

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICENATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

JUN 19 1979

AUG 20 1979

DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

The Oaks

AND/OR COMMON

The Oaks

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

U. S. Hwy. 61

— NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Hardwood

— VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
6th - Gillis Long

STATE

Louisiana

CODE

22

COUNTY

West Feliciana

CODE

125

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

— DISTRICT

☒ BUILDING(S)

— STRUCTURE

— SITE

— OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

— PUBLIC

☒ PRIVATE

— BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

— IN PROCESS

— BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

☒ OCCUPIED

— UNOCCUPIED

— WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

☒ YES: RESTRICTED

— YES: UNRESTRICTED

— NO

PRESENT USE

☒ AGRICULTURE

— COMMERCIAL

— EDUCATIONAL

— ENTERTAINMENT

— GOVERNMENT

— INDUSTRIAL

— MILITARY

— MUSEUM

— PARK

☒ PRIVATE RESIDENCE

— RELIGIOUS

— SCIENTIFIC

— TRANSPORTATION

— OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Mr. and Mrs. Edward Irwin Daniel III

STREET & NUMBER

P.O. Box 455

CITY, TOWN

St. Francisville

— VICINITY OF

STATE

Louisiana

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTIONCOURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

West Feliciana Parish Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

St. Francisville

STATE

Louisiana

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Louisiana Historic Sites Survey

DATE

1979

— FEDERAL ☒ STATE — COUNTY — LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

State Historic Preservation Office

CITY, TOWN

Baton Rouge

STATE

Louisiana

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

☒ EXCELLENT
☐ GOOD
☐ FAIR

☐ DETERIORATED
☐ RUINS
☐ UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

☐ UNALTERED
☒ ALTERED

CHECK ONE

☒ ORIGINAL SITE
☐ MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Oaks is the center of a large farming operation on this and other sites in West Feliciana Parish, Louisiana. Only the house, its existing dependencies, and the park-like grounds of ~~28.5~~¹⁵ acres are nominated.

The house faces west; it is approached by a north/south .2 mile avenue lined on each side with 15 live oaks spaced 40 feet apart and interspersed with 20-ft. diameter Formosa azaleas, all planted by the builder in 1899. East of the avenue is a 5-acre grassy meadow bordered by woodlands which form the eastern and southern boundary of the nominated property. The western boundary parallels the avenue and just beyond are the tracts of the West Feliciana Railroad, now virtually abandoned by the Illinois Central. The northern boundary is a farm service lane bordered by woodlands which continue eastwardly, circling the rear of the house and its dependencies.

From the avenue the house is approached by a allée lined on each side by six live oaks and various varieties of azaleas grown to huge size. Just south of the house is an informal garden 330 x 100 feet containing original 19th century plantings of flowering shrubs. This garden is bordered on the west by seven cedars and two live oaks. Located in it are the brick remains of a greenhouse.

The frame, clapboard plantation house is deeper than it is wide, having a central hall with a staircase, and three rooms each side. The second floor hip roof contains a full central hall and two bedrooms. The roof is broken on the front and rear by large three-bay pedimented dormers with oculi fanforms in the tympana. The sides are treated somewhat differently. On the north side, the dining room semi-octagonal bay is repeated in the second story dormer. It then culminates in an octagonal turret, with a prominent conical roof which is ornamented with round head lucarnes and surmounted by a turned finial. On the south side, there is a small three-bay pedimented portico, which encompasses a stain glass garden vestibule. This is surmounted by a large plain dormer.

Both the front gallery and the side portico are treated with large scroll sawn brackets which serve both as capitals for the posts, and as modillions for the cornice. The rear gallery is plain.

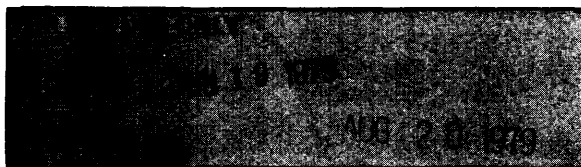
The shutters and plate glass windows are original as is the millwork in the fenestration, and in the gallery posts and ballustrades.

The front facade has handsome Renaissance Revival lintles over the windows and the central door.

The four chimneys are corbelled in and out in a manner resembling stop chamfering.

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Description (cont'd)

The interiors are, for the most part, large and plain.

Since the house was built a kitchen and office has been added on the north side, a bathroom has been added on the south side. But these additions have not significantly affected the front facade or the general massing of the house.

To the immediate rear of the house are located the following original dependencies:

1. Kitchen and laundry: A double pen of cypress drop siding stained dark green with central chimney and original cypress shingled roof. The random width pine flooring is original. Bargeboards are embellished with saw-tooth wooden trim.

2. Dairy: Later used to house Delco generator. Single pen, cypress drop siding stained dark green, no chimney, pine floors, saw-tooth trim. Shingled roof covered by corrugated tin.

