

PH 635 4261

DATA SHEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED OCT 18 1976

DATE ENTERED DEC 12 1976

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC *\*\** Moundville Plantation House

AND/OR COMMON

(Wartelle House)

**LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER Off La. Hwy. 103, 2½ miles northwest of  
Washington

CITY, TOWN

Washington

VICINITY OF

— NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

7th - John Breaux

STATE

Louisiana

CODE

22

COUNTY

St. Landry

CODE

097

**CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
			<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME Alphonse Wartelle, et. al., F. M. Wartelle Estate

STREET & NUMBER

Box 73

CITY, TOWN

Washington

— VICINITY OF

Louisiana

STATE

**LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

St. Landry Parish Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

P. O. Box 750

CITY, TOWN

Opelousas

STATE

Louisiana

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

None known

DATE

— FEDERAL — STATE — COUNTY — LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

## 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<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 _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Wartelle House at Moundville Plantation is a story and a half Creole structure with a hipped roof and three dormer windows, two facing north (front) and one south. (See photos) The high-ceilinged white frame shuttered house, flanked now on three sides by broad galleries, was at first a rectangular building of six rooms made of cypress and constructed on a series of brick walls some three feet high. These earliest rooms were erected over a period of months between 1827 and 1829 and open onto galleries at the front and rear. The two front rooms, bisected by the wide central hallway (library), are the large master bedroom to the left and a formal parlor at the right. The mantle in the master bedroom has simple carving. Glass paneled French doors at the rear of the hallway open into the dining room, which extends two-thirds of the width of the original structure. In the far left corner, a built-in cabinet covers the entrance to the wine cellar below. At either side of the dining room is a smaller bedroom, one behind the master bedroom and one behind the parlor. Beyond the dining room, through a second set of French doors, lies the back gallery. Two double fireplaces heat the parlor, two bedrooms, and the dining room.

The staircase in the central hallway leads to the upper floor, a single plastered room which served in the 19th century as a boys' dormitory. Also plastered are the hallway and the parlor. It is the flooring and woodwork in these downstairs plastered areas, along with the paneled doors throughout the original rooms, which evoke most comment from architects today. Their degree of preservation is rarely seen in unrestored homes.

In the hallway, for example, the delicate pink faux marbe molding and the floor painted almost 150 years ago to simulate Italian marble still show the detail and styling which once characterized fine workmanship. (see photo) In the parlor is a gracefully carved pale green faux marbe Federal style mantle with a sunburst rosette. (see photo) And from the center of a plaster medallion on the ceiling hangs a painted French lamp. (see photo) The main entrance into the hallway from the open front gallery is through yet another set of French doors, these in perfect alignment with the two at the rear of the hall. These doors are paneled faux bois (see photo) and above them is an arched lunnette. (see photo) The glass in this and in the other windows in the house is original. The roof above the gallery is supported by slender cypress colonettes, and the bannisters at its front have clean, uncluttered lines.

The second structure at Moundville was added about 1860. It is, itself, a four-room, two-story house--a kitchen and storage center built of bricks made on the place to replace an earlier structure. (see photo) The open-beamed ceilings and brick interior walls are whitewashed. A large double fireplace heats the two major downstairs rooms. The back room, with barred windows, was an ironing room before 1865 and became a plantation schoolroom in 1880's. Along a hallway to the left of the front room lies a store room for kitchen staples, and above it, the second floor which housed a Scottish gardener in the 1880's. In over a hundred years almost no bricks have crumbled.

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The third and final phase of major construction began and ended shortly after the original owner's youngest son bought the plantation in 1879. He added at the east of the house a single row of rooms which extends the full length of the original structure: a sewing room/office, two bedrooms, and at the southern extremity, a pantry. (see photo) The doors of the built-in cupboards there may well have been in the pre-1860 kitchen. An invisible valley, built beneath the roof line at the juncture of this east wing with the older rooms, was an added precaution against leakage into the house. A double and a single fireplace heat the rooms of this added wing, and wide shuttered windows and doors open onto a gallery built at the same time.

The original Hepplewhite and Empire furnishings, now owned by designated heirs of the F. M. Wartelle estate, are still in the house. They include four carved tester beds, a French rosewood piano, and the table on which the original owner and his bride were served their wedding breakfast in 1827. Above the mantle in the parlor hangs the engraving of Napoleon's farewell to his troops at Fontainebleau, one of whom is said to be the original owner of the house. Still in the house, too, is a service of over three hundred pieces of gold banded Haviland China. The personal effects of the original owner and his library of some four to five hundred 18th and 19th century French books, including Diderot's Encyclopedia have been removed. They are not part of the estate but remain in the family.

Important outbuildings date from about 1880. Off the east door of the kitchen is the outdoor privy. (see photo) It may actually have been built earlier, but the second owner noted in his ledger expenditures for its masonry. He built the barn and stables some distance to the east of the house, and probably the saddle house, too. There are also a bean house, a potatoe house, and several other structures which have housed chickens and swine. These last-mentioned buildings are probably 19th century constructions. The outbuildings are unpainted, but the privy, at least, bears traces of white paint. (see photos)

The house is built on a hill and faces a neighboring hill to the north. (see photo) To the east, the land gently slopes to Bayou Courtableau. The view to the south and to the west is of tree-studded meadows. The flower garden, or parterre, off the front gallery dates from the 1820's, having been laid out in formal beds by the original owner. Many of the beds, carefully held to their original design just ten years ago, are evident though neglected today. Elegant old Malmaison and Duchese de Barbant roses still bloom there. Crepe myrtle, camellias, sweet olive, and moss-draped live oaks still shade the parterre in the spring and summer. Still visible, too, is an avenue of water

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oaks shading the walk down to Bayou Courtableau a half mile below the house. (see photo) This avenue, planted along with the parterre in the 1820's, once stretched for two miles and lined the approach to the house from the west. Thirty-five years ago WPA writers called it "one of the longest and most beautiful avenues of water oaks in Louisiana."<sup>1</sup>

Few of the original aspects of Moundville have been changed. Electricity, gas and indoor plumbing, of course, have supplemented 19th century heating, lighting, and bathing facilities. But at Moundville, those 20th century improvements were kept minimal and take nothing from the 19th century atmosphere of the place. The nine fireplaces still provide the major source of heat; no room has more than a single electrical outlet. A small bathroom was built into the master bedroom some thirty years ago, a second bath cuts off the outer corner of the back gallery, and a third bath was built off the end of the east gallery. About 1920, the kitchen was joined to the east wing by a latticework breezeway, which along with the back and east galleries, is screened. The paper covering the cypress walls in the dining room, sewing room/office, and downstairs bedrooms was replaced about fifty years ago, as was the roof. But perhaps with an eye on history, the owners never replaced the paper covering the plaster areas. In the parlor, enough of it remains to identify the original pattern. Nor has the plaster, which has fallen from the ceiling in the hall and the upstairs room, ever been replaced. The few pieces of molded plaster which fell away in the parlor, however, were carefully saved to be restored to their rightful place someday. Most of the paint was worn away from the hallway floor, but the moldings above it, the parlor faux marbe, and the faux bois doors might have been painted yesterday.

Ironically, it is the twentieth century improvements which have fared least well over the years, and whose degeneration constitute the greatest threat to the home today. The paper needs replacement again because the Louisiana humidity has loosened it from the walls and ceilings in all but the master bedroom. The exterior of the house, last painted eighteen to twenty years ago, needs new paint. The plumbing need refurbishing. More importantly, the roof needs replacement. A recent leak in the valley between the original and added rooms warped or rotted several wall boards between two bedrooms before it was partially corrected. With all of that, the house is still very nearly as sound as it was when first built. No floorboards creak; no casements have decayed; no walls sag; few window panes have broken. The overall effect on an initiate was summed up by Robert Smith, architect and curator of exhibits at the Lafayette Natural History Museum and Planetarium. Smith was searching all last winter for links to Louisiana's past. "When I saw Moundville," he told me, "I thought I had died and gone to heaven."<sup>2</sup>

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Footnotes

<sup>1</sup>Harry Hansen, ed., Louisiana: A Guide to the State, American Guide Series (originally compiled by Federal Writers' Program, Works Projects Administration, State of Louisiana, 1941; New York: Hastings House, 1971), ftnt. p. 612.

<sup>2</sup>Robert Smith, personal interview, Lafayette, La., July 6, 1976.

# 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 checked="" 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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) cultural
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1827-29; c. 1860; c. 1880 BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

In the 19th century, the Wartelle House at Moundville Plantation was the focal point of an impressive commercial agricultural establishment--a 2122 acre cotton and sugar-producing estate worked by almost 200 slaves before the Civil War. Bounded on the north by Bayou Cocodrie, on the south by Bayou Carron, and on the east by Bayou Courtableau, the plantation lies in the heart of the upper Teche country. At the northeast corner of the estate, near the confluence of the three bayous, was once the village of Moundville. Like the plantation, the village took its name from Indian mounds in the area, burial grounds from which arrow heads have been recovered.

The 1827 home predates by several years the incorporation of the nearby town of Washington. A sleepy little town on the banks of Bayou Courtableau today, Washington in the early 19th century was the commercial and cultural capital of Southwest Louisiana. By 1830 this "unreconstructed Williamsburg" was a bustling steamboat community. It was an important port which thrived on trade from the heavily-traveled bayou.<sup>1</sup> Boats navigating the Courtableau also docked behind the Moundville Plantation house to load and unload plantation supplies.

The architectural style and the interior of the house, discussed in detail in section 7 of this form, provide insight into a distinctive culture in Louisiana history. They are decidedly Creole. The elegantly finished parlor and central hallway tell much about Captain Pierre Gabriele Wartelle, for whom the house was built. The furnishings and the rare French books add the details. Captain Wartelle is in his own right an important symbol of an era in the history of St. Landry Parish. Wartelle, along with General Garrigues de Falugeac and others, was among a small colony of Napoleon's officers who helped to guide the development of prosperous St. Landry. His marriage to the daughter of a Virginia-born judge represents yet another cultural influence in the growth of Louisiana: the merging of Anglo and French societies. That marriage, no doubt, accounts for certain Anglo touches in Captain Wartelle's house and library.

The landscape architecture of the surrounding grounds is as noteworthy as the natural beauty of the homesite, which is considerable. The avenue of water oaks and the formal parterre, both planted in the early 19th century and described in section 7, reflect Wartelle's ability to integrate the best of nature with man's emotional and physical needs. The avenue is considered unusual because its primary path is to the bayou rather than to the house. Family legend states that it was planted to protect the ladies from the sun as they strolled down the hill for a swim.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Primary Sources:

Manuscripts:

St. Landry Parish Courthouse, Opelousas, La. Clerk's Office. Conveyance Nos. 17057, 17058, Feb. 20; Aug. 21, 1879.

St. Landry Parish Courthouse, Clerk's Office. Succession No. 2704, Aug. 10, 1865.  
(cont'd)

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY approximately 10 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,5	5,8,8	9,0,0	3,3	9,0	30 0	B					
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		
C							D					

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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 Valerie Jean Conner, Assistant Professor

ORGANIZATION

DATE

July 1976

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

Department of History, Florida State University

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Tallahassee

Florida

# 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.

SIGNATURE

*Keith S. DeCompte*

TITLE Assistant SHPO

DATE

October 14, 1976

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE

*12/12/88*

ATTEST:

DATE

*12/6/76*

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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Militarily, the homesite is worth mention not because it was built by a Napoleonic officer, but because union officers were billeted in its parlor when Opelousas and Washington were captured during the Civil War. Reports of the movements of General Banks troops in that area in 1863 generally include tales of plundered halls and pillaged fields. (See, for example, accounts in John D. Winters, The Civil War in Louisiana, Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1963, and in Morris Raphael, The Battle in the Bayou Country, Detroit: Harlo Press, 1975). The house at Moundville Plantation was an exception to those general accounts. The occupying troops agreed with the old French captain that his household should be undisturbed.

Perhaps the most significant historic and cultural quality about the Moundville Plantation house and its outbuildings is the degree to which they reflect the lifestyle of what Fred B. Kniffen, Boyd Professor of Geography and Anthropology at Louisiana State University, calls the "River Creole." The vast cultural differences between the prairie (or Acadian) French and the river (or Creole) French, Kniffen explains, were reinforced by geographical conditions. Thus, the prairie French by necessity remained isolated subsistence farmers, while the river French were generally well-educated people, with ties to France, who relied upon steam power and river travel. They spoke proper French, lived in elaborate houses, and built large barns. They cooked in detached kitchens, engaged in commercial agriculture, and maintained well-established slave systems.<sup>2</sup> The Wartelle family at Moundville so typifies Dr. Kniffen's model of the river Creole that the Lafayette Natural History Museum and Planetarium used Moundville Plantation to illustrate Kniffen's words in its Bicentennial Exhibit: "1776-1976: Two Hundred Years of Life and Change in Louisiana."

**FAMILY AND PROPERTY HISTORY:**

Pierre Gabriel Wartelle was born at Brie, France, and baptized there in April, 1787. The son of a wealthy merchant, he received his early education as a cadet at the Fontainebleau Military School. Wartelle joined Napoleon's army in 1802 and until the Emperor's second exile in 1815, he fought for the glory of France. His career has been documented as follows: Sub-lieutenant of the 21st Regiment of the Infantry, September 23, 1806; Lieutenant of the same regiment, 1809; Captain of the 128th Regiment of the Infantry, June 30, 1812. Active service from 1806 to 1814 took him into battle in Poland, Austria, Germany, and Russia. In 1813, he was awarded the Cross of Honor, and the following year his superiors submitted his name for the Legion of Honor. Before he could receive the diploma awarding it, however, Napoleon's Empire collapsed. The new regime in France felt no loyalty to the promises of the old. Captain Wartelle, dejected and restless, sailed for America. There in 1857, he would receive official thanks for his efforts, and the Medal of St. Helena from Napoleon III.<sup>3</sup>



