that builder W. Wright began work on November 1, 1834 and finished May 1, 1835. The total cost was \$13,109.20.

Wright's agreement with Turnbull reads (misspellings, etc. included):

Proposition for doing the carpenter and joined work of a certain frame house the whole to be complete after the most modern stile the front to be executed with full gretio dorric collums and cornice the inside to be finished throughout the two stories complete one finish above the second story nor Dormer windows. The workmanship and stile not to be surpassed in the state

W. Wright

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The “most modern style” in question was transitional Federal-Greek Revival. Spanning the wide five bay façade is a double gallery with Doric posts, matching pilasters and a Doric entablature of triglyphs, metopes, and mutule blocks (Wright’s “full gretio dorric collums and cornice”). At each corner of the eaves is an anthemion design. The gallery posts are smooth while the pilasters are fluted. The balustrades with their pronounced, quite bulbous balusters, are particularly distinctive. At the center of the composition, upstairs and down, is a handsome Federal style elliptical arch doorway distinguished by boldly formed fluting, a layered entablature, a keystone, and leaded patterns superimposed on the glass. The fanlight features a series of loops in a radial design, while the side lights feature ovals and roundels. The leaded members are held in place by patera and lion’s head clasps. The door, with its six horizontal panels, is like those found most commonly on the interior. Handsome floor-to-ceiling fluted surrounds with smooth cornerblocks set off the façade’s other openings, which are filled with six over six windows and a paneled section below. These surrounds and other woodwork in the house are transitional in that they are Federal in form, but bolder and “stouter” than typical of a style known for its lightness and delicacy. Although the elliptical doorways, a Federal style “signature,” seem lighter in character than the window surrounds, even they are heavy in proportion when compared to c.1810 Federal woodwork. The original block’s side elevations feature handsome wooden fan forms in the gable peaks.

In the mid-1840s the Turnbolls added a one story Grecian wing to each side of their home. The northern two-room wing has been known traditionally (and is still known) as the Henry Clay wing. According to family tradition, the addition was made to accommodate a Gothic Revival bedroom suite originally intended for Henry Clay. Friends of Clay had it specially made for him when he announced for the presidency in 1844. It was to be for his use in the White House. When Clay lost the election, the bedroom suite (with its huge bed) was put on the market. Daniel Turnbull bought it, according to family tradition, and had to build a wing to accommodate it. To keep things in balance, he also built a Grecian wing (one room, known as the library) on the south side. (Sadly, the magnificent Henry Clay bedroom suite was removed from the property by a private owner in the 1990s and sold to various parties. The Dallas Museum of Art purchased the bed.)

The principal elevations of the wings face to the side of the main block. Hence, when looking at the façade of the main block, one sees the secondary elevations (the sides) of the wings. The south wing, which takes the form of a Greek temple-like pavilion, culminates in a handsome three-bay Doric portico spanning its width. The north wing is the larger of the two; however, its façade has only a two column porch. In both wings the columns are fluted while the pilasters are smooth. The Doric entablature and eave treatment of the main block is repeated on the wings. Each wing is topped by a balustrade with balusters similar in shape to those on the main block; however, they are considerably lighter in scale.

The rear of Rosedown is notable for its plainness. Because little documentation survives on this elevation from before the 1950s and because considerable work was done there during the 1960s restoration, one cannot be certain of its original appearance. A drawing dated August 1957 and 1950s photos show two wings, both of which were removed as part of the restoration. Located at the southern corner, “Miss Nina’s Wing” (named for the last of Martha Turnbull’s granddaughters who died at Rosedown in 1954) featured a Greek Revival gallery of simple boxed columns on the front and back. According to family history it was built in the 1850s to accommodate a growing family. The drawing and photos reveal that it was located at the corner (see sketch) and communicated with the main house via galleries.

The northern wing, which by the 1950s was quite ramshackle in appearance, was the kitchen. It is believed to be the original free-standing kitchen which had later been moved up to the back of the house.

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Located at the north corner, it too could be accessed only by the gallery. Miss Nina's wing was moved a few yards to the rear of the house; the kitchen was removed and reconstructed.

At present the rear elevation has a small room on each side of a porch set under a shed roof. In progress restoration photos taken after the wings were removed reveal that the present porch is either original or a faithful reproduction. The small room on the north side was already there, but it must have been in deteriorated condition for it and the south room (where Miss Nina's wing would have attached) are shown under construction. The window pattern on the second story is unusual in that one room is shown without a window. The room is where the gallery roof of Miss Nina's wing abutted the rear elevation; so one wonders if perhaps a window was removed when the wing was built in the 1850s.

Unlike many a period house, Rosedown does not have a hall running through the middle. The original block on the ground story is two rooms deep and three to four rooms wide. The front door opens into a large room containing an elegant, curving staircase. To each side is a fairly large, roughly equal size room. The rear range has at its center a broad dining room and adjacent butler's pantry. To each side is a smaller room. At the upstairs, there are three rooms across the front (the central one containing the stair landing). The original configuration of the rear range upstairs is not certain. Today there is a small room at each corner with a T-shaped hall and two large bathrooms at the center. The hall-bathroom configuration is so unusual for the period that one suspects it is not original. (The bathrooms themselves date from the restoration, but the configuration is shown "as is" in a Leake drawing.)

