

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

received APR 10 1985  
date entered MAY 9 1985

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic The Narrows Plantation House

and/or common Same

2. Location

street & number off Hwy. 717 on south shore of Lake Arthur N/A not for publication

city, town Lake Arthur X vicinity of

state LA code 22 parish: Vermilion code 113

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	N/A in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	N/A being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name See Continuation Sheet

street & number

city, town \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ state

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Vermilion Parish Courthouse

street & number State Street (no specific address) P. O. Box 790

city, town Abbeville state LA 70510

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title LA Historic Sites Survey has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1984  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records LA State Historic Preservation Office

city, town Baton Rouge state LA

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date N/A
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Narrows Plantation House was built in the 1830s and completely remodeled between 1910 and 1912. It is now a one-and-a-half story galleried house in the Arts and Crafts style. It occupies an open prairie setting in extreme western Vermilion Parish and has received only minor alterations since the 1910-12 remodeling.

The 1910-12 remodeling was so extensive that it is difficult to tell much about the original house. Presumably it was about the same shape and size as the present structure. It appears to have had a central hall with two rooms each side and a front gallery overlooking Lake Arthur. Heavy hewn and pit sawn timbers can still be seen under the floorboards, and some of the original bousillage walls survive.

But virtually the entire visual character of the present house was determined by the 1910-12 renovation. As it stands the Narrows is an enormous cottage with a gabled ended roof and galleries on three sides. The galleries are set under a continuous false gallery type extended roof, which lends additional complexity to the roofline. The attic rooms are lit by massive pent dormers which run nearly the length of the house. Exterior detailing is plain with simple square gallery posts and drop siding.

The Narrows' significance rests upon its Arts and Crafts interiors. The ground story consists of a large living room and a large dining room with a stair hall between. There is also a plantation office "shoehorned" under the principal landing of the staircase. In renovating the interiors, the designer made every effort to eliminate as much wall surface as possible and create an open floor plan. But this was not done in a haphazard way as it might have been under the Queen Anne Revival. The space was opened and articulated in a very axial and controlled way which reflects the influence of the Beaux Arts. One enters on axis with the staircase in the center of the main front. A secondary axial space unites the stair hall, the living room and the dining room through openwork piers and beams. This is linked with a third axis which runs through an alcove and the dining room. Spaces are further united by opening the walls above the wainscot and by the extensive use of balustrade screens. In addition, the eye is carried from room to room by the pattern of the double frame beam ceilings which extends throughout the ground story almost uninterrupted.

The staircase is complex and boldly three dimensional, employing four runs of steps and four landings merely to ascend one story. It also makes extensive use of plain square balusters and heavy paneled newel posts.

All interior woodwork is of varnished cypress. Most of the walls feature a high paneled wainscot which, together with the other woodwork, gives an effect which is both Japanese and vaguely medieval. The living room and dining room terminate in projecting bays with window seats. The house's single fireplace features a Craftsman-looking battered brick mantel. The second story has four bedrooms with more or less conventional turn-of-the-century details.

Since the 1910-12 renovation the following changes have been made in the house:

CONTINUED

# 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

**Specific dates**    1910-12                      **Builder/Architect** 1910-12 remodeling: John Macdonell  
**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**                      Criterion C                      (Builder)

The Narrows is of local significance in the area of architecture because its interiors constitute an important example of the early twentieth century Arts and Crafts influence within the context of southern Louisiana.

In a very general sense the thousands upon thousands of bungalows in the region reflect the influence of the Arts and Crafts movement. But these houses are merely pale and diluted examples of the taste. High style, convincing examples of the movement are very rare. Most bungalows in southern Louisiana have plain interiors with perhaps a brick mantel or a few oak cabinets. Many have Mission or Colonial Revival interiors. By contrast, the interiors at the Narrows feature paneled wainscotting, double framed ceilings, balustrade screens, and a very elaborately articulated staircase. These features set the Narrows interiors among the top few examples in the region. Moreover, in one sense the Narrows is superior to them all. None of the comparable examples known to the State Historic Preservation Office have the degree of openness and spatial complexity found at the Narrows. This single aspect places the Narrows in the vanguard of open planning as it was developing in the early twentieth century.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

Vermilion Parish Conveyance Records

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 9.861 acres

Quadrangle name Jennings, LA

Quadrangle scale 1:62500

### UTM References

A 

1	5	5	2	9	4	5	0	3	3	2	4	7	0	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

B 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

C 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

D 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

E 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

F 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

G 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

H 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

### Verbal boundary description and justification

Boundary lines follow the property lines of the lot on which the house stands. See enclosed property plat map.