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Some years before Waterloo, another of Napoleon's officers, Louis Joseph Paul Antoine Garrigues de Flauegeac, had arrived in America. An aristocrat from Southern France born in 1780, de Flauegeac had been captivated by the romance of Bonaparte's dreams. Before he was twenty years old, he had been appointed to the staff of General Joachim Murat; and as a subaltern in the Dragoons Corps, he fought in the Italian campaign which ended in victory at Marengo in 1800. De Flauegeac had then asked and received permission to join the ill-fated San Domingo expedition. Wounded there and captured by a British landing force, he was jailed in Cuba until the short-lived Peace of Amiens in 1801. At their release, he and two companions sailed for France, only to be shipwrecked and rescued by a merchant ship bound for New Orleans. Shortly thereafter, the three Frenchmen settled near Opelousas in St. Landry Parish. De Flauegeac quickly married, became a surveyor, and served as judge for the community. When Louisiana became a state in 1812, he became one of its first senators. And in January, 1815, after leading a battalion at the Battle of New Orleans, he emerged a hero and a Brigadier General--bringing home as souvenir of war the field glasses of Britain's fallen Pakenham. A short time later, Garrigues de Flauegeac no doubt helped to convince a small group of Napoleonic exiles which included Captain Wartelle to join him in St. Landry Parish.<sup>4</sup>

Wartelle, upon arrival in America, had fallen back on his father's skill to earn the capital he needed. He had begun a series of commercial ventures in New Orleans. Once in St. Landry, he opened general stores in Opelousas, Ville Platte, and faraway Lake Charles. In 1827, he married twenty-six year old Louisa King, daughter of one of the first American settlers in Louisiana, George King, Judge of St. Landry Parish between 1806 and 1842. At the edge of the village of Moundville, near the settlement of Washington, Wartelle built a cabin from which he supervised the building of the home which stands today. In the cabin near piles of cypress and bricks, Louisa gave birth to their first child. Some of the cupress was cut into a long bookcase and placed in the hallway of the new house. "Wartelle must have been an avid reader," Simone Delery writes.

The works of Corneille, Racine, Montesquieu, Rousseau and the Encyclopedists were placed on the shelves, along with the lates anthologies of verses and songs brought back from business trips to New Orleans. During the day, he worked hard figuring what brought a better return: indigo or sugarcane. But late at night...the exile would reread some of Hugo's favorite lines.

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'In a great feast one day at the Pantheon...  
I saw Napoleon'<sup>5</sup>

By 1829, Wartelle, King, and de Flauegeac were all sugar planters in the Moundville area. Niles' Weekly Register, the Baltimore news journal, reported in January that Judge King was beginning a plantation and de Flauegeac was "embarking very extensively" in cane cultivation.<sup>6</sup> Over the next three decades, Wartelle planted extensively, too, in cotton and cane. Much of the acreage he purchased from his father-in-law, as the conveyance books in the St. Landry Parish Courthouse show. In the 1860's, he was a great planter, commanding the 2122 acres which his youngest son later purchased with the home. Nor did his interest in commercial New Orleans flag over the years. He retained extensive holdings there, in the heart of the business district along Camp, Baronne, and Carondelet Streets.<sup>7</sup>

Captain Wartelle and Louisa King had six children who lived to maturity: George King, and Jean Gabriel, named after their grandfathers; and Annette, Felix, Amelia, and Ferdinand. Louisa King's brother had gone to his father's home state to study law--the only Louisiana student at the University of Virginia soon after Thomas Jefferson founded it in the 1820's. When Louisa's sons grew old enough, they studied at the same university: George and Jean in the 1840's and Felix, in the 1850's.<sup>8</sup> After their years in Virginia, the boys were sent by their father to study in the Latin Quarter in France. Among the Wartelle sons, only Ferdinand, the youngest, refused to follow the educational outline so carefully drawn by their parents. Like his father, he loved books, nature, and the green seclusion of Moundville. Born in 1844, he went to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, but would neither go to France nor study the French language. This youngest son, a friend told the father, "is the most individualistic and therefore the most French of your offspring."<sup>9</sup> Of the four sons, only Ferdinand would continue his father's work and dreams.

For Pierre Wartelle, the American Civil War presented a difficult problem. He would have liked to avoid the conflict. He had never become an American citizen. But he lived in the South and was a slave owner. Delery tells us that he often read Montesquieu on slavery and became troubled when he considered the toilers in his fields. Then Felix rushed off to war; Ferdinand, without a trigger finger since a schoolboy prank, took the field hands and went to Texas. And in a more direct way, the war came finally to Moundville:

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Standing in the hall, the door wide open to soft night, Wartelle heard steps on the avenue where forty years ago he had planted acorns. The moonlight filtered between branches and he saw unfamiliar uniforms. The voices wafted on the night air were harsh. He gave a desperate look at the box which contained his French diplomas, his gold epaulette, his St. Helena medal, all his treasures. But after all, were they enemies, those exhausted men looking for shelter? 'Entrez, Messieurs,' the old gentleman courteously greeted the Union soldiers. Not one of his precious souvenirs nor his beloved books was ever touched by the Yankees. Much later, he received notice that one of his sons had been killed at Shiloh and he envied<sup>10</sup> a colleague...who had preceded in death his son....