Rosedown's entrance room was clearly meant to impress. The staircase's balustrade is of solid mahogany and its fascia is sheathed in crotch mahogany veneer. (An invoice documents the purchase of mahogany, an expensive wood, for \$129.73.) With its thin balusters, railing and spiral-formed newel post, the staircase is light and delicate in character. The room originally featured a scenic wallpaper produced in France. Fragments of it were found during the restoration, and Mrs. Underwood replaced it with antique French paper of a similar character.

As befits the home of a wealthy family, the principal downstairs rooms have marble mantels. There are a total of five black marble mantels -- three in the original block and one in each of the wings. The upstairs rooms and the two downstairs rooms flanking the dining room/butler's pantry feature wooden mantels. The marble mantel in the Henry Clay bedroom is very untypical of the period. According to an interview conducted in 1960 with George Leake, the mantel in this room was in a "thousand pieces" and was put back together on-site. However, the mantel does not look pieced together.

The four other marble mantels are for the most part strongly Greek Revival. Two feature engaged Ionic columns, while the library mantel has Greek ear, or shoulder, molding. The fourth marble mantel has an entablature with a panel at its center and a block design above each pilaster. There are six original wooden mantels in two models (two downstairs and four upstairs) -- all with a transitional Federal-Greek Revival character. The mantels are being described as transitional because they display certain Federal traits (multiple layers of molding) but are quite "chunky" in proportion as would befit the later Greek Revival. One model features a layered shelf, reeded pilasters and an entablature with multiple, very boldly formed moldings. The other model is similar except it has heavy smooth round columns instead of reeded squared off pilasters. Above each column is a strongly articulated block with a half column inset on its front and outward-facing side (see photo). One wonders if the main block's marble mantels were added when the wings were built in the mid-1840s, or it is possible for the main block's marble and wooden mantels to all be from 1835.

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There are two mantels upstairs (in the rear corner rooms) that one suspects are twentieth century. They are suspicious for two reasons: (1) They are of a Federal style (almost Adamesque) that one would find c.1800 – i.e., considerably earlier than the house; and (2) They have certain features that make one think they are not true c.1800 Federal mantels (shallow, one dimensional panels and a sunburst and other moldings that are “overdone”).

Doors in the original portion of the house feature the same six horizontal panel treatment found on the front door. Molding profiles on the door and window surrounds of the original portion are of various types, although all feature bold profiles with a strong three-dimensional character. The molding is pronounced enough on some frames to be almost half round in profile. Door frames in principal downstairs rooms (for example, the staircase room) are capped by a pronounced cornice in the manner of a multi-layer mantel shelf. Originally each door of the main block had a transom window, but these have been filled in with a wood panel. (This was done before the 1960s restoration.) The openings in the mid-1840s wings are by comparison quite chaste in appearance. Smooth, unadorned side members are capped by a molded entablature. The doors in the wings have four raised panels (two long panels with two small panels below).

Both wings feature elaborate cornices. The Henry Clay cornice has various types of molding, including two bands of enriched talon, one of bead and reel, and a band of large dentils. That in the library features multiple boldly formed layers which extend several inches onto the ceiling. Ceiling medallions with typical motifs of the period (acanthus leaves, anthemions, etc.) are found in the principal rooms. One is original (that in the entrance room), two were added by Leake (the parlors flanking the entrance room), and at least one (the Henry Clay room) is a partial reconstruction of the original. (A pre-restoration photo shows a damaged medallion with only the present central portion remaining.)

Other important interior features include Gothic cornices over the windows in the Henry Clay bedroom and a punkah above the dining room table. Also known as a “shoo-fly,” a punkah is a fairly large piece of wood attached to the ceiling and pulled back and forth by a rope.

Whether or not the so-called “closets” found in three upstairs rooms are original is a matter of debate, although the weight of evidence is that they are. Although always referred to as closets, they are actually shallow cupboards located to one or both sides of a mantel. Such a treatment is quite unusual for a house of the period, but not unknown. What would have been typical, and what is found throughout the rest of the house, is a window to each side of a mantel. The moldings do look legitimate, but then the 1960s restoration work was so meticulous that it can easily fool the trained eye. However, if closets were added in the 1960s, one would expect them to have been typical deep closets capable of accommodating hanging clothes – i.e., furred out into the room flush with the front wall of the chimney flue rather than almost useless shallow cupboards recessed from the front wall of the flue. Also in support of the cupboards being original is a 1930s photo showing a portion of the north side of the house. No windows appear where the cupboards are now located. Finally, the same type of “closets” are found in the doctor’s office, and one cannot imagine any reason for adding them in the restoration.

The Restoration:

The massive Rosedown restoration project undertaken by the Underwoods lasted over an eight year period. A temporary metal building was erected on the property to serve as headquarters, and a small army of workers were employed for the gardens, buildings, and furniture restoration. Ralph Ellis Gunn of Houston was the landscape architect, as noted previously. Initially the architect was Richard Koch of New Orleans, the most prominent specialist in historic building restoration in Louisiana at the time. Koch had

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been head of the Historic American Buildings Survey in Louisiana in the 1930s and subsequently was responsible for the restoration of various major buildings in the state (in New Orleans and along the River Road). But by 1960, Koch had been replaced by George Leake, also of New Orleans. And because Leake was the architect when restoration work on the historic buildings began in earnest, he is considered the architect of record. The New York firm of McMillen, Inc. were the interior decorators for the restoration. (At that time roughly 85% of the furnishings were original.)