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county code

state code county code

# 11. Form Prepared By

ASSISTED BY M. E. MACDONELL

name/title National Register Staff  
Division of Historic Preservation

organization State of Louisiana date January 1985

street & number P. O. Box 44247 telephone (504) 922-0358

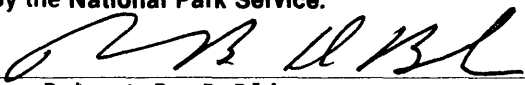
city or town Baton Rouge state LA 70804

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

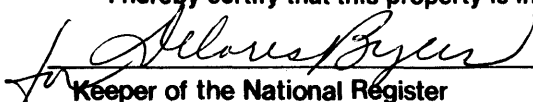
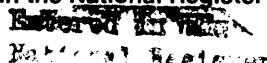
State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

Robert B. DeBlieux

title State Historic Preservation Officer date March 29, 1985

### For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

  date 5-9-85  
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

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Continuation sheet The Narrows Plantation House Item number 4

Page 1

Owners :

M. E. Macdonell (318) 233-2378 (office)  
P. O. Box 51707  
Lafayette, LA 70505

R. A. Macdonell (504) 344-3398 (office)  
2677 Nicholson Drive  
Baton Rouge, LA 70802

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Continuation sheet The Narrows Plantation House Item number 7

Page 1

7. Description (cont'd)

1. The old kitchen, which was connected to the west side of the house by a short gallery, has been reworked. Also, the gallery has been enclosed for a dining area.

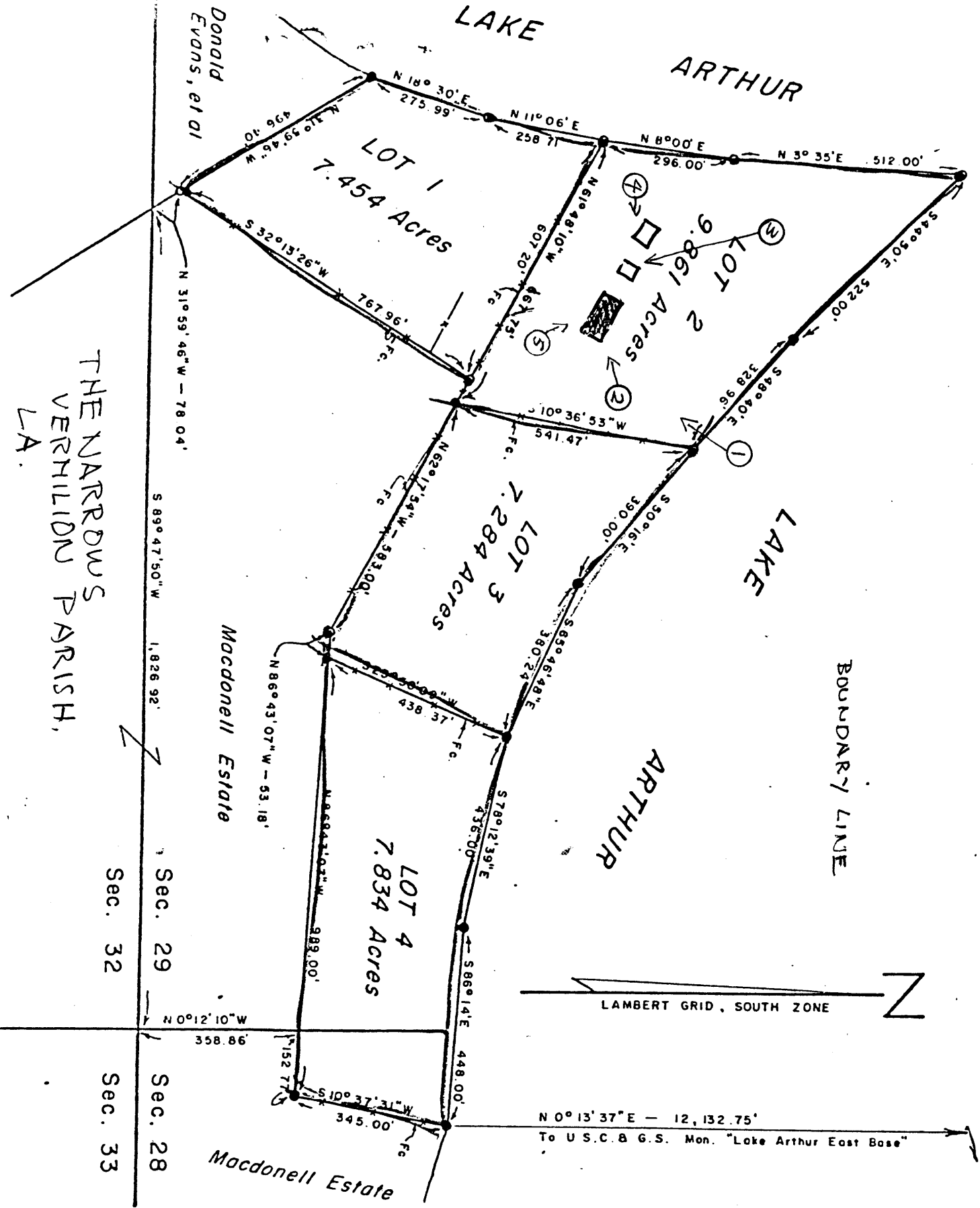
2. A second story sleeping porch (east side) has been enclosed for a bathroom.

