

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Edwin Epps House
Name of Property
Avoyelles Parish, LA
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 8 Page 1



- Edwin Epps House Additional Documentation
- State/Federal Agency Certification**

3. As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets, meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register Criteria.

*Kristin P. Sanders 4/20/17*

**Signature of certifying official/Title:** Kristin Sanders, Dep. State Historic Preservation Officer **Date**  
Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation, and Tourism  
 State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. **National Park Certification**

- I hereby certify that the property is:
- entered in the National Register
  - determined eligible for the National Register
  - determined not eligible for the National Register
  - removed from the National Register

other, explain: \_\_\_\_\_  
*[Handwritten signature]*

*6-12-2017*

**Signature of the Keeper**

**Date of Action**

The purpose of this additional documentation is to remove Avoyelles Parish's Edwin Epps House from the National Register of Historic Places. The property was added to the National Register on April 12, 1984. It was listed at the national level for its significance under Criterion A: History in the areas of literature and social/humanitarian because of its close association with the famous slave narrative *Twelve Years a Slave*. Edwin Epps was the main character, Solomon Northup's, master for the last ten years of his twelve year enslavement and the Epps House figures very prominently in the book.

According to the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 [36 CFR 60.15 (a)(1)], a property may be delisted if it has ceased to meet the criteria for listing in the National Register because the qualities which caused it to be originally listed have been lost or destroyed. Sadly, this is the case for the Edwin Epps House because it was moved from its 1984 listing location to Alexandria in 1999. Originally located on the north bank of Bayou Boeuf near Holmesville, the Epps House was in a deteriorated state and the owner was planning on demolishing it. Thus, a local preservation group moved the house 3.5 miles to Highway 71 in 1976 for development as a museum. The setting was not ideal as it went from rural to more commercial, but the house was listed because of its strong connection to *Twelve Years a Slave*. The Epps House was and still is the only extant structure directly

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associated with the book.<sup>1</sup> In 1999, the Epps House was moved again, this time to the campus of Louisiana State University – Alexandria (LSUA). It was moved there to become the centerpiece of a plantation complex at LSUA. The house was completely dismantled and reconstructed at the new site.<sup>2</sup>

Per National Register Bulletin 15, while discussing Criteria Consideration B: Moved Properties: “One of the basic purposes of the National Register is to encourage the preservation of historic properties as living parts of their communities. In keeping with this purpose, it is not usual to list artificial groupings of buildings that have been created for purposes of interpretations, protection, or maintenance. Moving buildings to such a grouping destroys the integrity of location and setting, and can create a false sense of historic development.”<sup>3</sup>

Moving the Edwin Epps House to a fake village setting on the campus of LSUA negatively impacted the house’s integrity of location, setting, feeling, and association. Furthermore, extensive renovation work was done on the house due to its deteriorated condition. Per a July 2013 letter from the Division of Historic Preservation’s National Register Coordinator to the Alexandria Historic Preservation Commission:

“As we discussed, the house is no longer part of the National Register because it has been moved from the site upon which it stood when listed in 1984. Unfortunately, it does not appear possible to re-list the house at its new location. The major replacement of materials which took place at that time has changed the dwelling’s appearance so much that it looks like a replica rather than a real historic building. Additionally, there is some concern about the new location on the campus of Louisiana State University at Alexandria. Although the building’s immediate setting is open, one cannot miss seeing the numerous modern buildings nearby. And, the house has been moved from one parish to another.”<sup>4</sup>

Today, this same determination would come into play as well as the thinking on recreated villages of historic buildings has not changed. The Edwin Epps House has lost its integrity of location and setting and along with those, the integrity of feeling and association. Furthermore, the extensive use of replacement materials has affected the building’s integrity of materials (see the pictures that follow on pages 5-7 to see the Epps House as it was moved from its original location to the listing location in 1976, renovated thereafter, and then moved again in 1999 from Hwy 71 in Bunkie to the campus of LSUA in Alexandria).

This additional documentation serves to officially delist the Edwin Epps House from the National Register of Historic Places as no official delisting paperwork has ever been filed for the property.

<sup>1</sup> National Register of Historic Places, Edwin Epps House, Bunkie, Avoyelles Parish, Louisiana, National Register #84001255.

<sup>2</sup> Eloria Newell James. “Historical Edwin Epps House under reconstruction at LSUA.” *Sunday Advocate*, Baton Rouge, LA. September 26, 1999, pg. 10B.

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Cultural Resources. “National Register Bulletin: How to Apply the National Register Criterion for Evaluation.”1990; pg. 29.

<sup>4</sup> Patricia Duncan. “RE: Edwin Epps House, Rapides Parish, LA.” Letter to Ms. Megan Lord. July 1, 2013.

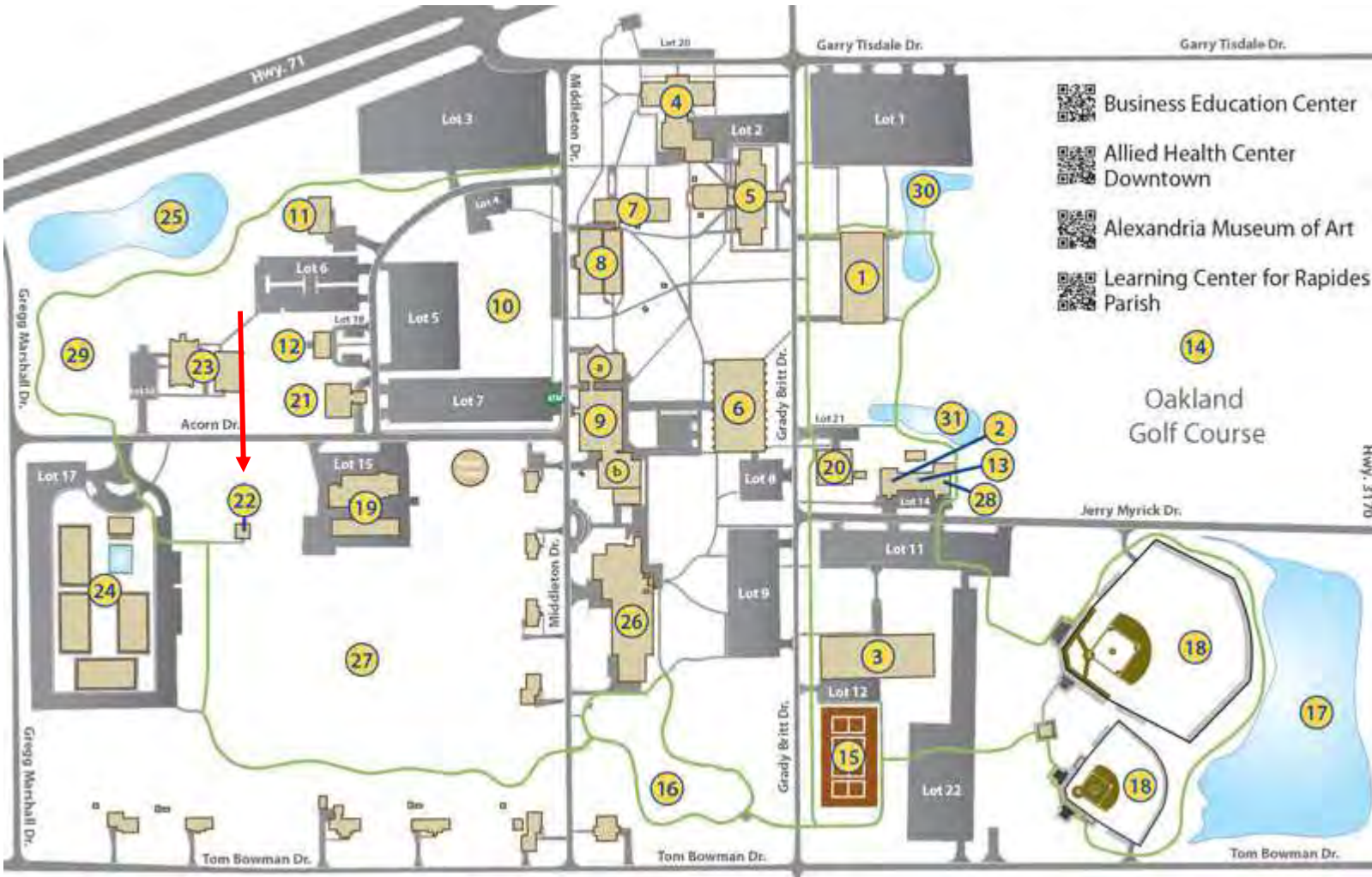


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The above campus map of LSUA shows the Edwin Epps House as Building #22 off of Acorn Drive.

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Google Street View image of the campus of LSU-A as viewed for Highway 167. The Edwin Epps House sits at the center of the photo. See arrow.

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The Epps House at its original location prior to being moved in 1984 (top) and the Epps House after it was moved in 1976 and listed in 1984.



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The Epps House at its listing location c. 1984.

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The Epps House at its current location, where it was moved in 1999. Note the roof returned to a metal roof, new exterior chimney, and use of new materials for shutters, doors, and the front porch.

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Bibliography:

Duncan, Patricia. "RE: Edwin Epps House, Rapides Parish, LA." Letter to Ms. Megan Lord. July 1, 2013.

James, Eloria Newell. "Historical Edwin Epps House under reconstruction at LSUA." *Sunday Advocate*, Baton Rouge, LA. September 26, 1999, pg. 10B.

National Register of Historic Places, Edwin Epps House, Bunkie, Avoyelles Parish, Louisiana, National Register #84001255.

U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Cultural Resources. "National Register Bulletin: How to Apply the National Register Criterion for Evaluation." 1990.



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National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

received MAR 14 1984  
date entered

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

1. Name

historic  Edwin Epps House

and or common Same

2. Location

street & number <sup>U.S.</sup> Highway 71 N/A not for publication

city, town Bunkie N/A vicinity of

state LA code 22 parish ~~XXXXX~~ Avoyelles code 009

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name W. Belmont Townsend Foundation c/o Sue Eakin

street & number P. O. Box 704

city, town Bunkie N/A vicinity of state LA 71322

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Avoyelles Parish Courthouse

street & number Main Street (no specific address)

city, town Marksville state LA 71351

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

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

date 1979  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records LA State Historic Preservation Office

city, town Baton Rouge state LA

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> moved date <u>1976</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

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

The Edwin Epps House (1852) is a single story frame Creole cottage presently located on Highway 71 on the outskirts of the town of Bunkie. Despite a move and considerable replacement of architectural fabric, the house still conveys its historic appearance and consequently its association with the famous slave narrative Twelve Years A Slave.

When the Epps House was moved from its original location on the north bank of Bayou Boeuf near the small community of Holmesville, it was in a deteriorated state and in imminent danger of being demolished by the owner. A local preservation group undertook the 3-1/2 mile move in order to save the house and develop it as a museum. Had it not been for their efforts, there is no doubt that the house would no longer be standing. Unfortunately the original setting of the house was rural while the present setting is an open commercial area along a two lane highway.

Despite this change in setting, the house remains in the same vicinity and hence can still evoke the same historical associations. In any case, it was built as a plantation house, but had long since lost its plantation setting when it was moved. It stood by itself in an overgrown condition along a country road. Gone were the plantation appurtenances and the cultivated surroundings. The preservationists moved the house where they did because it needed a less remote location if it were to be properly maintained and protected. Its only viable use from their perspective was as a museum and tourist center, which demanded a location near a major route. The house is currently the headquarters of the Solomon Northup Trail, a tourist route marking various sites in the slave narrative. (The Epps House, however, is the only remaining standing structure directly associated with Twelve Years A Slave.)

