

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
received <b>AUG 24</b> 1982
date entered

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

**1. Name**

historic N/A  
and/or common Ponchatoula Commercial Historic District

**2. Location**

street & number Roughly bounded by Fifth, Seventh, Hickory  
and Oak Streets, 5th, 7th, N/A not for publication

city, town Ponchatoula N/A vicinity of congressional district

state LA code 22 parish Tagnipahoa code 105  
~~COUNTY~~

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	Multiple use
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input 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	<u>N/A</u> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<u>N/A</u> 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 Multiple ownership (more than 50 property owners)

street & number

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

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Tangipahoa Parish Courthouse

street & number Mulberry and Bay Streets (no specific address) P. O. Box 667

city, town Amite state LA 70422

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

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

date 1982  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Louisiana State Historic Preservation Office

city, town Baton Rouge state LA

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>	
<input checked="" 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 <u>N/A</u>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

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

The Ponchatoula Commercial Historic District comprises an area of three streets of predominantly early twentieth century commercial and commerce-related buildings as well as the Illinois Central Railroad corridor. There is also a railroad spur which is surrounded largely by warehouses. There are 67 structures within the district. Most of the buildings are of brick, and the majority are one story high.

The only exception to this one story scale is the West Pine Street corridor from Railroad Avenue to 6th Street where two story buildings dominate the streetscape. Approximately one-third of the length of the sidewalk in this area is covered by galleries. At the ground level these galleries shade the shopfronts and provide covered access from building to building. On the upper level they provide covered balcony space for the second story apartments. In many small towns of the early twentieth century, two story commercial buildings had residential space on the upper level. In most cases these areas are now vacant, but in Ponchatoula most of these second story spaces are still kept up and lived in.

Although most of the wooden shopfront galleries are modern, they are not contemporary in character. They are innocuous and duplicate the basic shape, massing and bay pattern of the original galleries. They are the best modern replacements that could be expected and are far better than the usual fixed metal awnings suspended on wires. It should be noted that they are easily removable.

On the whole, the streetscapes are tightly packed with relatively few open lots facing the street. Virtually all of the district's buildings are set flush with the inner edge of the sidewalk. This, together with the closely packed character, yields a closed rather than open streetscape even in areas where single story buildings predominate.

The only exception to this is the railroad corridor which is the width of two normal streets. There the open area is so wide that the space is no longer dominated by the buildings. A double railroad line runs through the center of the corridor raised on a two foot embankment. The railroad line has a strong visual presence which is enhanced by the 1894 Illinois Central railroad station. It is appropriate that the railroad should have such a strong presence because it made the economic development possible which led to the construction of the district's buildings.

### Contributing Elements

Categories of contributing elements were selected according to the relationship between the various types of buildings in the district and the district's 3 major areas of significance - commerce, agriculture and architecture.

#### c.1890-c.1910 Commercial Buildings (11 buildings)

This early category of contributing commercial buildings was singled out for two reasons:

1. Much of the documentary evidence, including a Sanborn Map, focuses upon the end of the first decade of the twentieth century. Hence 1910 was a

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7. Description (cont'd)

convenient cut-off date.

2. In Ponchatoula there is a noticeable architectural distinction between the c.1890-c.1910 commercial buildings and those which were built later. On the whole, the earlier commercial buildings are two stories high, have more elaborate ornamentation, and retain something of a nineteenth century feeling. The later buildings are generally one story high and more severe in character.

Specific historic features generally associated with the c.1890-c.1910 commercial buildings:

1. two story height;
2. shallow arched fenestration (Bldg.#33);
3. the extensive use of brick dentils and corbel tables (Bldg.#38);
4. the use of parapets, several of which have pedimented or gabled tops;
5. open work, plate glass shopfronts with ornamental cast-iron columns (Bldg.#43A).

All of the district's early commercial buildings are clustered along West Pine Street between Railroad Avenue and Sixth Street. It is these buildings which give this stretch of Pine Street its pretentious two-story character (Streetscape Views 7 and 11).

Historically speaking, these early commercial buildings represent a modicum of economic prosperity which was dependent upon the local coniferous lumber industry and upon the early growth of truck farming (especially strawberries).

c.1911 - c.1931 Commercial Buildings (30 buildings)

With few exceptions the commercial buildings of this period are no more than one story. Evidently second story residential space was no longer sought in new commercial buildings after about 1910. It is quite possible that this reflected the increasingly urban character of the downtown area. (Prior to that time there were many residences downtown.) It is also possible that it reflected the growing affluence in the area due to the growth of the strawberry industry and the 1920's cypress boom. Undoubtedly more and more merchants could afford a separate house in a residential neighborhood.

On the whole, the later commercial buildings are more severe than the earlier ones. Molded brick cornices are used in place of corbel tables and most of the window openings have square heads(Bldg.#20). Shopfronts are also plainer without ornamental cast-iron columns(Bldg.#20). Many of the later commercial buildings have shaped parapets (Bldg. #58).

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7. Description (cont'd)

Historically speaking, the later commercial buildings represent simultaneous local booms in the strawberry and in the cypress cutting industry.

The period 1890 to 1931 was chosen as the district's historic period of commercial prosperity for the following reasons:

1. The strawberry industry began in the 1890's, grew substantially in the early 20th century, and boomed in the twenties. It peaked in 1931 and thereafter declined rapidly.

2. In the early 1920's local swamps were first tapped for their cypress trees. It became a prosperous local industry, but it was short-lived. The native cypress was soon exhausted, and the last tree was cut in 1931.

The district's later commercial buildings represent an impressive period of prosperity which was dependent mainly upon the strawberry boom and to a lesser extent prosperity generated by the cutting of local cypress trees.

c.1911 - c.1931 Warehouses (7 buildings)

These reflect the same period of prosperity as the later commercial buildings. Most are located near the Illinois Central Railroad spur. Most were built as strawberry packing houses and are closely linked to the strawberry boom. Architecturally they vary from parapeted brick structures which look like simplified versions of the later commercial buildings (Bldg.#17) to greatly enlarged tin sided frame sheds (Bldg.#7). The area of warehouses is the most densely packed in the district.

Integrity

The district's warehouses have suffered little changes because there has been no need to update their appearance. On the whole minor repairs have been all that were necessary.

The commercial buildings are a different matter, however. The issue of the replacement of the original galleries has already been addressed. In all but a few cases the upper part of each commercial building is intact; however, in most cases the shopfront has suffered at least some modification. In some cases this has meant the complete replacement of the shopfront level facade (Bldg.#44). In some cases, however, only the window glass has been replaced (Bldg.#42). Despite the many alterations which have occurred at the shopfront level, it should be noted that there is no other period central business district whose shopfronts are in any better general state of originality in the entire Florida Parishes area. Hence the district's architectural value to the area has not been significantly diminished by shopfront modification. In addition, it should be noted that the district's commercial buildings are still easily recognizable as such (Bldg.#15). Hence modification of the shopfront level has not diminished their power to convey the

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7. Description (cont'd)

commercial history of Ponchatoula.

Non-contributing Elements (19 buildings)

For purposes of this nomination, non-contributing elements are defined as structures which do not fit into the district's three categories of contributing elements (c.1890-c.1910 commercial buildings, c.1911-c.1931 commercial buildings, c.1911-c.1931 commerce related warehouses).

There are three categories of non-contributing elements:

(1) old commercial buildings which have been so modified that they no longer convey their original construction date and their historical associations (Bldg.#55 );

(2) post-1931 commercial buildings (Bldg.#57 );

(3) two structures which never experienced commercial use (one an old schoolhouse that was moved into Ponchatoula in 1976 and the other a residence tucked behind one of the commercial buildings).

All but a handful of the non-contributing elements are in the second category (post-1931 commercial buildings). Overall, about 25% of the buildings in the district fall into categories 1 and 2, which is about average for a small town central business district in Louisiana. It should be noted that these buildings are low in scale, are similar in design to the older buildings, and are scattered throughout the district. In no place do they dominate the streetscape.

Breakdown by Periods:

c.1890 - c.1910 contributing elements	11	16.4%
c.1911 - c.1931 contributing elements	37	55.2%
non-contributing elements	19	28.4%
	67 buildings	

NB: Although the last inventory number is 66, there are actually 67 buildings in the district. There is one instance in which 2 buildings have the same inventory number (#43) and "A" and "B" are used to distinguish them.

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PONCHATOULA COMMERCIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT INVENTORY

1. 109 N. E. Railroad Ave. 1929. Contributing element. One-story brick commercial building with shaped parapet.
2. 105 E. Hickory St. 1929. Contributing element. One-story stucco over brick commercial warehouse with stepped parapet.
3. 113 E. Hickory St. Strawberry Packing Plant. 1928. Contributing element. One-story brick commercial warehouse with pediment shaped parapet and loading platform.
4. 117 E. Hickory St. c.1930. Contributing element. One-story brick commercial building with shaped parapet. Doors and windows replaced c.1970.
5. 115 Rear N. Fifth St. c.1930. Contributing element. One-story brick commercial warehouse featuring a pitched roof with wooden gable.
6. 111 N. Fifth St. Berry Packing Shed. 1923. Contributing element. Large one-story tin-sided frame shed with pitched roof.
7. 111 N. Fifth St. Office, Ponchatoula Farm Bureau. 1923. Contributing element. One-story tin-sided frame warehouse/office with loading dock and storage area.
8. 176 E. Pine St. Formerly service station, now appliance warehouse. 1927. Contributing element. One-story brick and concrete block service station. Windows and garage bay doors replaced c.1970.
9. 170 E. Pine St. Ponchatoula Feed and Seed Store Inc. c.1930. Contributing element. Large two-story brick commercial building with fixed awning and two-story attached tin-sided frame warehouse.
10. 130-32 E. Pine St. c.1930. Contributing element. One-story brick commercial building with pediment shaped parapet and cement trim. Colored glass facade and modern fixed awning added c.1950.
11. 126 E. Pine St. c.1940. Non-contributing element. Sympathetic one-story brick commercial building with false front, recessed store front entry, transoms, and fixed awning.
12. 114 E. Pine St. c.1950. Non-contributing element. One-story concrete block and brick commercial building with recessed storefront entry and fixed awning.
13. 112 E. Pine St. 1952. Non-contributing element. One-story wooden sided concrete block commercial building with overhanging shingled roof. Present appearance dates from c.1970.

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14. 100 E. Pine St. Paul's Cafe, with offices upstairs, formerly drug store. 1927. Contributing element. Two-story brick commercial building with molded cornice and corner entry. Lower windows and front door replaced and new gallery constructed c.1970.
15. 110 N. E. Railroad Ave. c.1930. Contributing element. Two-story brick commercial building with residence upstairs. Pediment shaped parapet. Lower facade altered c.1960. Windows and door replaced and fixed awning added.
16. 112 N. E. Railroad Ave. c.1940. Non-contributing element. One-story brick commercial building with pediment shaped parapet.
17. 114 N. E. Railroad Ave. c.1920. Contributing element. One-story brick commercial warehouse with shallow arched fenestration, gabled parapet, and loading platform.
18. Railroad Right-of-Way between E. Pine St. and E. Hickory St. Formerly railroad depot and freight depot, now Ponchatoula Country Market. Built 1894, remodeled in 1920's. Contributing element. One-story frame and stucco over brick depot with gabled roof.
19. Railroad Right-of-Way between E. Pine St. and E. Hickory St. Formerly Ponchatoula Police Station, now Ponchatoula Chamber of Commerce Office. 1954. Non-contributing element. Small one-story brick office with flat roof.
20. 195 E. Pine St. Law Office. c.1925. Contributing element. One-story brick commercial building with gable shaped parapet, decorative brick courses, and transoms above fixed awning. Shopfronts original.
21. 187 E. Pine St. 1960. Non-contributing element. Small one-story brick commercial building.
22. 179 E. Pine St. c.1920. Contributing element. Two-story brick and stucco commercial building with residence upstairs. Decorative brick courses. Shopfront windows replaced c.1960.
23. 165 E. Pine St. c.1920. Contributing element. One-story brick and stucco commercial building with shaped parapet, recessed storefront entry, and sidewalk gallery. (Present sidewalk gallery is c.1960 replacement of the original one.)
24. 159 E. Pine St. c.1920. Contributing element. One-story brick commercial building with pediment shaped parapet and fixed awning. Shopfront windows and door replaced c.1955.
25. 157 E. Pine St. c.1930. Contributing element. One-story brick commercial building with shaped parapet, transoms above fixed awning, and recessed storefront entry. Entire lower shopfront replaced c.1960.