Leake died a few years ago, and documentation on his work at Rosedown is fragmentary. Fortunately, his restoration philosophy is quoted in a 1976 Rosedown publication. "There are many diverse views on how a restoration should be approached," said Leake. "Some say that the progressive changes, additions and deletions over a great many years of the life of the property should be restored to reflect the various changes sustained through the years. . . . I cannot say that I agree with this method of proceeding. I believe that the goal of historic preservation should be to restore an area or building in the context and spirit of the time in which it was originally conceived. Williamsburg is the obvious example of this philosophy."

Leake went on to explain that because the Underwoods wanted everything to be authentic, he used in some places "the old systems, mortise and tendons (sic) with wood pegs. On exposed framing or boards, we had the timber hand split and dressed with old tools such as foot adze and draw knife. Hand forged square nails were used wherever they would be exposed, . . ."

The above described approach, of course, makes it extremely difficult for even a trained eye to determine original features from replaced features, and at Rosedown, even original dependencies from reconstructions. Most fortunately, there are enough pre-restoration and in-progress photos to make most distinctions possible (combined with some architectural clues that one cannot duplicate easily – most notably, the look of weathered wood).

Photos and a video done when the Underwoods acquired Rosedown in 1956 show that the house was in deteriorated condition, although not nearly as severe as that of many a plantation house in the region. In short, the house needed help and it needed it soon, but it was not on the immediate verge of collapse.

To summarize, changes and replication of original architectural fabric to the main house, known to have been carried out during the 1960s restoration are as follows:

1. Bees had bored into the solid wood columns on the main block. The damage was extensive enough to necessitate replication of several columns. The work was done so carefully that the only way one can tell replacement from original is to tap on each. The replacements are hollow.
2. In-progress restoration photos show the Doric entablature of the main block removed. Either it was removed for restoration and re-installed or the present entablature is an in-kind replacement.
3. Considerable work was done at the rear, as explained above, including the removal of two wings (one from the 1850s and the kitchen from an unknown date, although clearly historic).
4. Bathrooms were placed in the upstairs rear central space.
5. Henry Clay Wing: The marble mantel was either added or "reconstructed." The ceiling medallion is a partial reconstruction, and a modern bathroom was added.

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6. As shown in extant plans, the mantels were fitted with electrical outlets in the top of the shelf for the purpose of small lamps and electrified candelabra.
7. About half of the balusters are replicas (according to 1960 interview with Leake).
8. All of the doors are original but they have been re-hung with new hinges. Presumably, as part of the restoration, the doors were removed for cleaning and repainting.

Miss Nina's Wing (non-contributing)

As noted above, Miss Nina's Wing was built at the rear corner of the main house in the 1850s and removed and relocated during the 1960s restoration (an excellent example of Leake's restoration philosophy). Because of the re-location, National Register guidelines require that the wing be listed as non-contributing. However, it should be noted that the wing was only minimally connected to the rear and read largely as a free-standing building. Now it truly is free-standing and is located only a few yards from its original position. It has a simple boxed gallery on both of its long sides and a three room interior.

Although non-contributing by Register standards, Miss Nina's wing looms large in Rosedown legend. According to tradition it was to this wing that Sarah Turnbull retired in her later years when upkeep of the "big house" became too much. The last of her unmarried granddaughters, the aged Miss Nina Bowman, lived there alone for several years before her death in 1954.

Kitchen (non-contributing)

Without the aid of pre-restoration documentation, one would have thought the kitchen to be historic. It has a massive chimney made of old soft bricks and is of pegged construction. However, in-progress restoration photos show it under construction. Clearly the old kitchen wing was removed, judged to be beyond salvation and was reconstructed using the "old methods" proposed by the restoration's architect George M. Leake.

Doctor's Office

The doctor's office is one of several buildings and structures photographed by Richard Koch in the 1930s for the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS). According to family history, this diminutive Greek temple style building was added to the plantation in 1844, one year after Daniel and Martha Turnbull's seven year old son died of yellow fever. Family history indicates it was the doctor's office for the entire plantation (i.e., the hundreds of enslaved people as well). The date is certainly believable, but one would not expect such a facility to be located where it is – set like a small jewel at one edge of the oval-shaped forecourt to the main house.

Regardless of its use, the wood frame building is a handsome adornment to the Rosedown gardens. A three bay Greek temple spans the façade. The unusual slender columns are splayed slightly and paneled. The paneling is particularly unusual, not being the standard bolection mold but rather a raised central section with a curvilinear cut, similar to cuts and molds found in the main house's mantels and door surrounds. Normally such a cut would have been formed on a plane, but the decorative cut actually splays as the column splays, indicating that it must have been hand-carved. Windows are nine over nine. The front door's transom is subdivided in a decorative pattern.