These changes have not affected the first story interiors, which are the source of the house's significance.

Outbuildings

Near the house are two dependencies, one of which has a large carport addition. Both appear to be contemporaneous with the period of significance for the house, and hence are listed as contributing elements. There are also two relatively modern metal sided sheds. These are listed as noncontributing elements.

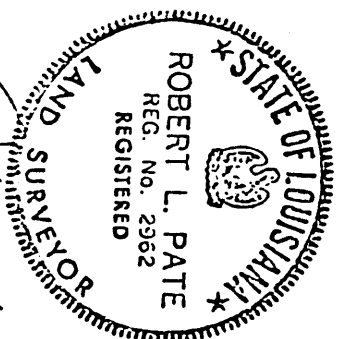
T-11-S, R-3-W



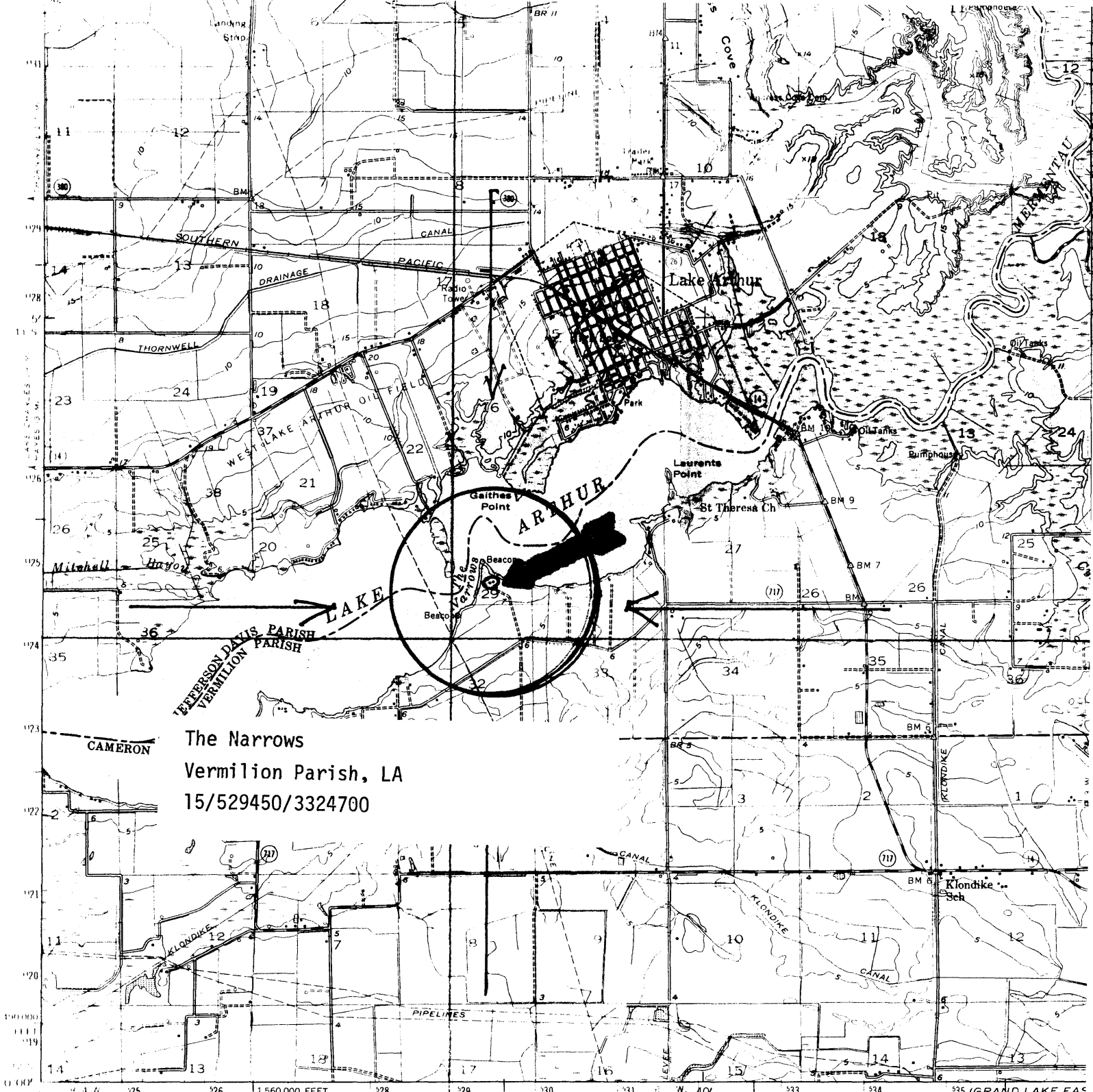
NOTE: Corner monuments were not set

PLAT OF SURVEY  
OF A PORTION OF THE PROPERTY OF THE  
MACDONELL ESTATE

LOCATED IN SECTIONS 28 AND 29  
T-11-S, R-3-W  
VERMILION PARISH, LOUISIANA  
SCALE: 1" = 300' JUNE 22, 1976

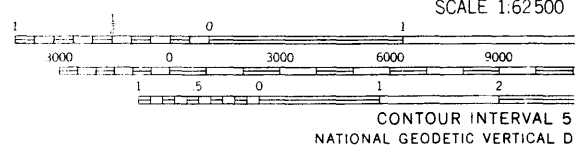
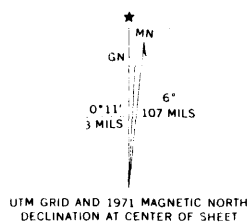


*Robert L. Pate*  
CAFFERY, PATE, & REAUX #6



**The Narrows**  
 Vermilion Parish, LA  
 15/529450/3324700

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey  
 Control by USGS, USC&GS, and Louisiana Geodetic Survey  
 Culture and drainage in part compiled from aerial photographs  
 taken 1951. Topography by planetable surveys 1954-1955  
 Polyconic projection, 1927 North American datum  
 10,000 foot grid based on Louisiana coordinate system,  
 south zone  
 1000 meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,  
 zone 15, shown in blue  
 Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown  
 Certain land lines unsurveyed in T. 11 S., R. 2 W.  
 This map was prepared in cooperation with  
 the Vermilion Parish Board of Supervisors from aerial photographs  
 taken in 1951. The map is published by the U.S. Geological Survey  
 and is available for sale to the public at a special price.



THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP  
 FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER, COLORADO  
 AND STATE OF LOUISIANA, DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS  
 A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS