

PH0098261

(NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)

Form 10-300 (July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Louisiana	
COUNTY: Natchitoches	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	JUN 13 1972



1. NAME

COMMON: **Melrose Plantation**

AND/OR HISTORIC: **Yucca**

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER: **La. Route 119**

CITY OR TOWN: **Melrose**

STATE: **Louisiana** CODE: **22** COUNTY: **Natchitoches** CODE: **069**

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) Tourist Attraction

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME: **Association of Natchitoches Women for the Preservation of Historic Natchitoches**

STREET AND NUMBER: **Box 2654**

CITY OR TOWN: **Natchitoches** STATE: **Louisiana** CODE: **22**

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: **Natchitoches Parish Courthouse**

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: **Natchitoches** STATE: **Louisiana** CODE: **22**

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY: **Historic American Buildings Survey LA-69**

DATE OF SURVEY: **1937** Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: **Library of Congress**

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: **Washington** STATE: **District of Columbia** CODE:

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: COUNTY: ENTRY NUMBER: DATE: FOR NPS USE ONLY

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

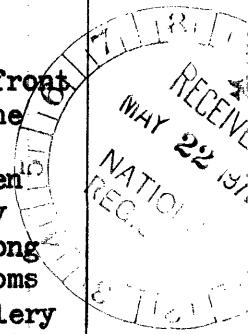
The buildings of Melrose Plantation include the Big House, the African House behind it, the Yucca House, the Ghana House, the Writers Cabin, the Weaving House, the Bindery and the Barn. All these buildings with the exception of the Writers Cabin, the Weaving House and the Bindery are on their original sites. The three exceptions were moved to Melrose by Mrs. Cammie Garrett Henry, the last private owner. They are old buildings from the vicinity but not original to this plantation. The various buildings are described as follows:

1. The Big House is a raised basement type plantation in the Louisiana French Colonial style with early Greek Revival details. The walls of the basement story are of brick masonry, painted. The exterior walls of the upper story are covered with weatherboards, and are probably of colombage construction with either bricks or mud and moss (bouzillage) between the posts. A gallery extends across the entire front and rear of the house with square brick piers on the lower story, and chamfered wood columns on the upper. The hipped roof, covered with wood shingles, extends over the galleries. Stairways on the galleries provide access to the upper floor. The attic is lighted by well proportioned dormer windows, and is unfinished but accessible by a small rear ladder-like stair. The rooms on the upper story are plastered with wood ceilings. The mantels on both stories are of wood with rather unusual panelled over-mantels. There is a single chimney. The house is only one room in depth with two large rooms on each floor and a small room or cabinet at each end of the rear gallery. French doors open from each room to the front and rear galleries. At either end of the front gallery a two story pyramidal roofed, hexagonal pavillion was added during the Henry ownership period. A two story rear kitchen wing was also added during this period and spoils the effect of the rear facade.

2. The African House is a unique, nearly square structure, directly in the rear of the Big House and may have been intended as a stable on the ground floor and quarters or storage above. The ground floor walls are of heavy horizontal, square timbers, dove-tailed at the corners, the piece sur piece type of construction used by the earliest French settlers in Louisiana. The great hipped, shingled roof almost conceals the upper story and extends some ten feet beyond the exterior walls on all four sides, supported by round log struts extending out from above the brick wall to the plate that supports the rafters. The absence of supporting columns gives the building a curious umbrella-like appearance that is believed to be of African derivation.

3. The Yucca House, said to be the original plantation house or former slave hospital is a long, rectangular structure with galleries front and rear, the floor level being only a foot or so above the ground. The walls are of colombage construction, a heavy frame of squared timbers, morticed and tenoned and pegged to sills and plates, the spaces between the timbers filled with mud and moss or animal hair. The galleries may have originally extended also across the ends of the house, but have long been enclosed so that the the floor plan now consists of two large rooms each with its separate fireplace and brick chimney, and the end or gallery rooms. The ceilings all have exposed wood beams. Doors and windows had

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



3. SIGNIFICANCE

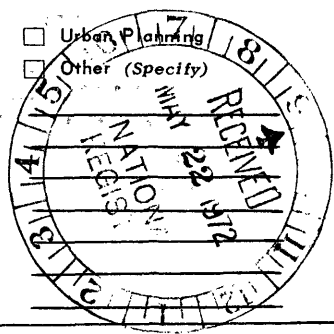
PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian	<input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 18th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century
<input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century	

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal	<input type="checkbox"/> Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Political
<input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> Engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy
<input type="checkbox"/> Historic	<input type="checkbox"/> Industry	<input type="checkbox"/> Science
<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> Invention	<input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Art	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Literature	<input type="checkbox"/> Theater
<input type="checkbox"/> Commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> Communications	<input type="checkbox"/> Music	
<input type="checkbox"/> Conservation		



STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Melrose Plantation is of great significance both architecturally and historically. Architecturally its buildings illustrate the changes and variations in local building form and techniques from the earliest French Colonial types to the 1830's period of the Big House, and the late 19th and early 20th century additions. If further research can verify that the design of the African and Ghana houses is indeed African in origin, their significance would be even greater.

The historic significance of Melrose is perhaps more important than its undeniably great architectural worth. Its significance lies in many fields, ethnic, artistic and literary. The ever-increasing interest in negro history in the United States adds to the importance of Melrose as a plantation established and developed by free people of color through several generations. This fact lends credence to the assumption that the design of the African House and Ghana House at Melrose are actually African. The Big House is known to have been built in 1833 by Louis Metoyer, Jr., a free man of color.

Melrose is also important as the house of Mrs. Cammie Garrett Henry whose patronage of the arts and preservation of local artifacts was the beginning of a movement to preserve the heritage of Natchitoches Parish. Her enthusiasm for the state's history and folkways inspired others to seek out, to preserve and to protect reminders of the past. Her house was a mecca for authors, artists, architects, horticulturists and those interested in the various handcrafts that she revived.

Among writers who resided at Melrose was Lyle Saxon who lived in Yucca House and worked on some of his books there, making use of Mrs. Henry's vast collection of scrapbooks. The French journalist, Francois Mignon lived at Melrose until 1970 and produced a series of decorative plates illustrating the historic Natchitoches area, tape recordings of a visit to Melrose and some writings. The noted negro primitive artist Clementine Hunter, painted a panorama of Louisiana plantation life on the walls of the upper room of the African House.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

Montgomery 1.1.65301

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Association of Natchitoches Women for the Preservation of Historic Natchitoches, Natchitoches, Oldest Settlement in the Louisiana Purchase, Natchitoches Times, 1958, p.p. 48-52.

Saxon, Lyle, The Friends of Joe Gilmore and Some Friends of Lyle Saxon, by Edward Dreyer, Hastings House, 1948, p.p. 19-26; 142-145.

Callahan, J.J., The History of St. Augustine's Parish, Isle Brevelle, Natchez, 1954, p.p. 15-21

Gallien, Charles Stanley, Melrose, A Southern Cultural and Literary Center M.A. 1966 Social Science

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		92° 57' 57"	35° 35' 58"	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

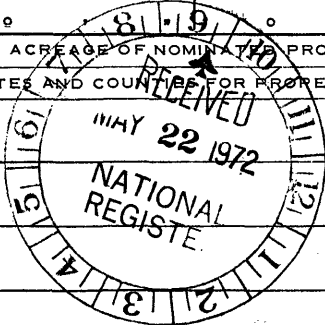
Montgomery 1.1.65301

No am CD incorrect - should be 31°

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **5.77 Acres**

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
Samuel Wilson, Jr., Architect

ORGANIZATION **Association of Natchitoches Women for the Preservation of Historic Natchitoches** DATE **April 13, 1972**

STREET AND NUMBER:
Box 2654

CITY OR TOWN: **Natchitoches** STATE: **Louisiana** CODE: **22**

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name George W. Pease
Chairman
Louisiana Historical Preservation and Cultural Commission

Title _____
Date May 16, 1972

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

Robert M. Utley
Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date 6/13/72

ATTEST: William Stewart
Keeper of The National Register

Date _____

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

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7. DESCRIPTION (Continuation Sheet)

(Number all entries)

batten shutters, with interesting wood barred grilles at the windows. The present gallery columns are peeled cypress logs and are probably not original.

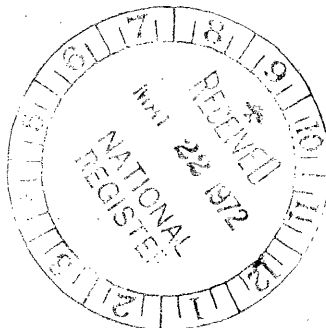
4. Ghana House is a one story, one room structure of heavy squared logs laid horizontally and dove-tailed at the corners like the upper story of the African house. The double pitched, hipped roof with wide overhanging eaves, does not appear to be original nor does the stone chimney. The present foundation consists only of four stones supporting the sills, one at each corner of the building. This small building is of interest because of its wall construction.

5. The Writers Cabin. This small cabin of round log construction, stone chimney and low pitched roof is one of the small buildings moved to Melrose Plantation by Mrs. Henry. It is interesting as illustrating a different construction technique.

6. The Weaving House is a small rectangular, gable ended structure with an outside stone chimney at one end. It is another of the buildings collected by Mrs. Henry and re-erected here.

7. The Bindery is another small rectangular, gable ended house with a gallery front and rear. The roof, extending out over these galleries provides a large attic space lighted by windows in the gable and a dormer. The wall construction is of squared logs, dove-tailed at the corners. A Greek Revival entrance door is evidently from some unrelated structure.

8. The Barn is a rectangular frame structure with a hipped roof which extends over the front and rear where it is supported on peeled log columns. The roof is now covered with corrugated sheet iron but was probably originally wood shingles. A small storage building of somewhat similar frame construction completes the complex of Melrose buildings.



UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
WASHINGTON, D.C.

The National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings

Yucca Plantation, Melrose, Louisiana

Yucca Plantation (now known as Melrose Plantation) was established by a former slave, Madame Marie Therese Coin-Coin Metoyer, who later became a slaveowner herself. As the mistress of Yucca Plantation, she was a property owner and a wealthy businesswoman at a time when most black women were slaves and most white women had no identity apart from their husbands. The African design of the earliest buildings on the plantation reflect Madame Metoyer's independence in refusing to adopt the European models of architecture around her. An important chapter might be added to American art history if the many surviving paintings of members of the Metoyer family, which may be the earliest and finest collection of portraits of Afro-American subjects in the same family, could be collected, copied, and studied. The Metoyers were very wealthy. (In 1840 the head of the family alone had property assessed at a total value of \$100,360.) Melrose Plantation reflects a unique aspect of American Slavery, i.e. Negro slaveholders.

Buildings of African style and design which are perhaps the only extant structures of this kind in the Nation remain. The Plantation Complex consists of: (1) The African House--a unique nearly square structure intended as a stable. The great hipped roof concealing the upper story overhangs the lower story unsupported by columns giving the building a curious umbrella-like appearance believed to be of African derivation. (2) Yucca House--believed to be the original plantation house, is a long rectangular structure with galleries front and rear, the floor level being only a foot above ground. (3) The Big House--a raised basement type plantation in the Louisiana French Colonial style with early Greek Revival details. (4) Ghana House--a one-story, one-room structure of heavy squared logs laid horizontally and dove-tailed at the corners like the upper story of the African House. (5) The Barn--a rectangular frame structure with a hipped roof extending over the front and rear where it is supported on peeled log columns. Access to the public is restricted.

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NSHSB: 6/4/74
M M G