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The back wall of the one room interior has a mantel with a cupboard to each side (similar to those described above for the main house). The mantel takes the form of an aedicule motif with pilasters featuring fluted-looking paneling similar to that found on the columns. They do not splay. The cupboard doors feature six raised panels in the so-called "Cross and Bible" configuration. (This type of door is not typical of the Greek Revival, but it is not unknown.)

The siding on the sides and rear was replaced during the restoration.

Flower Garden Summerhouse:

Also documented by HABS in the 1930s, this latticed garden pavilion is a hexagonal structure with two round arch openings and an ogee roof culminating in an urn. The pavilion's rafters are steamed and bent to form the ogee shape, as can be seen from the interior. There is a suggestion of an entablature. The pavilion is particularly distinctive because virtually every surface is of intricately made latticework – not just the walls but architectural features such as the pilasters defining each corner and the round arch openings. The latticework is of two sizes – larger for the walls and very small for the pilasters and round arch openings. It is closely "woven" so that the holes are fairly small, indeed tiny for the architectural details. The latticework wood is thick and the members are fitted together in the manner of a fine piece of furniture. Instead of one board simply lying on top of another, the boards interlock. The pilasters and round arch openings are particularly pronounced because of the smaller, very tightly "woven" latticework pattern. The openings are further re-enforced visually by a wooden keystone with deep fluting and a wooden block on each side with a raised panel. The pavilion floor is brick. (A concrete foundation was added during the restoration.)

There is no compelling reason to believe that the flower garden summerhouse is anything other than antebellum in date. It is constructed with square nails (indicating a date from before about 1880), and given the precarious financial state of the widow Martha Turnbull in the post-war years, it is hard to believe she had the funds to spend on "extras."

Ralph Ellis Gunn had reason to believe that the flower garden summerhouse dated to 1885. He wrote in a September 10, 1959 report that "the records prove that the summer house in what they called the flower garden was built in 1885." What the "records" were is unknown; they might have been an important primary source, but then again, they may not have been.

North and South Garden Summerhouses:

As noted in the garden description, there is also a summerhouse at roughly the center of the large gardens to each side of the oak allee (the north and south gardens). The first known documentation on these two structures uncovered to date is from the 1930s (a garden plan showing their location and HABS photos). Identical, they are hexagonal latticed structures with an ogee roof culminating in an urn and rafters steamed and bent to form the ogee shape, but they are not as elaborately built and articulated as the rose garden summerhouse. Here the openings are square head and are formed of wood, as are the pilasters with molded capitals accenting each corner, and the latticework is of the more conventional overlapping type. The entablatures feature a delicate pearl molding. The latticework is of fairly thin wood and is held together with round head nails. The latter two clues indicate that the latticework must have been replaced at some time. (For the record, it looks the same as that shown in the 1930s HABS photo documentation.) Like the flower garden summerhouse, the summerhouses in the north and south gardens are held together with square nails

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(indicating a date from before roughly 1880), and there is no reason to believe that these two summerhouses are anything other than antebellum in date.

It is known that the south and north garden summerhouses were hidden in unchecked, jungle-like growth when the Underwoods purchased Rosedown. And while they did need some restoration work, the fabric appears to be largely original (except for the latticework, as noted above). (While George Leake apparently even used square nails in the restoration – at least where they would show – he could not have reproduced the look of weathered wood. Also, in-progress restoration photos show the summerhouses in fairly good condition except for perhaps the roofs. There is one photo showing repair work on one of the roofs. For the record, one of the pavilions must have had its foundation replaced during the restoration. It is now of concrete with a brick overlay.)

Milk House

Documentation from the 1930s shows this building in its present location behind and to the side of the main house (see map). Its original use cannot be documented, but it has been known as the milk shed as long as anyone can remember. It has a one room core of *piece sur piece* construction – a particularly skillful form of log construction wherein the members interlock very tightly (see photo). Small openings feature wooden bars.

The milk shed has a hip roof that extends beyond the building core by a few feet, supported by simple posts. 1930s photos show this configuration; however, 1960s restoration photos show the removal and in-kind replacement of the roof structure.

Garden Tool Shed

Located just west of the flower garden, this small square brick building gives every appearance of being antebellum. It is laid up in common bond and has a gable end roof. A door on each side features a jack arch lintel. As noted previously, a greenhouse was originally attached to one side.

Log Shed

Little is known about this small log building of unknown (although clearly historic) date. In-progress restoration photos show it in the present location.

Boiler Shed (non-contributing)

Located next to the log shed, this small clapboarded traditional-looking building is shown in restoration photos as under construction.

Privy (non-contributing)

While there was a privy on the property when the restoration began (per a photo), all available evidence indicates that the present privy, although identical in most respects, is largely or entirely a reconstruction.

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Barn

Located on the edge of the North Garden is a good-size barn formed of wood slats with an open passageway at the middle. There is no documentation on this building other than the knowledge that it was there when the Underwoods purchased the property. Given its location, its use must have been garden-related rather than agriculture.

Hothouse

There is no reason to believe that this low, sloping brick structure is not from Martha Turnbull's period.

Buildings located outside of the main complex of historic buildings and gardens:

There are numerous non-contributing elements spread throughout the Rosedown acreage – apart from the four mentioned above within the historic core. They all date from the 1960s restoration and were built to accommodate Rosedown's new role as a major tourist attraction or as support buildings for the cattle business undertaken on the property.