Felix's death at Shiloh, on April 6, 1862, was but one of a series of family sorrows in the mid-nineteenth century. Death claimed two more sons, a daughter, and Pierre Wartelle, himself. George Wartelle had died before the war began, in July, 1859, at Berwick Bay, Louisiana, married and a father. Jean, also with a wife and small children, died insolvent in the autumn of 1866 at Lake Charles. Annette, too, died young, before the summer of 1867, the mother of four minor children. The settlement of the estate which Pierre Wartelle left at his death at seventy-eight on June 25, 1865, would prove difficult for his widow and two surviving offspring.<sup>11</sup>

For almost twenty years after the Civil War, Louisa King Wartelle, son Ferdinand, and daughter Amelia were necessarily preoccupied with the future of Moundville Plantation. Ferdinand had returned from Texas with the former slaves who wanted to work on the place for wages. In 1873, he married Valerie Lastrapes, granddaughter of his father's old friend, Garrigues de Flaueac. It was at Moundville Plantation that he chose to make his home with his wife, mother and sister. Meanwhile, it became obvious that the only way to satisfy the claims of the families of his deceased brothers and sister was to sell the Pierre Wartelle Estate. One of the surviving spouses allegedly looked forward to getting the plantation itself. Thus, in February, 1879, Ferdinand and Amelia bought from their mother the house and approximately 1400 acres. The other 800 or so acres he bought that spring at a sheriff's sale. While the Moundville pasture lands and cultivated acreage were valued at only \$2.00 an acre, the New Orleans property was assessed at \$41,000.00. But for Ferdinand Wartelle, the emotional value of the plantation far outweighed the financial value of the New Orleans holdings. The New Orleans property was sold off in January, 1882, in order to keep the plantation in the Wartelle family.<sup>12</sup>

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When Louisa King died in 1883, Ferdinand and Valerie Lastrapes had had seven of their thirteen children and expanded the house.

Like his father before him, Ferdinand M. Wartelle was a successful planter. A biographic sketch in 1891 concluded that there "are few men in St. Landry Parish who take more active interest in everything that is for the public good than Mr. Wartelle. He is an intelligent and refined gentleman, and his life has been a reflection of usefulness."<sup>13</sup> He refused to leave Moundville even in death, and was buried there in 1915.

Valerie Lastrapes Wartelle lived in the Moundville Plantation house until her death at ninety-three in 1941, and the last of her children died there on New Year's Eve, 1973.

The house at Moundville Plantation has been occupied by the Wartelle family for a hundred and fifty years. During most of the 20th century, Ferdinand Wartelle's three unmarried daughters saw to its needs. So respectful were they of its past that they threw nothing away, moved nothing usable from its original place, held the grounds to their original design. They probably never saw the 1865 inventory of Pierre Wartelle's household possessions filed in the St. Landry Parish Courthouse, but when one reads that inventory today, he can tell what path the assessors took through the house. It has changed that little. During their last years in the 1960's, two of the sisters worried about the future of the Moundville house, much as their father had done one hundred years earlier. The estate now belongs to the heirs of Ferdinand M. Wartelle. His grandson manages the place and protects the house from decay and vandalism. Fortunately, the heirs will not permit the homesite to leave the family. Today Pierre Wartelle's home remains "a model of its time....an historical vault of information."<sup>14</sup>

Footnotes

<sup>1</sup>Claire Brown and J. R. Brown, "Washington: The Unreconstructed Williamsburg of Louisiana," Sunday Advocate (Baton Rouge, La.,) Jan. 21, 1962, p.3-E

<sup>2</sup>Fred B. Kniffen, "Prairie Acadians and River Creoles,"; Fred B. Kniffen, "The Ways of Life Varied Within French Louisiana" (Typescripts, bicentennial exhibit, Lafayette Natural History Museum and Planetarium, 1976.)