3. Well House: Open-sided, sexagonal Gothic structure with conical slate roof topped with wooden finial, all painted white, covering underground well and pitcher pump still functional.

4. A carriage house in the same mode as kitchen/laundry and dairy was located to the rear of these structures. It is no longer in existence; ruins marked its location.

The existing dependencies are stabilized but in need of repair with the exception of the well house which is in excellent condition.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
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 1888

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

Thomas Butler

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Oaks Plantation house is a large and imposing late nineteenth century plantation house. It is significant in that it typifies the manner in which fashionable styles of the late Victorian period were manifested in Louisiana plantation house design. That is to say the standard central hall plan, one and one-half story, plantation house garnished with Renaissance Revival inspired brackets, lintels, and dormers, and treated with a Queen Anne inspired turrets, semi-octagonal bays, and hesitant irregularity in the roofline.

The plantation is also significant for its unusual decorative millwork in the dependencies.

Thomas Butler II, born at The Cottage Plantation (National Register) in 1840, grew to manhood on the cotton plantation of his mother's family. He was a student at the University of Mississippi when the Civil War began and upon the secession of Louisiana in 1861 was commissioned a lieutenant and fought all the way from Shiloh to Appomattox. After the war he studied law, was admitted to the Bar of Louisiana in 1872 and combined the time-honored pursuits of law, planting, and politics.

The land remained the only capital by which planters like Butler could hope to regain their former wealth. The price of cotton was high just after the war, fell in the national depression of 1873, yet plantations in Feliciana survived because of superior economic resources and managerial skills. In 1875 the loessal soil of the Felicianas produced 5.6% of the state's cotton on less than 3% of its area.³ In 1874 the Freedman's Bureau dominated parish politics; the White League was formed to combat it. In 1876 Reconstruction was put down as the planting aristocracy banded together as never before or since.⁴ Thomas Butler was very much a part of all of this. A local newspaper wrote, "In the trying times of the fight to regain complete white supremacy...his comradely counsels were of great assistance..."⁵

In 1876, Thomas Butler married Mary Fort, uniting two old parish families.⁶ He was 34; she a girl of 20, born in 1856, and had known little of ante-bellum culture and ease. Three years later Butler ceased practicing law, its demands "incompatible with plantation management."⁷ In 1888, his aged and widowed father, with whom the young Butlers lived, died, and one month later Butler purchased 150 acres on which to build a new house. The family moved into the new home shortly before

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See attached sheet

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA ¹⁵

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 10 acres

QUADRANGLE NAME _____

QUADRANGLE SCALE _____

UTM REFERENCES

A 15 654290 3409590

B 15 654480 3409570

C 15 654410 3409250

D 15 654210 3409280

E 15 654410 3409250

F 15 654210 3409280

G 15 654410 3409250

H 15 654210 3409280

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION The boundaries were drawn to encompass the house, out-buildings, the driveway which is lined with live oak trees amid the lawn vista from the house. Begin at the intersection of La. Rt. 61 and the railroad tracks, proceed generally north along the inside of the tracks 950 ft., then generally east 85° and

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

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE
Beryl Daniel Lott

ORGANIZATION

DATE

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

St. Francisville

Louisiana

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL ____

STATE ____

LOCAL X

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

E. Bernal Carrin

TITLE

State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

5-14-79

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Robert C. ...
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER
ATTEST: *...*
CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

DATE

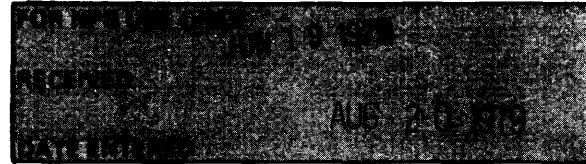
8-20-79

DATE

Aug 20 '79

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Significance (cont'd)

Christmas, 1888.⁹ There is no indication of the origin of the plan or of a building contract, though family papers include bills for the materials and services from A. T. Gastrell, a local contractor active in the area during this time.¹⁰ Though it was said that the move from the old plantation¹¹ was occasioned by a desire to be nearer the active hub of town life,¹¹ it is more than likely that the death of his father relieved Butler of his obligations to the old lifestyle. Family members recall that both Mr. and Mrs. Butler wanted a "new" house;¹² the one they built was still regarded as "modern" in 1922 when Thomas Butler died: "The Oaks is one of the most attractive modern houses in West Feliciana, set in beautiful gardens with open grounds beyond and an avenue of young oaks leading to the front gate, all a monument to the foresight and good taste of the master and mistress..."¹³ Planting continued to be the moving force in their lives; crop diversification was preached by their more progressive neighbors. Along with other apostles of the New South, the Butlers saw the promise (if not the problems) of the machine and mechanized production; and this is evident in their architectural tastes. Wood remained the popular choice; it was still plentiful and cheap, and could now be turned, twisted, and shaped into the symbols of the period. Shaded galleries, louvered shutters, and breezy center halls were retained; the mode was adapted to the climate and to preconceived notions of domestic architecture. The hall and parlor house remained popular until the 1930's.¹⁴ Significantly, the dependencies cluster about The Oaks and include the outside kitchen/laundry, dairy, and carriage house, but no "quarters." Tenant houses occupied sites far removed from the Big House in the post-bellum South.