At the property entrance on Louisiana Highway 1 is a wood frame ticket office built in the form of a traditional Louisiana *pigeonnier* (pigeon house). The gates also date from the restoration.

To the south of the Flower Garden is the maintenance area, which includes a long, open, board and batten shed and a greenhouse. There are numerous mature trees and other vegetation screening this utilitarian area from the rest of the property. In short, someone has to tell you that it's there and lead you to it.

Immediately beyond the North Garden is a small (roughly 50 car) visitors parking lot with an office, restroom building, and gift shop. The parking lot was created in the midst of numerous large trees and features a grassy area with trees in the middle; hence it is not as intrusive as might be expected (see photo). The office and restroom building, both of frame construction and small in scale, were designed to resemble historic cottages. The gift shop, the only modern-looking building at Rosedown, is a corrugated metal shed. Fortunately, its impact is mitigated by lush vegetation. Immediately behind the restroom building (but not accessible from the parking lot) is a small wood frame caretaker's cottage which is traditional in character.

At the rear of the Rosedown acreage are two small barns, a stable, and a cottage. The barns and stable are of board and batten construction. The small traditional looking cottage is sheathed in weatherboards.

MAPS AND PHOTOS

There are four maps accompanying this submission: 2 USGS maps, a property plat map, and an over-size map showing the layout of the main complex with photos keyed to it. The latter is a schematic map showing the overall layout rather than a HABS level map showing, for example, the exact twist and turn of each path.

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Given the size of the nominated area (374 acres) it was impossible to key all photos to a map. The bulk, those showing the main complex and its immediately adjacent parking lot, #4-52, are keyed to the map. Photos 1-3 are at the Highway 10 entrance and at the beginning of the approach lane (as noted at the bottom on the map). Photos 53-56 are of non-contributing buildings at the rear of the 374 acres – at some distance from the main complex. This is noted at the top of the map. Photo 57 is of the maintenance area located south of the reservoir (also noted on map).

SUMMARY OF CONTRIBUTING/NON-CONTRIBUTING ELEMENTS

Contributing site: gardens

Contributing buildings: main house, doctor's office, large barn at edge of north garden, milk house, garden shed, log shed

Contributing structures: 3 gazebos, 1 hothouse

Non-contributing buildings:

Main complex: Miss Nina's wing, kitchen, shed, privy

Outside of main complex: giftshop, office, restroom building and cottage (in or near visitor parking); maintenance shed; two barns, one stable and one cottage at rear of acreage; ticket booth at entrance on HWY 10

Non-contributing structure: modern greenhouse in maintenance area

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8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Applicable National

Register Criteria: A__ B__ C_X D__

Criteria Considerations

(Exceptions): NA A__ B__ C__ D__ E__ F__ G__

Areas of Significance: landscape architecture, architecture

Period(s) of Significance: 1835, c.1845 (main house)
c. 1840-1860 (gardens)

Significant Dates: 1835, c.1845

Significant Person(s): NA

Cultural Affiliation: NA

Architect/Builder: W. Wright (contractor for original house)

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State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.

Rosedown Plantation is nationally significant in the areas of landscape architecture and architecture. The designed landscapes of the Southern antebellum plantation era represent an important chapter in the history of design in America, and Rosedown's gardens, in and of themselves, are nationally significant in this respect – for their size, sophistication and overall integrity. Their only “competitors” are the renowned gardens of Middleton Place in South Carolina and Virginia's Mount Vernon and Monticello. In some respects, as described below, Rosedown is the more impressive. Additionally, Rosedown is particularly important as a *tout ensemble* to convey the appearance (to “tell the story”) of the antebellum plantation domestic landscape at its apex. As the real version of the *Gone With The Wind* stereotype, Rosedown, due to its completeness, enables one to appreciate first-hand the domestic world of the South's wealthiest planters. And as a plantation house of the first rank, Rosedown's imposing main house contributes mightily to the *tout ensemble*.

The Southern antebellum plantation landscape was dominated by large amounts of acreage devoted to the cultivation of the cash crop – cotton, sugar, tobacco or rice. The fields of cropland typically surrounded the smaller components of the productive landscape – fruit orchards, vegetable gardens, fields of fodder crops, pastures for cattle. At the heart of the plantation landscape was the domestic landscape: the home of the planter and his extended family, usually surrounded by ornamental landscape. In south Louisiana, as documented in paintings and other period documents, the ornamental gardens were typically either in front of the Big House, or flanking the sides of the house, or both. Design of these garden spaces ranged from a grid of live oak trees, to a circle of cedars lining a carriage drive, to more elaborate and intricate parterre patterns planted in flowering plants and small trees. Designed landscapes of the size and sophistication of Rosedown were in a small minority across the South, and for such a fragile entity to survive with so much of its character intact is nothing short of remarkable.

The scale and scope of plantation landscapes such as Rosedown make them laboratories for the study and interpretation of the cultural conditions of slavery, the life style of the gentry, and scientific experiments in agriculture and horticulture. These places would not have been possible had not the labor forces of enslaved people from Africa built them and maintained them. The climate of the Southern plantation region, ranging from temperate to semi-tropical, provided for long growing seasons, creating the potential for nearly year-round crop production and ornamental horticultural display.