The four bay galleried house is two rooms wide and two rooms deep. There is no central hall. Because it was so deteriorated before the move, much of the original fabric had to be replaced. Original features include the pitched roof galleried form, the framing, the fenestration openings, the beaded ceiling beams, the beaded ceiling boards, and about half of the interior wall boards. Replaced features include all of the siding, all of the windows, the porch columns, and all of the flooring. Both chimneys have been lost.

It should be noted that all replacement was necessary and most of it was done in kind. For example, the present siding is virtually identical to the original. The only difference is that the bead on the present flush boarding is a bit small. But this is something which requires a trained eye even to notice. There is no doubt that the Epps House conveys its historic appearance. Epps and Northup would certainly recognize it today. This is particularly evident if one considers the house's most distinctive feature. Although the two front doors abut each other, each leads into a different front room. This is a local Bunkie area fenestration peculiarity which is not seen much in other parts of the state.

SEE ITEM 7 CONTINUATION SHEET FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON THE MOVE

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Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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7. Description (continued)

Additional Information on the Move:

Before the 1976 move, the Epps House stood near a clump of second growth trees and was encompassed by a pecan orchard on three sides. The house faced south-southwest along Bayou Boeuf just southeast of the Texas and Pacific railroad tracks. Originally, of course, the setting for the house would have been a cotton plantation. After the move the house was placed in the original compass point orientation on what was open highway. It was only subsequently that the area experienced significant commercial development.



# 8. Significance

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

1853 (publication date of Twelve Years A Slave)

**Specific dates** House: 1852

**Builder/Architect**

Builder; Edwin Epps

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

Criterion A

The Edwin Epps House is of national significance in the areas of literature and social/humanitarian because of its close association with the famous slave narrative Twelve Years A Slave.<sup>\*</sup> Epps was Northup's master for the last ten years of his twelve year enslavement and the Epps House figures very prominently in Twelve Years A Slave.

### IMPORTANCE OF TWELVE YEARS A SLAVE:

Twelve Years A Slave is the extraordinary story of Solomon Northup, a free black adult from New York who was kidnapped and enslaved in Louisiana. It was first published in 1853, shortly after Northup's rescue, under the title Twelve Years a Slave, Narrative of Solomon Northup, a Citizen of New York, Kidnapped in Washington City in 1841, and Rescued in 1853, from a Cotton Plantation Near the Red River in Louisiana.

Northup was reunited with his family in Glen Falls, New York on January 20, 1853 and shortly thereafter began work on the narrative with the aid of a local writer named David Wilson. The book was actually written by Wilson, but as dictated to him by Northup. Unlike most of the ghost writers of slave narratives, Wilson was not an antislavery activist. Historians Sue Eakin and Joseph Logsdon, the editors of the most recent edition of Twelve Years A Slave, theorize that Wilson "merely became intrigued with the tragedy and recognized its publishing potential." They also feel there is no reason to doubt Wilson's statement, made in the original preface to the book, that he had dedicated himself to an accurate transcription of Northup's reminiscences.

Slave narratives were immensely popular reading in the North and Twelve Years A Slave was certainly no exception. Its sensational element (i.e., a free black kidnapped and sold into slavery) made it a best seller of its genre. The narrative was an immediate success; the first printing of 8,000 copies was sold within a month. It sold over 30,000 copies in American and European editions during Northup's lifetime and was reprinted several times after his death in 1863. In addition, his story received considerable publicity from articles in Northern newspapers as well as in the antislavery press.

Not only did Northup's story capture the general public's attention, but it also merited comment from such well-known figures as Harriet Beecher Stowe and Frederick Douglass. The first newspaper account of Northup's story (New York Times, January 19, 20, 1853) mentioned the similarity to Uncle Tom's Cabin and Stowe herself termed it a "striking parallel" to her novel. In The Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin (1853), she related Northup's story and noted "the singular coincidence that this man was carried to a plantation in the Red River country, that same region where the scene

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property approximately 1/8 acre.

Quadrangle name Bunkie, LA

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A 

1	5	5	7	7	0	4	10	3	4	2	5	3	8	10
Zone			Easting					Northing						

B 

Zone			Easting					Northing						

C 

Zone			Easting					Northing						

D 

Zone			Easting					Northing						

E 

Zone			Easting					Northing						

F 

Zone			Easting					Northing						

G 

Zone			Easting					Northing						

H 

Zone			Easting					Northing						

Verbal boundary description and justification See enclosed sketch map for description.

Justification: Boundaries were drawn closely around the house in order to discretely encompass the significant resource. Little land was included because the setting is not historically associated with the house and does not contribute to one's appreciation of the house's historic value.

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 ASSISTED BY Sue Eakin, P. O. Box 704, Bunkie, LA 71322  
Division of Historic Preservation

organization State of Louisiana date January 1984 (H) 318/346-2161  
(O) 318/445-3672

street & number P. O. Box 44247 telephone 504/342-6682

city or town Baton Rouge state LA 70804

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Robert B. DeBlieux

title State Historic Preservation Officer Robert B. DeBlieux date February 29, 1984

For NPS use only

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

for Helores Byers Entered in the date 4/12/84  
Keeper of the National Register National Register

Attest: date

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
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8. Significance (cont'd)

of Tom's captivity was laid." Frederick Douglass, who had already recounted his experiences as a slave, recognized the compounded tragedy in Northup's account: "Think of it: For thirty years a man, with all a man's hopes, fears and aspirations--with a wife and children to call him by the endearing names of husband and father--with a home, humble it may be, but still a home . . . then for twelve years a thing, a chattel personal, classed with mules and horses . . . . Oh! it is horrible. It chills the blood to think that such are." (Liberator, August 26, 1853, quoted from Frederick Douglass's Newspaper)

Northup also apparently did some public speaking in the North on his experiences. A reaction to one such personal appearance can be found in a letter to William Lloyd Garrison two years after the first appearance of Twelve Years A Slave: "Twelve Years A Slave has been widely read in New England, and no narrative of man's experience as a slave . . . . is more touching, or better calculated to expose the true character and designs of slaveholders. But it is far more potent to see the man, and hear him, in his clear, manly, straightforward way, speak of slavery as he experienced it, and as he saw it in others. Those who have read his Narrative can scarce fail to desire to see the man . . . and to hear his story from his own lips."

Of the about eighty full-length slave autobiographies published before the Civil War, Twelve Years A Slave is particularly noteworthy for the following reasons:

- (1) Northup had a very unusual set of credentials because he observed the "peculiar institution" from the perspective of both a free black and a slave. Although abductions such as his were not unique, they were certainly not an everyday occurrence. Twelve Years A Slave is one of very very few slave narratives told from such a perspective.
- (2) No other slave has left such a detailed picture of slavery in the Gulf South. Relatively few slaves ever managed to win their freedom from this region and hence almost all of the slave narrators came from the border states or the Atlantic seaboard. His account is particularly valuable for its descriptions of cotton and sugar production and its portrayal of the accommodations and day to day routine of slaves in the Gulf South.
- (3) Twelve Years A Slave is regarded by historians as one of the most reliable and valuable of the extant slave narratives. Joseph Logsdon, in his Solomon Northup entry in the Dictionary of American Negro Biography, observes that leading students of slavery such as U. B. Phillips, Kenneth Stampp, Stanley Elkins, and John Blassingame have all either attested to its credibility or used it extensively in their studies of American slavery.

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8. Significance (cont'd)

This reputation is important because many slave narratives are considered "questionable" by historians because they were often ghost written by abolitionists for use in their propaganda campaign. It should also be noted that the editors of the most recent edition (1968) found Northup's account to be amazingly accurate as they checked it against other available sources.

- (4) Although Northup catalogs cruelty after cruelty and condemns the institution of slavery in no uncertain terms, his account is considered to be a well-balanced treatment of the subject. Reviewers, for example, were quick to take note of his apparent lack of bitterness. Very importantly, Northup makes distinctions between good and bad masters and points out the amenities that made his life endurable. Also, he recounts both the sensational and the ordinary aspects of life under the "peculiar institution."

THE EPPS HOUSE'S ASSOCIATION WITH TWELVE YEARS A SLAVE:

The Epps House figures very prominently in Northup's rescue, as described in the final portion of Twelve Years A Slave. In fact, it is the only extant structure directly associated with the narrative. As noted elsewhere, Epps was Northup's master for the last ten years of his enslavement.

"In the month of June, 1852, . . ." recounts Northup, "Mr. Avery, a carpenter of Bayou Rouge, commenced the erection of a house for Master Epps." Because of his skill as a carpenter, Northup was assigned to help with the building of the house, and it was thus he met Samuel Bass, the man most instrumental in his return to freedom. (Bass was one of the carpenters working on the house.) After overhearing Bass express antislavery sentiments to Epps, Northup decided to approach him for help. Northup explains that he waited until early August when he and Bass were alone working on the house to broach the subject. Bass was receptive and he met Northup that night in the unfinished house to hear the details of his story. Bass wrote letters to various Northern friends of Northup's, acquainting them with his situation, and seeking their assistance to secure his release. Because of the risk involved, Bass understandably remained anonymous. One of these letters reaped results when on January 3, 1853, Henry Northup, the scion of the family that had owned Northup's father, arrived at Epps' plantation to secure Northup's release. It was in the Epps House that Henry Northup and the local sheriff confronted Edwin Epps with Northup's true identity.

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8. Significance (cont'd)

One wonders if Northup would have ever secured his freedom had it not been for the construction of this house. Would he have met Samuel Bass otherwise? Perhaps, but suffice it to say that Solomon Northup undoubtedly considered the construction of the house to be of special importance in ending his twelve years as a slave.

\*These two areas are checked because slave narratives are a literary genre and their subject matter, slavery, best fits under the social/humanitarian category in this instance. Because Twelve Years A Slave yields important information about slavery, an institution of immense national consequence, the State Historic Preservation Office felt that, by definition, the Epps House had to be nominated to the Register at the national level of significance.

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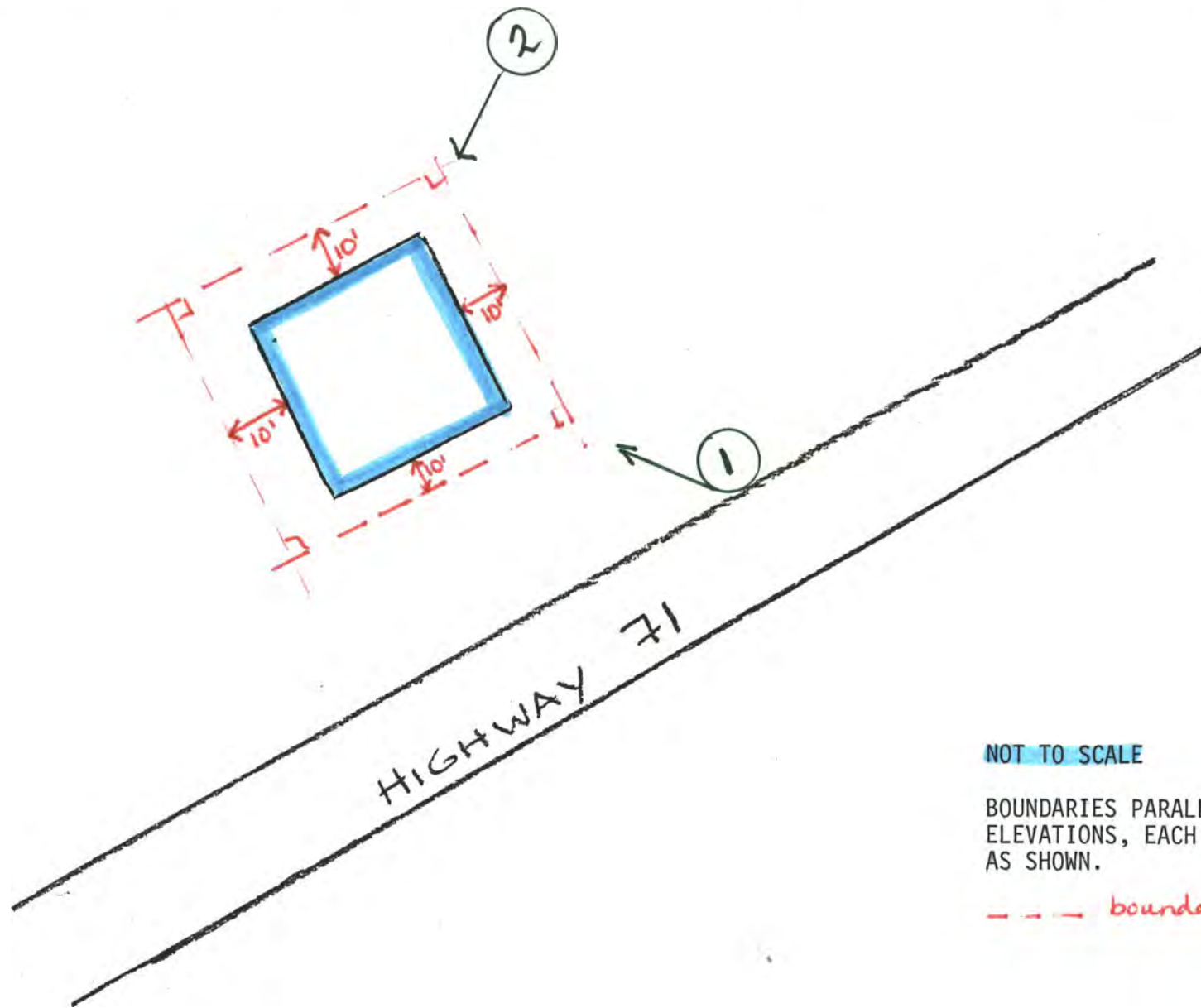
9. Bibliography