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- <sup>3</sup>Papers Relating to Estate of Felix-Clement Wartelle, d. 1834 (source unknown, copies in possession of form preparer); Ruth Robertson Fontenot, "Captain of Napoleon's Army: Pierre Gabriel Wartelle," in "Some History of St. Landry Parish from the 1690's." Daily World (Opelousas, La.), Special Supplement, St. Landry Parish 150th Anniversary Edition, Nov. 3, 1955, pp. 212-213; Simone (Riviere de la Souchere) Delery, Napoleon's Soldiers in America (Gretna, La.: Pelican Publishing Company, 1972), p. 117.
- <sup>4</sup>Delery, Napoleon's Soldiers, pp. 113-116; William Henry Perrin, Southwest Louisiana: Historical and Biographical (New Orleans: Gulf Publishing Company, 1891), Pt. I, p. 379.
- <sup>5</sup>Delery, Napoleon's Soldiers, pp. 117-118.
- <sup>6</sup>"Sugar Crops." Niles' Weekly Register, Jan. 24, 1829, p. 355.
- <sup>7</sup>Papers Relating to Estate of Pierre Gabriel Wartelle, St. Landry Parish Courthouse, Opelousas, La., Clerk's Office, Succession No. 2704, August 10, 1865.
- <sup>8</sup>U. S., Census Office, Seventh Census of the United States, 1850, Census of Louisians, St. Landry Parish 7, Microfilm Edition (Washington, D. C.: National Archives and Records Center), Reel 240, Residence No. 1860; Maximilian Schele De Vere, ed., Students of the University of Virginia (Baltimore: Charles Harvey and Co., Publishers, 1878), unpaginated.
- <sup>9</sup>Delery, Napoleon's Soldiers, p.189.
- <sup>10</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>11</sup>De Vere, Students; Estate of Pierre Gabriel Wartelle, Succession No. 2704.
- <sup>12</sup>Estate of Pierre Gabriel Wartelle, Succession No. 2704: Description of Property Bought by Ferdinand M. Wartelle and Amelia L. Wartelle from Louisa King Wartelle, St. Landry Parish Courthouse, Clerk's Office, Conveyance No. 17057, Feb. 20, 1879; Description of Property Bought by Ferdinand M. Wartelle from Estate of Pierre Gabriel Wartelle, St. Landry Parish Courthouse, Clerk's Office, Conveyance No. 17058, Aug. 21, 1879.
- <sup>13</sup>Perrin, Southwest Louisiana, Pt. II, p. 90.
- <sup>14</sup>"At Lafayette Museum: Wartelle Plantation Featured in Exhibit," Daily Advertiser (Lafayette, La.), April 7, 1976, p. 11.

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U. S. Census Office. Seventh Census of the United States, 1850. /Census of Louisiana, St. Landry Parish/ Microfilm Edition. Washington, D. C.: National Archives and Records Center.

Wartelle, Felix-Clement. Papers Relating to Estate. Copies, Personal Library.

Wartelle, Ferdinand M. Ledger, Moundville Plantation, 1870-1896. Personal Library.

Printed Materials:

De Vere, Maximilian Schele, ed. Students of the University of Virginia. Baltimore: Charles Harvey and Co., Publishers, 1878. Gives years of attendance and date and place of death.

Perrin, William Henry. Southwest Louisiana: Historical and Biographical. New Orleans: Gulf Publishing Company, 1891. Contains record of Garrigues de Flaageac at Battle of New Orleans and biography of Ferdinand M. Wartelle.

Perrine, C. O. Perrine's New Military Map Illustrating the Seat of War. 1862. Marks Plantation Site as "Montville."

Niles' Weekly Register. "Sugar Crops," Jan. 24, 1829. Reports on King, de Flaageac plantations.

Interviews:

Smith, Robert. Personal interview. Lafayette, La., July 6, 1976.

Secondary Sources:

Books:

Delery, Simone (Riviere de la Souchere). Napoleon's Soldiers in America. Gretna, La.: Pelican Publishing Company, 1972. Published originally in France and made a Book of the Month Selection by LeCercle du Livre de France. Contains finely drawn portraits of Garrigues de Flaageac and Pierre Gabriel Wartelle.

Hansen, Harry, ed. Louisiana: A Guide to the State. American Guide Series. (Originally, Federal Writers' Program, Works Projects Administration, State of Louisiana, 1941) New York: 1971. Concisely notes features of home and landscape and significance of Pierre Gabriel Wartelle.

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Articles:

Daily Advertiser (Lafayette, La.). "At Lafayette Museum: Wartelle Plantation  
Featured in Exhibit," April 7, 1976.

Daily World (Opelousas, La.). Fontenot, Ruth Robertson. "Captain of  
Napoleon's Army: Pierre Gabriel Wartelle," in "Some History  
of St. Landry Parish from the 1690's." Special Supplement  
St. Landry Parish 150th Anniversary Edition, Nov. 3, 1955.  
Documents Wartelle's military career and describes architecture  
and preservation of home.

Kniffen, Fred B. "Prairie Acadians and River Creoles." Typescript from  
Lafayette Natural History Museum and Planetarium, bicentennial  
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Kniffen, Fred B. "The Ways of Life Varied Within French Louisiana." Typescript  
from Lafayette Natural History Museum and Planetarium,  
bicentennial exhibit, La., 1976.

V&C 7/20/76



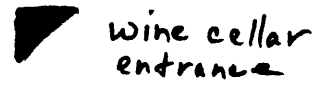
Bayou Courtableau

Circa 1880

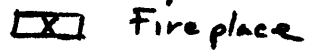


Brick Circa 1860

Key



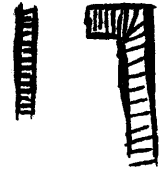
Wine cellar entrance



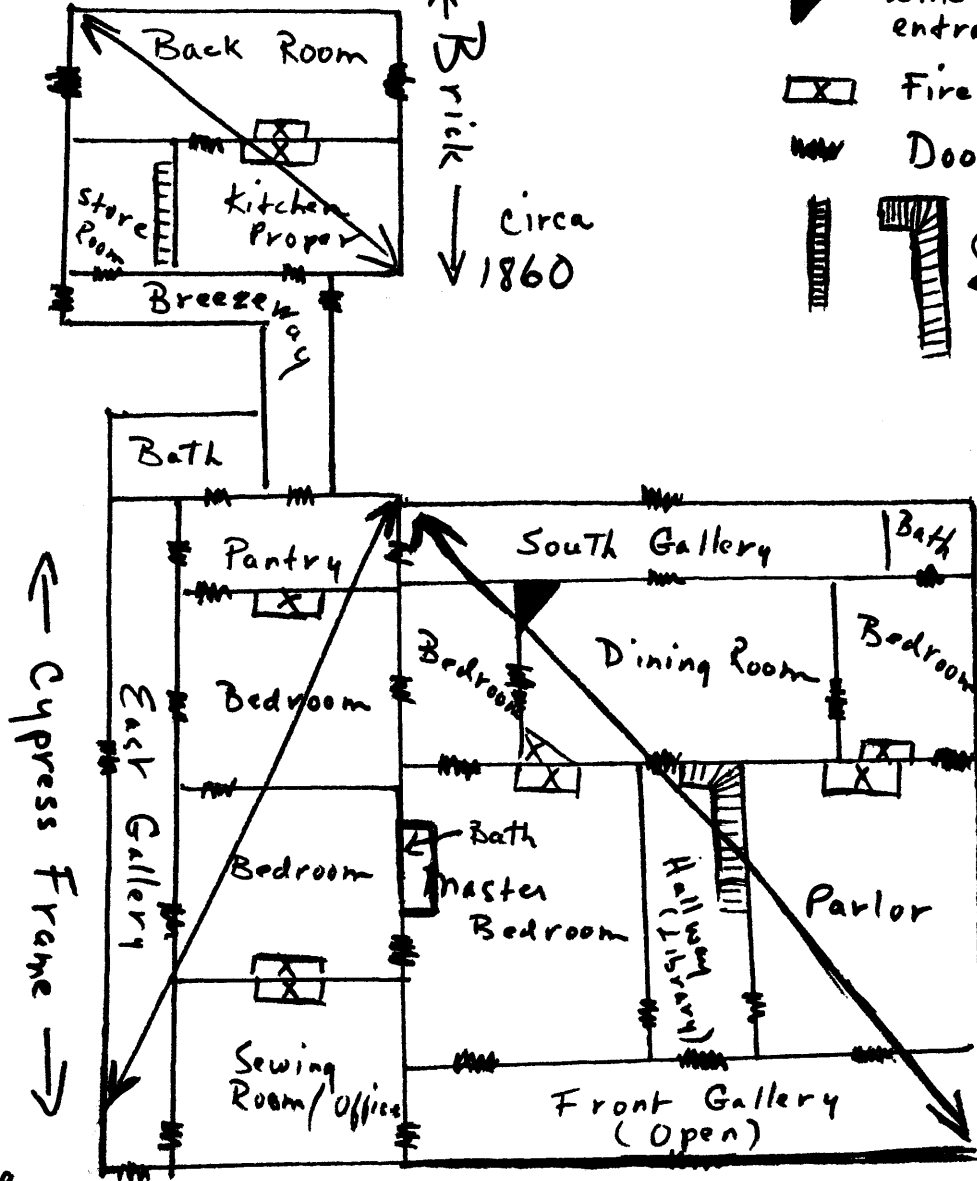
Fireplace



Doorway



Stairways to upstairs (areas not shown in plan -)



Cypress Frame

Cypress Frame

Circa 1880

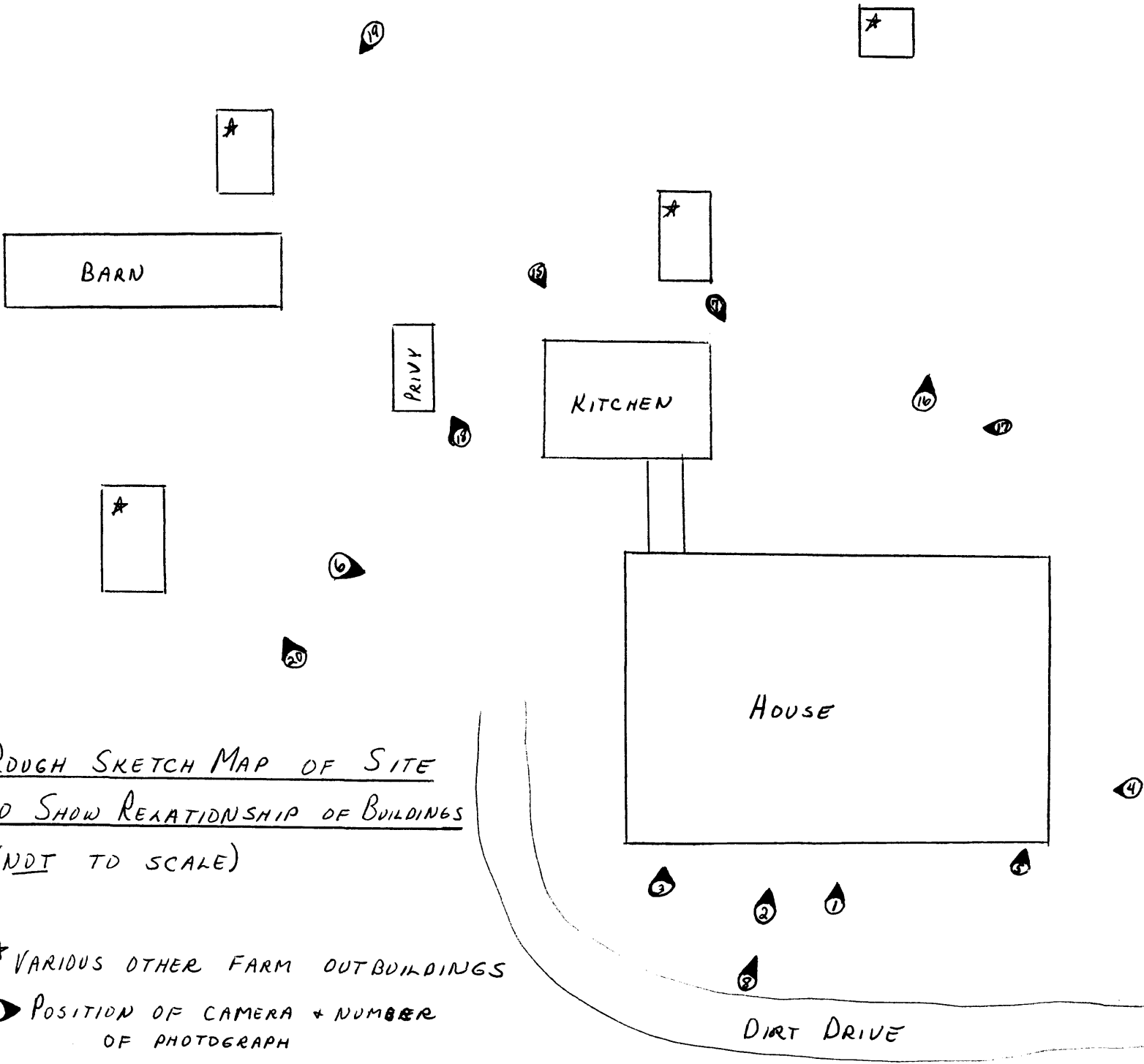
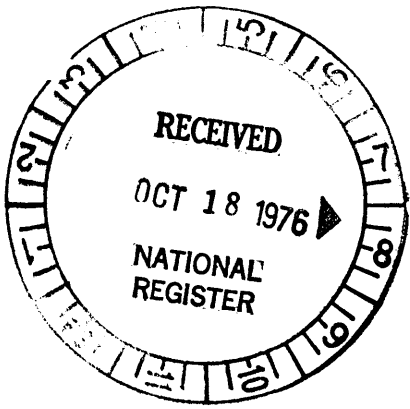
North

1827-1829

- First Floor -

Rough Plan of Moundville Plantation House - For Illustration Only





ROUGH SKETCH MAP OF SITE  
TO SHOW RELATIONSHIP OF BUILDINGS  
 (NOT TO SCALE)

- \* VARIOUS OTHER FARM OUTBUILDINGS
- ① POSITION OF CAMERA + NUMBER OF PHOTOGRAPH