At Rosedown, the direct evidence of the agricultural portion of the plantation, as well as the slave quarters, no longer exist. On the other hand, Rosedown represents one of the most intact, documented examples of a domestic plantation complex in the South. The big houses of many Southern plantations have survived, and in some cases many of the ancillary buildings have also survived. But in extremely few cases have both the house and the garden survived in such a complete condition. For example, the gardens at Middleton Place in South Carolina are an earlier and larger example of a designed plantation landscape, but the plantation house has not survived. Another distinguishing factor of the Rosedown landscape is the thorough documentation of the plant materials used in the gardens by virtue of Martha Turnbull's garden diary, spanning sixty years of work in the garden. Very little specific information survives for Middleton Place Gardens. Perhaps only the gardens of Monticello in Virginia are better documented than those of Rosedown. Jefferson was a prolific writer, and many more of his manuscripts survive than do letters of Martha Turnbull and those of her family members.

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Rosedown is comparable in scale and overall design approach to the plantations of Mount Vernon and Monticello, both nationally significant plantation sites not only because they were the homes of important American presidents but because they are outstanding examples of designed landscapes of the mid-to-late eighteenth century. However, the gardens of Mount Vernon and Monticello have, to a large extent, been recreated in the last half of the twentieth century because much of the plant materials and in some cases the layout had been lost due to changes in ownership and neglect. The gardens of Rosedown contain more original plant material and a stronger horticultural connection to their original plantings than either of these examples. Some of this is due to the fact that Rosedown is several decades younger than Mount Vernon and Monticello, but the survival is also due to the fact that Rosedown was continuously owned and cared for by the same family from its creation until 1956, and then underwent a very enlightened and professional landscape preservation treatment.

In all three of these plantation complexes (Mount Vernon, Monticello, Rosedown), the main house is located at a high point on the site with a central axis leading up to the front façade of the house, forming symmetrical gardens on both sides. At both Mount Vernon and Monticello, the central feature is a broad and long lawn, whereas at Rosedown, it is the oak allee with a far more narrow cone of vision and a more formal approach to the design's layout. Both Washington and Jefferson were familiar with the popular picturesque approach to garden design dominating Europe at the time, as was Martha Turnbull. Martha, though, chose to use the more dramatic and geometric pattern of the strong central axis with flanking sculptures, creating a miniature version of what she would have seen in the great gardens of Europe.

Rosedown is in many ways more complex and sophisticated than most other American plantation gardens of the period in that it merges the formal with the picturesque in much the same way that the picturesque was introduced at Versailles in the planting of the *bosquets* (ornamental features enclosed by trees) on either side of the central axis. Within these wooded areas were surprise features like pavilions and fountains, just as the winding paths in the North and South Gardens at Rosedown lead the visitor around curves to come upon a clearing with a latticed summer house.

Rosedown's national significance is reinforced by the existence of Martha Turnbull's garden diary and by the survival of so many of the plants introduced by Martha in her lifetime. Hers was one of the earliest camellia collections in the Deep South. She also relied heavily on other plants newly imported from the Orient, such as the cryptomeria, azaleas, and crape myrtles. Because we have access to Martha's life story through her own words describing her labor in and love of the garden, Rosedown reminds us of the central place that ornamental horticulture held in the lives of most people living in the plantation South during the antebellum period and its aftermath. The gardens at Rosedown represent one of the strongest examples of the adaptation of European garden ideas to the landscape of a Southern plantation, using a broad selection of plant materials that included indigenous species with ornamental qualities, together with the newest imports from the East. At Rosedown, outstanding garden design combined with an unusually intact collection of historic plants creates one of the most refined and horticulturally rich gardens of nineteenth century America.

While Rosedown's gardens are nationally significant in their own right, the estate as a *tout ensemble* – a whole greater than the sum of its parts – is of particular importance. With its “big house” (complete with Grecian wings) at the head of a 660-foot oak allee and its extensive pleasure gardens ornamented with summerhouses, Rosedown embodies the lifestyle of the antebellum South's wealthiest planters in a way very few other surviving properties can. Writing in 1974 in his seminal study of slavery, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made*, Eugene Genovese singled out Rosedown as the “pinnacle” – the “plantation ideal.”

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“On the Banks of the Mississippi many of the sugar and cotton planters live in edifices where within and without are exhibited all that artifice aided by wealth can produce.” This observation, made by a traveler in 1818, became even more apt in the heady prosperity of the 1830’s, ‘40s, and ‘50s when fortunes were made several times over by the South’s largest planters. Among them was Daniel Turnbull, who in 1860 owned three plantations with a total of 2,200 acres of improved land and 444 slaves. While such individuals were only a tiny percentage of the total population in the South, they dominated the region economically, politically, and socially.

The most visible sign of a planter’s wealth, taste and status was his residence, the “Big House.” And while most plantation houses were quite modest, mansions such as Rosedown loomed much larger in the collective psyche – and continue to loom much larger -- than their numbers would warrant. Frederick Douglass described growing up in the shadow of a “great house” and seeing it for the first time as a child: “It was a treat to my young and gradually opening mind to behold this elaborate exhibition of wealth, power, and beauty.” Genovese notes that though not the norm, “mansions like Rosedown dotted the landscape and fired the imagination of white and black alike, imparting that sense of power and permanence so necessary to sustain the claims of a landed ruling class.” For poor white farmers and slaves, who lived at best in adequate cabins and at worst in hovels, even a modest “big house” loomed as a mansion. One can only imagine “the awe and respect” (Genovese’s words) commanded by a house the size of Rosedown set at the head of a 660-foot oak allee flanked by extensive pleasure gardens. By their very size and grandeur, such estates not only defined the planter’s wealth, but, according to Genovese, reaffirmed him as a powerful and dominating figure.

The “Big House” image embodied by Rosedown has had a powerful hold on the imagination. Thanks to Margaret’s Mitchell’s enormously influential *Gone With The Wind*, people all over the world still equate the antebellum South with white columned houses of this and even larger size – houses where “within and without are exhibited all that artifice aided by wealth can produce.” And what is remarkable about Rosedown is that there’s so much more than the main house, as impressive as it may be. There are comparable mansions surviving in the South, but where else can one find so complete a picture of an antebellum estate as Rosedown? Even with the recent loss of the statues, Rosedown -- the *tout ensemble* -- remains a powerful image of the antebellum South.

The main house, as a work of architecture, contributes mightily to the national significance of Rosedown. It was and is a plantation residence of the first rank -- representing the small minority of great houses built by the South’s very wealthiest planters. By and large, larger plantation residences took the standard form established in eighteenth century Virginia of a two story house, five bays wide, two rooms deep, with a central hall. This rigidly symmetrical model emerged as the standard gentleman’s house in Restoration-era Britain (mid to late seventeenth century). Its symmetrical and classical detailing marked the growing influence of the Renaissance ideal in Great Britain – i.e., working its way down the social scale from royalty to the lesser gentry. This form and plan became the model for what was considered a “fine house” in the 13 British colonies and later in the United States. Indeed, it held sway through the Greek Revival era and beyond. In the southern United States it was the model for the larger plantation house, as seen in state after state.

The “big house” at Rosedown is one of a small minority of plantation houses that aspired to something more. Instead of the standard central hall, it has a capacious entrance room (much more a room than a hall) with a graceful, curving mahogany staircase. Behind, where the rear of the hall would normally be, is a large dining room fully 23 feet long and 14 feet wide. The main block accommodates three substantial rooms across the front, giving it a wider and grander presence than the standard central hall plan

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so characteristic of large period houses. The substantial Grecian wings extend the façade considerably and add much to Rosedown's stature as a mansion. Such a house would be impressive in any context, and so much more so when viewed through the perspective of a magnificent oak allee.

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9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Genovese, Eugene D. *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made*. Putnam, 1974.

Gunn, Ralph Ellis. Various drawings showing Rosedown's gardens "as is" and proposed, dated late 1950s through early 1960s, originals owned by Louisiana Office of State Parks.

Gunn, Ralph Ellis. Rosedown slides. This extensive slide collection is owned by Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas.

Gunn, Ralph Ellis. "Report on Rosedown Plantation: Initial Survey." June 1956. Copy in National Register file, Louisiana Division of Historic Preservation.

Gunn, Ralph Ellis. "Report on the Proposed Design for the Restoration of the Flower Garden." November 10, 1959. Copy in National Register file, Louisiana Division of Historic Preservation.

Gunn, Ralph Ellis. "Report on the Proposed Restoration of the Gardens and Structures at Rosedown Plantation." December 1959. Copy in National Register file, Louisiana Division of Historic Preservation.

Gunn, Ralph Ellis. "Report on the proposed restoration of the South Garden, Rosedown Plantation." March 1960. Copy in National Register file, Louisiana Division of Historic Preservation.

Koch, Richard. Historic American Buildings Survey photos dated September 1934 and garden plan dated July 1930. From the private archives of Koch and Wilson, Architects, New Orleans. Access to these essential materials provided by Robert J. Cangelosi, Jr., owner.

Leake, George M. Existing conditions floorplans of main house dated October 1960. Copy in National Register file, Louisiana Division of Historic Preservation.

Leake, George M. Pre-restoration photos. Leake gave copies of his photos to Mary Parke Luttrell in the early 1980s for a student research project and she in turn shared them with the Louisiana Division of Historic Preservation.

Leake, George M. Interview with Mary Parke Luttrell, March 1982. Typescript in National Register file, Louisiana Division of Historic Preservation.

"Reflections of Rosedown" video. Produced for the Underwoods, this video is valuable for its views of Rosedown prior to the 1960s restoration. Copy on file in the Louisiana Office of State Parks.

Rosedown Plantation Restoration Photo Collection, 1961-62. Louisiana State University Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library.

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The Sixty Year Garden Diary of Martha Turnbull, Mistress of Rosedown Plantation, 1836-1896.
Published by Rosedown Plantation, 1996. This volume is also of immense value for its collection of the earliest known photos of Rosedown (c.1900 and 1913).

Word, Ola Mae. "Reflections of Rosedown." This official Rosedown Plantation booklet produced in 1976 was invaluable because of its extensive quotes from now unavailable, perhaps lost, primary sources (the original building contract, Daniel Turnbull's journal, etc.).

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- Preliminary Determination of Individual Listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- Previously Listed in the National Register. (partially)
- Previously Determined Eligible by the National Register.
- Designated a National Historic Landmark.
- Recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey: #1101 (photos and data sheets only)
- Recorded by Historic American Engineering Record: #

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other (Specify Repository): Louisiana Office of State Parks

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreege of Property: 374 acres

UTM References: **Zone Easting Northing**
1) 15/654820/3408880
2) 15/655740/3409400
3) 15/656540/3407900
4) 15/655560/3407200

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Verbal Boundary Description: The nominated acreage is shown as Lot F-1 on the attached property plat map.

Boundary Justification: The boundaries for this nomination follow the current property lines to include all that remains of Rosedown Plantation's once extensive acreage. (The property has been subdivided over the years since Milton and Catherine Underwood purchased it.) While it would have been possible to cut the boundaries closely around the eighteen acre main complex of historic buildings and gardens, such an approach would have divorced the core from its setting (its *raison d'etre*). In short, it did not make sense to nominate a plantation estate without including at least what remained of the plantation acreage.

11. FORM PREPARED BY

Name/Title: Donna Fricker, National Register Coordinator [Landscape description and analysis by Suzanne Turner.]

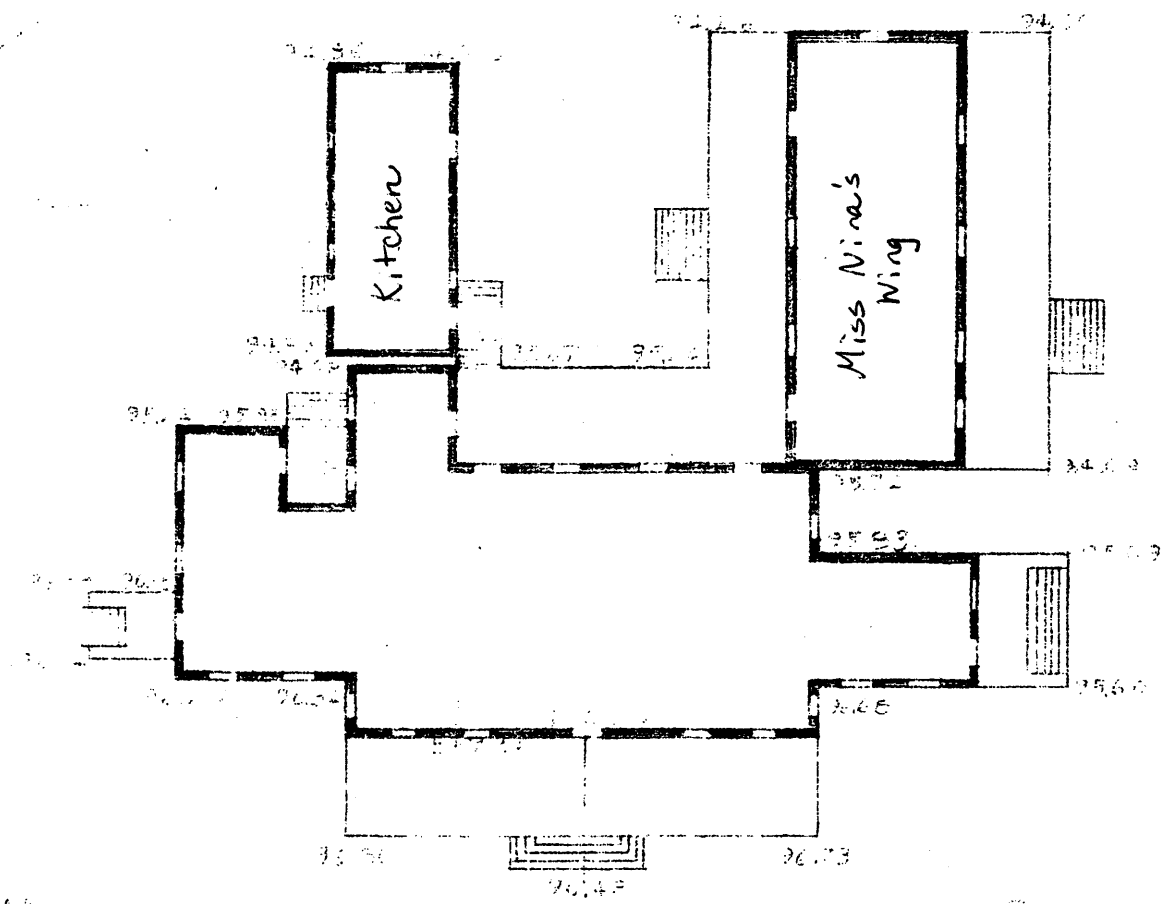
Address: Division of Historic Preservation, P. O. Box 44247, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70804

Telephone: (225) 342-8160

Date: March 2001

PROPERTY OWNERS

State of Louisiana
Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism
Office of State Parks
P. O. Box 44426
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70804-4426
(225) 342-8111



Footprint of main house dated August 1957