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# EDWIN EPPS HOUSE, BUNKIE, AVOYELLES P.



NOT TO SCALE

BOUNDARIES PARALLEL BUILDING ELEVATIONS, EACH AT A DISTANCE OF 10', AS SHOWN.

--- boundary line





Copies of pictures showing  
Epps House prior to the  
move.

Edwin Epps House  
Ivory Lakes Parish  
Louisiana





Edwin Epps House  
Bunkie, LA Avoyelles Parish  
Jonathan Fricker  
July 1983  
LA State Historic Preservation Office  
Photo #1  
NORTH - NORTHWEST



Stark's

WHEEL  
TIRE  
& MOTOR OIL

MALTO CORN



Edwin Epps House  
Bunkie, LA Avoyelles Parish  
Jonathan Fricker  
July 1983  
LA State Historic Preservation Office  
Photo #2

WEST-SOUTHWEST





Edwin Epps House  
Bunkie, LA Avoyelles Parish  
Jonathan Fricker  
July 1983  
LA State Historic Preservation Office  
Photo #3  
INTERIOR VIEW





Edwin Epps House  
Bunkie, LA Avoyelles Parish  
Jonathan Fricker  
July 1983  
LA State Historic Preservation Office  
Photo #4  
INTERIOR VIEW



Edwin Epps House

Bunkie, LA Avoyelles Parish

Jonathan Fricker

July 1983

LA State Historic Preservation Office

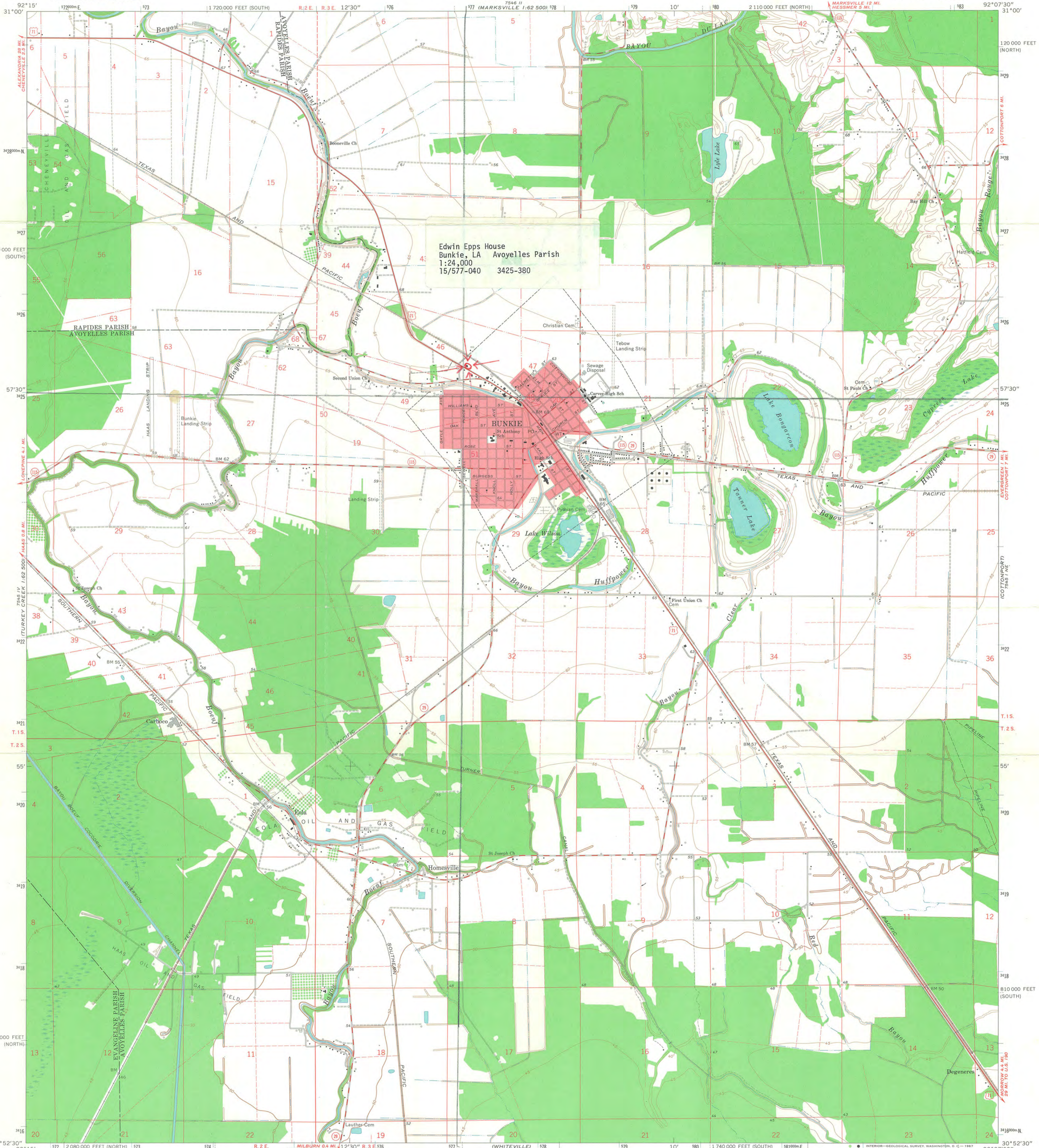
Photo #5

INTERIOR VIEW

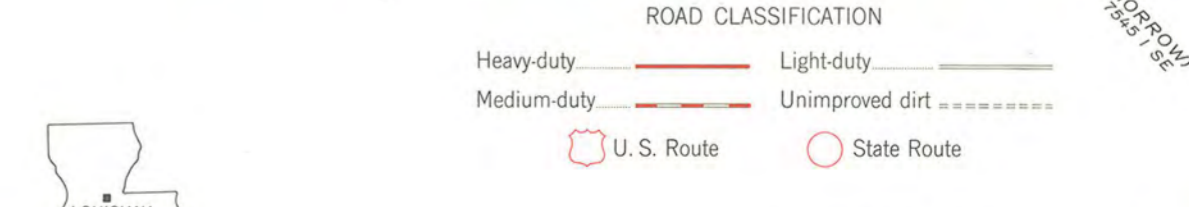
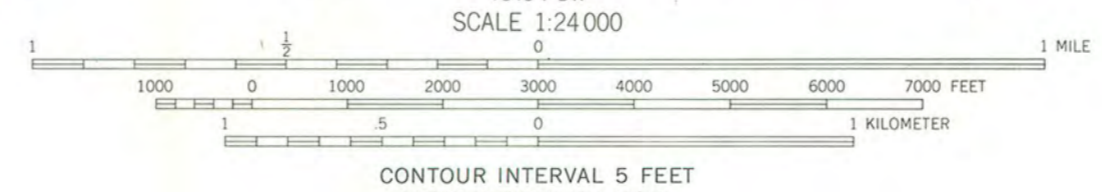
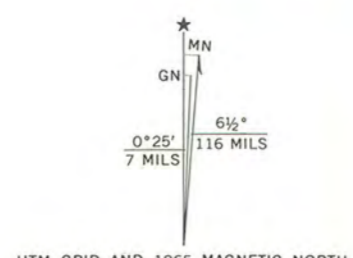








Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey  
Control by USGS and USC&GS  
Planimetry by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1965. Topography by planetable surveys 1965  
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum  
10,000-foot grids based on Louisiana coordinate system, north and south zones  
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 15, shown in blue  
Red tint indicates area in which only landmark buildings are shown  
Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked



THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS  
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR WASHINGTON, D.C. 20242  
AND BY THE STATE OF LOUISIANA, DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS, BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA 70804  
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST



BUNKIE, LA.  
NW/4 BUNKIE 15' QUADRANGLE  
N3052.5—W9207.5/7.5



National Register of Historic Places  
Memo to File

# Correspondence

The Correspondence consists of communications from (and possibly to) the nominating authority, notes from the staff of the National Register of Historic Places, and/or other material the National Register of Historic Places received associated with the property.

Correspondence may also include information from other sources, drafts of the nomination, letters of support or objection, memorandums, and ephemera which document the efforts to recognize the property.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Epps, Edwin, House  
Avoyelles Parish  
LOUISIANA

Working No. MAR 14 1984  
Fed. Reg. Date: 2/5/85  
Date Due: 4/12/84 - 4/28/84  
Action:  ACCEPT 4-12-84  
 RETURN  
 REJECT  
Federal Agency: \_\_\_\_\_

Entered in the  
National Register

- resubmission
- nomination by person or local government
- owner objection
- appeal

Substantive Review:  sample  request  appeal  NR decision

Reviewer's comments:

Recom./Criteria \_\_\_\_\_  
Reviewer \_\_\_\_\_  
Discipline \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ see continuation sheet

Nomination returned for: \_\_\_\_\_ technical corrections cited below  
\_\_\_\_\_ substantive reasons discussed below

1. Name

2. Location

3. Classification

Category	Ownership Public Acquisition	Status Accessible	Present Use
----------	---------------------------------	----------------------	-------------

4. Owner of Property

5. Location of Legal Description

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

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

- summary paragraph
- completeness
- clarity
- alterations/integrity
- dates
- boundary selection



---

**8. Significance**

Period \_\_\_\_\_ Areas of Significance—Check and justify below

Specific dates \_\_\_\_\_ Builder/Architect \_\_\_\_\_

Statement of Significance *(in one paragraph)*

- summary paragraph
- completeness **ADD A I RAM**
- clarity
- applicable criteria
- justification of areas checked
- relating significance to the resource
- context
- relationship of integrity to significance
- justification of exception
- other

---

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

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**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of nominated property \_\_\_\_\_

Quadrangle name \_\_\_\_\_

UTM References \_\_\_\_\_

Verbal boundary description and justification \_\_\_\_\_

---

**11. Form Prepared By**

---

**12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification**

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

\_\_\_\_ national      \_\_\_\_ state      \_\_\_\_ local

State Historic Preservation Officer signature \_\_\_\_\_

title \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

---

**13. Other**

- Maps
- Photographs
- Other

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_



DAVID C. TREEN  
GOVERNOR

MRS. LAWRENCE H. FOX  
SECRETARY

State of Louisiana  
DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE, RECREATION AND TOURISM  
OFFICE OF CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