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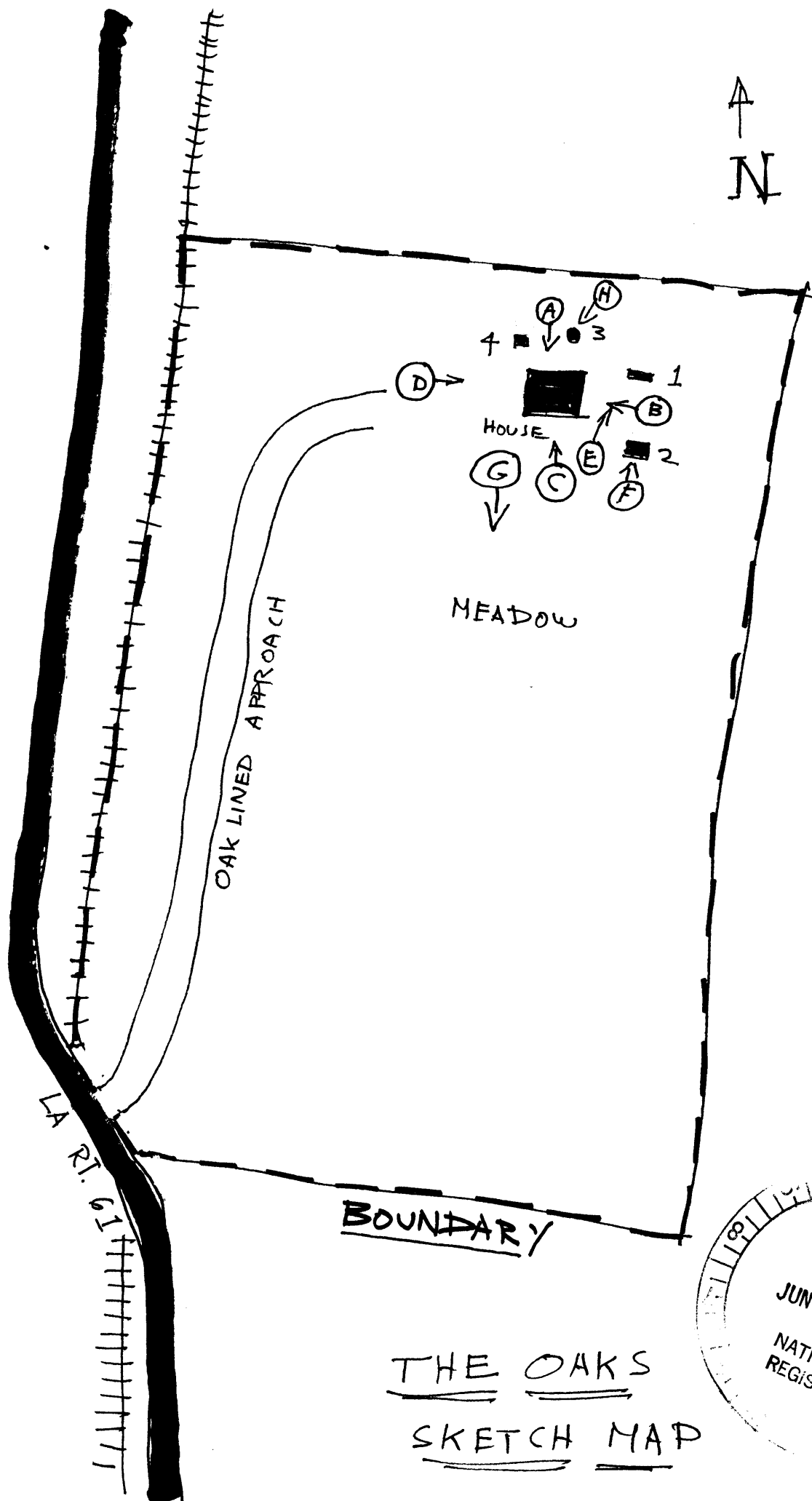
CONTINUATION SHEET

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Verbal Boundary description (cont'd)

proceed 600 ft., then turn 85° and proceed generally southward 1100 ft. then turn 105° and proceed to Rt. 61 then proceed generally north on Rt. 61 to the point of origin.



THE OAKS
SKETCH MAP