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26. 135 E. Pine St. c.1920. Contributing element. Two-story brick commercial building with residence upstairs. Decorative brick courses, transoms above fixed awning, one recessed storefront entry, and one entry at sidewalk. Shop-fronts are original. Fixed awning added c.1950.
27. 101 E. Pine St. Formerly Collingswood School. Built in 1876, now museum, moved to this site 1976. Non-contributing element. One-story frame school building with front gable and front porch.  
NB: This structure is classified as non-contributing for two reasons:  
(1) It was moved to its present location in 1976 and hence is not historically related to the district.  
(2) It has never known commercial use.
28. 195 S. W. Railroad Ave. c.1930. Contributing element. One-story brick service station with brick cornice, shallow arch fenestration, and frame canopy on brick piers.
29. 185 S. W. Railroad Ave. c.1930. Contributing element. One-story tin-sided frame commercial garage with shaped parapet. Sash windows replaced c.1975.
30. 165 S. W. Railroad Ave. Built c.1930 but extensively altered c.1970. As a result, listed as a non-contributing element. One-story brick commercial building with altered front facade.
31. 145 S. W. Railroad Ave. Built c.1900 but extensively altered c.1950. As a result, listed as a non-contributing element. One-story concrete block facade with shaped parapet added to two-story frame residence in rear.
32. 135 S. W. Railroad Ave. Built 1903 but extensively altered c.1970. Non-contributing element. Plain one-story brick and stucco commercial building with fixed awning and modern stucco facade.
33. 101 W. Pine St. 1903. Contributing element. Large two-story brick commercial building with residences upstairs. Recessed storefront entry with transoms, and balcony/gallery. Shaped parapet with brick trim, brick dentils and coursing, and shallow arched fenestration on second floor. Two windows added on side c.1960. Present wooden gallery replaced original, which was of similar design.
34. 119 Rear W. Pine St. c.1895. Non-contributing element (residence which never saw commercial use). Small one-story brick residence with slate gabled roof.
35. 105 W. Pine St. c.1940. Non-contributing element. Small one-story brick commercial building with colored glass facade and corner entry.
36. 121 W. Pine St. c.1940. Non-contributing element. One-story brick commercial building.

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37. 139 W. Pine St. c.1930. Contributing element. One-story brick commercial building with pediment shaped parapet and cement trim, recessed storefront entry, and fixed awning. Shopfront windows and sign replaced c.1970.
38. 145 W. Pine St. c.1905. Contributing element. Two-story brick commercial building with residence upstairs. Shaped parapet with double corbel table. Upper residential windows feature hood molds. Lower shopfront windows replaced and cast-iron columns covered c.1970. Original columns still visible at transom level.
39. 153 W. Pine St. c.1920. Contributing element. Two-story stucco over brick commercial building with residence upstairs. Dentilated cornice panel and label molds. Present frame gallery and balcony duplicates design of original.
40. 157 W. Pine St. c.1920. Contributing element. Two-story brick commercial building with residence upstairs. Dentilated cornice panel. Present frame gallery and balcony duplicates design of original.
41. 165 W. Pine St. c.1930. Contributing element. One-story stucco over brick commercial building with stepped parapet and cornice trim. Original shopfront completely replaced, but shape and style of overall building remain.
42. 169 W. Pine St. c.1920. Contributing element. One-story brick commercial building with stepped parapet and cornice trim, recessed storefront entry, and transoms above fixed awning. Fixed awning, present sign, and shopfront fenestration date from c.1950.
- A&B 43. 177 W. Pine St. c.1908. Contributing element. Two-story double brick commercial building with residence upstairs. Building on left has a recessed storefront entry with transoms and elaborate cast-iron ornamentation on pilasters, pedimented second story doorway, ornamented label molds, and cornice trim. Building on right has shallow arch fenestration. Present frame gallery and balcony duplicates design of original.
44. 195 W. Pine St. c.1908. Contributing element. Two-story brick commercial building with residence upstairs. Brick dentils on upper story. Lower front facade modernized c.1970 with marbelized facing. Shopfront windows replaced as is the door and the facing material. Present frame gallery and balcony duplicate design of original.
45. 145 and 155 S. Sixth St. c.1930. Contributing element. One-story brick commercial building with shaped parapet, cement cornice trim, and fixed awning. Windows replaced c.1950. One-story brick side extension apparently more recent.
46. 135 S. Sixth St. 1923. Contributing element. One-story concrete block commercial building. Signs removable.
47. 201 W. Pine St. 1921. Contributing element. Large one-story brick commercial building with shopfront and transoms. Modern false parapet and fixed awning added c.1960, but both are easily removable. Below fixed awning original facade still visible. Old facades on side and rear completely exposed.

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48. 245 W. Pine St. 1965. Non-contributing element. Large one-story modern plate glass and concrete block commercial building.
49. 265 W. Pine St. 1920. Contributing element. One-story rusticated concrete block commercial building with shaped parapet. Modern awning added c.1965.
50. 275 W. Pine St. 1925. Contributing element. Two-story stucco over masonry commercial building with residence upstairs. Front shutters and fixed awning added c.1960.
51. 240 W. Pine St. 1931. Contributing element. One-story brick commercial building with shaped parapets. Front facade resurfaced c.1960. Retains original shape and original fixed awning. Sign added and shopfront windows replaced c.1965.
52. 232 and 230 W. Pine St. c.1960. Non-contributing element. Sympathetic one-story brick commercial building with double shopfront. #230 has recessed storefront entry and shaped parapet. #232 is unornamented.
53. 220 W. Pine St. 1956. Non-contributing element. One-story brick commercial building with recessed storefront entry and modern gallery.
54. 202 W. Pine St. c.1930. Contributing element. One-story masonry and stucco service station with Mission details. Garage bays enclosed c.1970.
55. 160 W. Pine St. Non-contributing element. Built c.1930, but extensively remodeled c.1970. One-story brick commercial building with shaped parapet. Old front completely obliterated with Colonial style gallery and board and batten siding.
56. 156 W. Pine St. c.1920. Contributing element. One-story brick commercial building with shaped parapet, dentilated cornice panel, and transoms (partially covered) over fixed awning.
57. 152 W. Pine St. 1961. Non-contributing element. Plain one-story brick commercial building with recessed entry and fixed awning.
58. 150 W. Pine St. c.1920. Contributing element. Matches building #56, except entry was modernized c.1965.
59. 140 W. Pine St. c.1910. Contributing element. Two-story brick commercial building with residence upstairs. Recessed storefront entry and ornamental cast-iron columns. Brick dentils and corbel tables on cornice, label molds, and decorative brickwork. Second floor balcony removed and windows boarded c.1965. Shopfront doors replaced c.1970.
60. 138 W. Pine St. c.1910. Contributing element. Matches bldg. #59, but without label molds and board and batten facing added to lower facade c.1970. Cast-iron columns still visible. Present frame gallery and balcony duplicates design of original.

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61. 128 W. Pine St. c.1910. Contributing element. Two-story brick commercial building with residence upstairs. Gabled parapet, corbel table, ornamental cast-iron columns, and replaced gallery/balcony. Lower facade modernized c.1970's, but original cast-iron columns still visible.
62. 124 W. Pine St. c.1910. Contributing element. Matches bldg. #61, but with shallow arched fenestration and original recessed shopfront entry. Modern gallery added c.1970's.
63. 100 W. Pine St. 1904. Contributing element. Large two-story brick commercial building with residence upstairs. Original corner shopfront entry with ornamental cast-iron columns. Elaborate arched fenestration with transoms and corbel table on second floor. Present frame gallery and balcony duplicates design of original. Some first floor alteration (for example, transoms covered and resurfacing of part of one side).
64. 105 N. W. Railroad Ave. 1965. Non-contributing element. Small one-story concrete block commercial building with false front.
65. 145 N. W. Railroad Ave. c.1920. Contributing element. One-story brick commercial building with decorative brickwork and transoms (covered by sign) over fixed awning (which was added c.1950).
- \*\*66. 280 W. Pine St, Himel Auto Parts, 1929. Contributing element, One-story tapestry brick commercial building with three transomed shopfronts and a molded brick cornice.

\*\*Although the last inventory number is 66, there are actually 67 buildings in the district. There is one instance in which 2 buildings have the same inventory number (#43) and "A" and "B" are used to distinguish them.

# 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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" 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** c.1890-c.1931 **Builder/Architect** N/A

**Statement of Significance (In one paragraph)** Criteria A and C

The Ponchatoula Commercial Historic District is locally significant in the areas of architecture, commerce, and agriculture in the following respects:

- (1) The Pine Street corridor between Railroad Avenue and Sixth Street is, within the context of the Florida Parishes, a superior example of a small town, turn-of-the-century commercial zone. In fact, it is one of the two finest examples in the Florida Parishes.\* (The other is the Hammond Historic District, which is already on the National Register.)
- (2) The district is significant within the context of Tangipahoa Parish in the areas of commerce and agriculture because its contributing elements reflect Ponchatoula's role as a center of strawberry production, an industry of crucial importance in the agricultural and commercial history of the parish. The buildings in question contributed to and were a reflection of the prosperity generated by "King Strawberry."

### Background for Architectural Significance

In order to establish the Pine Street corridor between Railroad Avenue and Sixth Street as an architectural type worthy of comparative study, it is important to first discuss the background of this kind of commercial development in Louisiana. In many rural Louisiana communities, one and two story, masonry, false front commercial buildings began to replace older frame commercial building in about 1890. Single story examples had open, broad, mainly glass shopfronts with some ornamental brickwork above in the parapet. Two story examples had this treatment plus an intervening second story with several sash mounted plate glass windows and additional ornamental brickwork. Today these structures are seen as remote, builder vernacular descendants of pretentious Victorian false front commercial buildings. At the time they were fashionable, being more like urban commercial buildings, and, more importantly, they were fireproof. They were constructed throughout the first few decades of the twentieth century and occurred so often in so many towns that today they are rightly regarded as a distinct phase in Louisiana commercial architecture.

### Architectural Significance of Pine Street Corridor

Against this background, the Pine Street corridor between Railroad Avenue and Sixth Street is a superior example of a turn-of-the-century commercial zone within

CONTINUED

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property @ 25 acres

Quadrangle name Ponchatoula, LA

Quadrangle scale 1:62500

UMT References

A 

1	15	7	4	5	8	2	5	3	3	7	0	2	6	0
Zone	Easting				Northing									

B 

1	15	7	4	5	9	1	5	10	3	3	6	19	9	10	10
Zone	Easting				Northing										

C 

1	15	7	4	5	4	2	5	3	3	6	19	7	15	10
Zone	Easting				Northing									

D 

1	15	7	4	5	3	1	2	5	3	3	7	10	1	10	10
Zone	Easting				Northing										

E 

Zone	Easting				Northing										

F 

Zone	Easting				Northing										

G 

Zone	Easting				Northing										

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Zone	Easting				Northing										

Verbal boundary description and justification

See map and continuation sheet.

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

name/title	National Register Staff Division of Historic Preservation	SEE CONTINUATION SHEET
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organization	State of Louisiana	date	April 1982
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street & number	P. O. Box 44247	telephone	(504) 342-6682
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city or town	Baton Rouge	state	LA 70804
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# 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*  
Robert B. DeBlieux

title State Historic Preservation Officer    date August 18, 1982

For NPS use only	
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register	
<i>Thomas McDaniel</i>	date 10/5/82
Keeper of the National Register	
Attest: <i>Patrick Andrus</i>	date 9/30/82
Chief of Registration	

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8. Significance (Continued)

the context of the Florida Parishes. This can be seen in the following elements:

- (1) This one block strip, which consists of a total of 21 structures, is dominated by its 10 largest structures, all of which are first-rate examples of c.1890-c.1910 commercial buildings.
- (2) These 10 buildings dominate because of their size and the fact that they are all two stories high, while all but two of the later buildings within the block are only one story.
- (3) As a group, these ten buildings are first-rate examples of their type because:
  - (a) All have fully developed parapets.
  - (b) Five have shaped parapets.
  - (c) Nine have corbel tables or brick cornices.
  - (d) Nine have ornamental window tops.
  - (e) Six have ornamental brickwork panels.
  - (f) Seven have ornamental cast-iron columns still visible.
- (4) The grand effect which they create is supported by two c.1920 two-story commercial buildings.

There are approximately 30 major towns in the Florida Parishes, most of which have some 1920's commercial buildings and a few of which have a scattering of earlier, more richly ornamented commercial buildings. Only one other commercial zone can boast the rich and impressive turn-of-the-century commercial concentration and character found along the Pine Street corridor between Railroad Avenue and Sixth Street. (The other, as mentioned previously, is the Hammond Historic District, which is already listed on the National Register.)

\*The context for evaluation of architectural significance is an eight parish (county) area known as the Florida Parishes. This region, which lies east of the Mississippi and north of Lakes Maurepas and Pontchartrain, was originally West Florida. It covers an area of 5,117 square miles, making it slightly smaller than Connecticut and Rhode Island combined.

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8. Significance (Continued)

Importance of the Strawberry Industry to Tangipahoa Parish

The rise of the strawberry industry is of outstanding importance in the agricultural and commercial history of Tangipahoa Parish. In the 1880's Tangipahoa Parish was considered one of the state's most economically depressed parishes. Strawberries had been grown there since before the Civil War, but at that time strawberry production was not significant and cotton production dominated the parish as it did most of the state. (The rest of the state was dominated by sugar production.) It should be noted that in the late nineteenth century "King Cotton" was plagued by perennial low prices.

It was against this background of a depressed state and a particularly depressed parish that strawberry production began to flourish. Its development was more or less limited to Tangipahoa Parish. It began to become an important economic factor in about 1900, and by 1910 it had displaced cotton as the "money crop" of the parish. For example, in 1909 Tangipahoa Parish's cotton crop was valued at only \$60,000, while the strawberry crop was valued at over \$1.1 million. In the late teens and early '20's, strawberry production precipitated an economic boom in the parish. During this period Tangipahoa Parish strawberries supplied the entire mid-western market. Despite the fact that production was largely limited to one parish, Tangipahoa Parish's strawberries enabled Louisiana to become the nation's leading strawberry producing state for most of the 1920's.

Role of Ponchatoula in the Strawberry Industry

Strawberries began to be grown in Ponchatoula for commercial purposes in about 1890. By 1901 there were enough growers to warrant the organization of a strawberry association called the Ponchatoula Farmers Association. Its purpose was to market the strawberries on a cooperative basis. It held its first auction in 1906. In 1923 the present Ponchatoula Farmers Bureau Association was established.

Ponchatoula was a center of strawberry production for the parish apparently from the beginning and rose during the later years of the strawberry boom period to dominate the market. From 1924 to the end of the period (c.1931), the Ponchatoula Farmers Association was the largest producer of strawberries in the parish.

It should be noted that the Ponchatoula central business district is linked to the strawberry boom by more than just general commercial associations. Unlike many other "money crops," strawberry production owed its very existence to a nearby marketing and shipping center (like Ponchatoula). It was a highly perishable crop which needed to be marketed, sold, and shipped quickly. All of this took place in the commercial area of Ponchatoula. For example, the old berry packing sheds and warehouses in the district are direct visual links with the town's history as a strawberry marketing center. The railroad station, which was at the center of the

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8. Significance (Continued)

transportation network which delivered the berries to the Midwest, is another example. In short, the present Ponchatoula commercial district was a direct and integral part of the Tangipahoa Parish strawberry industry.

In addition to these direct connections, its buildings in a more general sense reflect the prosperity generated by the strawberry industry. In short, the old commercial sector in Ponchatoula was to a large extent dependent upon this prosperity for its very existence.

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Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service****National Register of Historic Places  
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   Historic District

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## 10. Boundary Justification/Explanation

The district boundary lines were tightly drawn to encompass but not exceed the significant cultural resource--the old commercial sector of Ponchatoula. These buildings form a distinct entity which conveys a definite sense of time, place, and historical development. They contribute to the district's significance as described in Item 8.

The break between the nominated district and adjacent areas is so stark that it is obvious to even the most casual observer. The old central business district is surrounded by modern commercial development and fairly nondescript c.1900-c.1930 residential neighborhoods. No commercial building adjacent to the district which could be considered a contributing element has been left out. If there are any other historic commercial buildings in Ponchatoula, they are not near the district. It is definitely known that there is no other grouping of historic commercial buildings in the town.

The boundary lines are slightly irregular in places and cut in closely behind and to the sides of buildings because every effort was made to exclude peripheral non-contributing elements (post-c.1931 commercial buildings, c.1890-c.1931 commercial buildings which have been significantly modified, and residences). In some cases, these non-contributing elements were located behind contributing elements; hence the boundary line cuts in to take them out (for example, behind buildings 55 & 56). In one instance, the boundary line is a party wall which separates a contributing element (#65) from a c.1950 non-contributing element.

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City of Ponchatoula

Mayor - Collins Bonicard

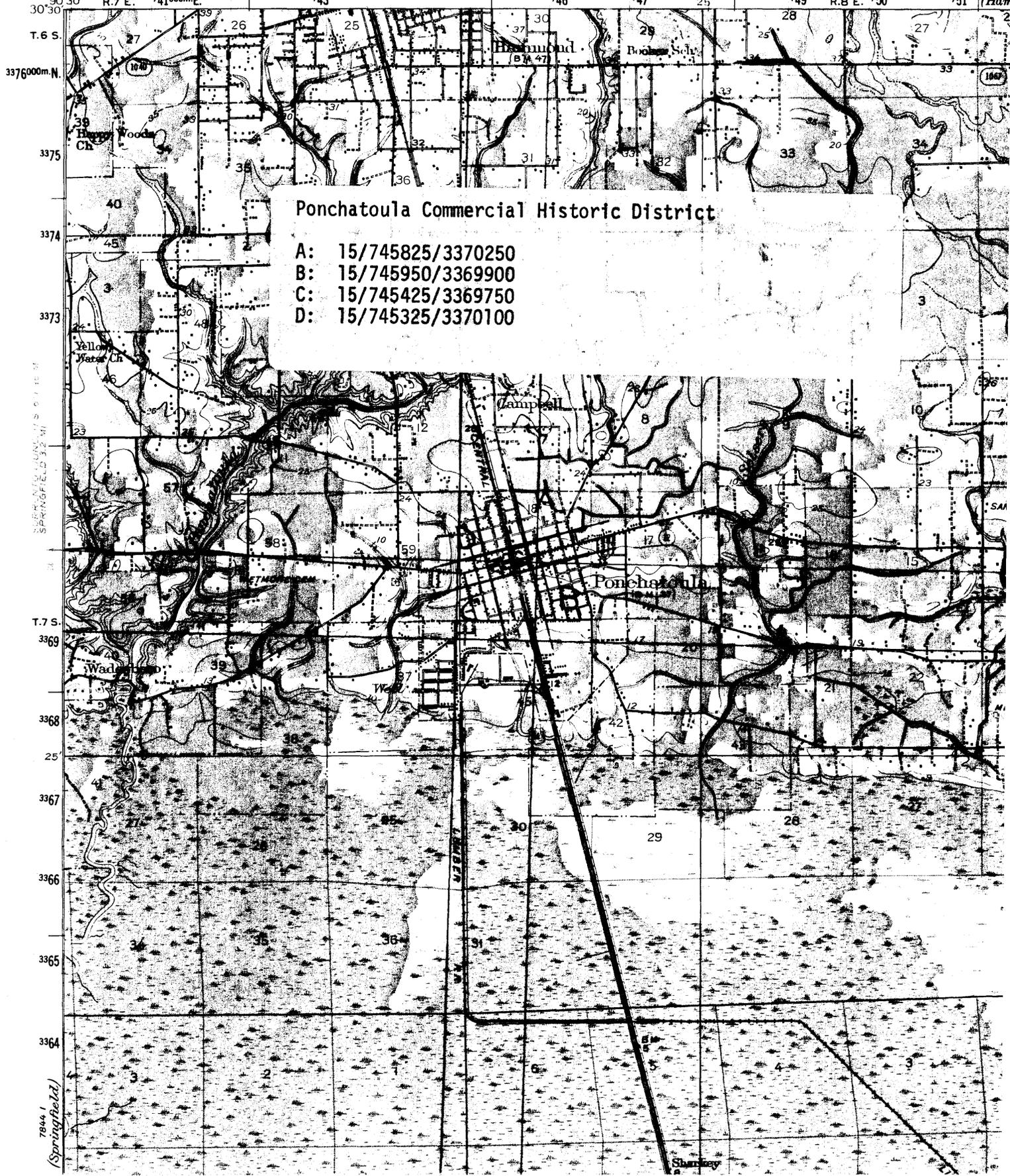
Ponchatoula Historic District Committee:

Robert Jackson, Chairman  
Ernie Drake  
Pat Richardson  
Roy McKenzie  
Tom Waterman  
Martha Ebrecht  
John Dardes

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
CORPS OF ENGINEERS

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(Ames)



**Ponchatoula Commercial Historic District**

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- B: 15/745950/3369900
- C: 15/745425/3369750
- D: 15/745325/3370100

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