ROBERT B. DEBLIEUX  
ASSISTANT SECRETARY

February 29, 1984

DIVISION OF ARCHAEOLOGY  
KATHLEEN BYRD, DIRECTOR

DIVISION OF THE ARTS  
ALBERT B. HEAD, DIRECTOR

DIVISION OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
ANN REILEY JONES, DIRECTOR

FOLKLIFE PROGRAM  
NICHOLAS R. SPITZER,  
PROGRAM MANAGER

Chief of Registration  
National Register of Historic Places  
National Park Service  
1100 L Street N. W.  
Washington, D. C. 20240

Dear Sir:

Enclosed please find the completed and signed nomination form for the Edwin Epps House, Avoyelles Parish, along with the necessary maps and photographs.

Because the Epps House has been moved and has certain integrity problems, we were hesitant about nominating it to the Register. So before making any commitment to the applicant, we discussed the case with Patrick Andrus, who was our reviewer at the time. We sent Patrick photographs of the house taken before and after the move and a letter explaining the integrity problems. He was already familiar with the property's historical significance. Patrick replied to the letter by telephone and stated that he had brought the case up at a general staff meeting and the consensus was that it was "safe" to nominate the Epps House. Also, we subsequently asked Carol Duby if we were correct in nominating the house at the national level of significance and she agreed that we were.

If you have any questions, please call Jonathan Fricker, our National Register Coordinator, at (504) 342-6682.

Sincerely,

Robert B. DeBlieux  
State Historic Preservation Officer

RBD/JF/bc

Enclosure: as stated

*Red*  
MAR 14 1984

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action: Removal

Property Name: Epps, Edwin, House

Multiple Name: \_\_\_\_\_

State & County: LOUISIANA, Avoyelles

Date Received: 4/28/2017      Date of Pending List: \_\_\_\_\_      Date of 16th Day: \_\_\_\_\_      Date of 45th Day: \_\_\_\_\_      Date of Weekly List: 6/12/2017

Reference number: OT84001255

Nominator: State

Reason For Review:

Accept       Return       Reject      6/12/2017 Date

Abstract/Summary Comments: the house was moved without prior permission in 1999. Its new location is inappropriate in relation to its significance

Recommendation/ Criteria: Remove

Reviewer Jim Gabbert  Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2275 Date \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION:    see attached comments : No    see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.

# National Register of Historic Places

## Note to the record

2017 - Correspondence related to removal





Associated Press photo

Carpenter George Cope of Bunkie positions old original joists with a newly milled one during the reconstruction of the historic Epps house at LSU at Alexandria.

## Historical Edwin Epps House under reconstruction at LSUA

By ELORIA NEWELL JAMES  
Town Talk

ALEXANDRIA — The Edwin Epps House, an early rustic plantation home, has been moved to a Louisiana college campus for inclusion in the school's Center for Plantation Studies.

The house will be the centerpiece of a plantation complex at LSU at Alexandria.

"We dismantled the house board by board so it could be placed on LSUA's campus," said Dr. Robert Cavanaugh, chancellor at LSUA. "When it's reconstructed it will be back in its original style."

The house was built in 1852 on Epps' plantation grounds in Holmesville, a port on Bayou Boeuf, which is now called Eola, said Dr. Sue Eakin, a retired LSUA history professor.

The house was deteriorating in a cane field on the Townsend Plantation at Eola at the time it was rescued and moved to Bunkie by a preservation group established in Epps' name.

Eakin said the house is being restored according to 1974 architectural drawings by Lauren F. Marchive.

It took about two months to dismantle the house, and reassembly is expected to last about two or three months, Cavanaugh said.

The Epps House is the first of several structures the school plans to include in its Center for Plantation Studies, an educational history exhibit scheduled to open at the university next year. A formal academic curriculum on the subject is also in the works. The program will focus on studies of the plantation as the base of Louisiana's economy until 1950.

Plans for the project also include development of the historic Northup Trail, which was named after Solomon Northup, a free black man from New York state who was kidnapped in Washington, D.C., and sold into slavery in central Louisiana in 1841. Northup's experiences in slavery until 1853, when he was rescued by white friends from New York, are recorded in his book "Twelve Years a Slave."

The modern version of the book was edited by Eakin and Joseph Logsdon. Eakin said the trail expansion could include nearly 50 documented sites in Rapides and Avoyelles parishes. The trail would be extended to include sites in St. Landry Parish and those through which Northup, who was called Platt as a slave, was taken to Franklin, La., in 1845 as one of a gang of cane cutters.

Epps purchased his plantation with funds indebted to him by Rapides planter Archy P. Williams, who also gave Epps eight slaves. The cash was enough for Epps to purchase his own plantation of 325.5 acres in Holmesville, three miles south of the present-day Bunkie. He took the eight slaves to his plantation, and a description of each slave was provided in the documented sale.

Eakin said LSUA has plans to include the Shaw-Harper House in its plantation complex. The Shaw house, which was located across Bayou Boeuf from the Epps Plantation, was described in Northup's book.

Eakin said that, as soon as money can be raised, the Shaw House will be moved to the LSUA campus.

Other buildings to be included in the Center for Plantation Studies exhibit are several cabins, a black Baptist church no longer in use and a country store.



## State of Louisiana

JAY DARDENNE  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

OFFICE OF THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR  
DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE, RECREATION & TOURISM  
OFFICE OF CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT  
DIVISION OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION

PAM BREAU  
ASSISTANT SECRETARY

July 1, 2013

Ms. Megan Lord  
Director, Historic Preservation Commission  
City of Alexandria  
Via e-mail

RE: Edwin Epps House, Rapides Parish, LA

Dear Megan:

I certainly enjoyed meeting with you on June 28. Thank you, again, for meeting me on your usual day off. Seeing the Edwin Epps House turned out to be a good learning experience for me.

As we discussed, the house is no longer part of the National Register because it has been moved from the site upon which it stood when listed in 1984. Unfortunately, it does not appear possible to re-list the house at its new location. The major replacement of materials which took place at that time has changed the dwelling's appearance so much that it looks like a replica rather than a real historic building. Additionally, there is some concern about the new location on the campus of Louisiana State University at Alexandria. Although the building's immediate setting is open, one cannot miss seeing the numerous modern buildings nearby. And, the house has been moved from one parish to another.

I'm sorry the news is not better. However, the story the house tells remains extremely important; and there is no reason the house in its current state cannot be used to tell that story.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of assistant in the future.

Sincerely,

*Patricia Duncan* via e-mail

Patricia Duncan  
Architectural Historian  
National Register Coordinator

PD/pld  
C: James Gabbert, National Park Service







**Property & Facilities Oversight**  
*Real Estate, Public Partnerships, and Compliance*

Phil Boggan  
State Historic Preservation Officer  
Office of Cultural Development  
Department of Culture, Recreation & Tourism  
1051 North 3<sup>rd</sup> Street  
Baton Rouge, LA 70803

Re: Edwin Epps House, Avoyelles Parish, LA

April 3, 2017

Dear Mr. Boggan:

LSU has received your letter of February 27, notifying us of the proposed removal of the Edwin Epps House from the National Register of Historic Places, in accordance with the terms of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966.

The Epps House is operated and maintained by LSU-Alexandria. I have consulted with the Chancellor of LSU-A, and he has requested that I provide the attached letter which will serve as LSU's response to your notice. LSU does not anticipate making any further comments at the April 6, 2017 meeting.

If you have any questions, please contact me at the number below or by email at [pmartin@lsu.edu](mailto:pmartin@lsu.edu).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Patrick H. Martin, V", is written over a horizontal line.

Patrick H. Martin, V  
Assistant Vice President for  
Real Estate, Public Partnership, and Compliance



March 28, 2017

Patrick H. Martin, V  
Assistant Vice President  
Real Estate, Public Partnerships, and Compliance  
LSU  
201 Facilities Services Bldg.  
Ceba Lane  
Baton Rouge, LA 70803

Dear Mr. Martin,

The Epps House as currently configured on the LSUA campus is an important symbol of an influential story about slavery as it was practiced in the Red River Valley. Solomon Northup was a free man of color in New York who was kidnapped, robbed of his freedom, and held for twelve years of his life as an enslaved person in Central Louisiana. His final owner, Edwin Epps, assigned him to help build the original house, and a contact that Northup made while working on it helped win his return to freedom. Historians from 1853 until now have used his story of his ordeal, *Twelve Years a Slave*, to understand and to teach about Southern slavery. Release in 2013 of a major motion picture based on his book helped new generations of Americans and people in other countries better understand American slavery.

LSUA history professor Dr. Sue Eakin was instrumental in bringing Northup's story to modern audiences in 1968 when she and Dr. Joseph Logsdon released their edition of his book published by LSU Press. Her primary focus on adding explanatory footnotes to the original text not only authenticated the story, but also made it more understandable to modern readers.

The Epps House educates visitors about the realities of Northup's experience, the importance of his unflinching account of slavery, and Eakin's role as a prominent female historian who dedicated much of her professional life to authenticating its accuracy. It should and must be preserved. LSUA is encouraged by LSU's recognition of its importance.

Nevertheless, the Epps House has been relocated twice, most recently to the LSUA campus, so it has been removed from its historical setting. Its reconstruction on campus included materials that were not authentic. Therefore, it is understandable that the Division of Historic Preservation would advocate its removal from the National Register of Historic Places.



Behavioral and Social Sciences Department  
(318) 473-6470 • Fax: (318) 473-6560

8100 Highway 71 South  
Alexandria, LA 71302-9121  
[www.lsua.edu](http://www.lsua.edu)

That removal, however, should not diminish its importance as a physical symbol of Solomon Northup's ordeal. He disappeared from the historical record after his return from Louisiana, so any physical reminders of him beyond his descendants are extremely rare. Neither should it diminish the importance of Dr. Eakin's role in preserving Northup's story and the physical effort she expended finding the house in its original location. She planned for it to become the centerpiece of a Center for the Study of Plantation Life and organized three World Plantation Conferences in accordance with that initiative before the end of her career.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jerry Sanson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "J".

Jerry Sanson, PhD  
Department Chair of Behavioral and Social Sciences  
Professor of History and Political Science



BILLY NUNGESSER  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

**State of Louisiana**  
OFFICE OF THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR  
DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE, RECREATION & TOURISM  
OFFICE OF CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT  
DIVISION OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION

RENÉE S. BURAS, II  
DEPUTY SECRETARY

DATE: April 20, 2017

TO: Mr. James Gabbert  
National Park Service, Technical Preservation Services  
National Register of Historic Places  
1849 C. Street NW, Mail Stop 7243, Washington, DC 20240

FROM: Nicole Hobson-Morris, Director *NHM*  
Louisiana Division of Historic Preservation

RE: Edwin Epps House, Avoyelles Parish, LA

Jim,

The enclosed disk contains the true and correct copy of the Additional Documentation for the Edwin Epps House to remove it from the National Register of Historic Places. Should you have any questions, please contact me at 225-342-8172, or nmorris@crt.la.gov.

Thanks,

Nicole

Enclosures:

- CD with PDF of the National Register of Historic Places nomination form
- CD with electronic images (tiff format)
- Physical Transmission Letter
- Physical Signature Page, with original signature
- Other:

Comments:

- Please ensure that this nomination receives substantive review
- This property has been certified under 36 CFR 67
- The enclosed owner(s) objection(s) do \_\_\_\_\_ do not \_\_\_\_\_ constitute a majority of property owners. (Publicly owned property)
- Other: