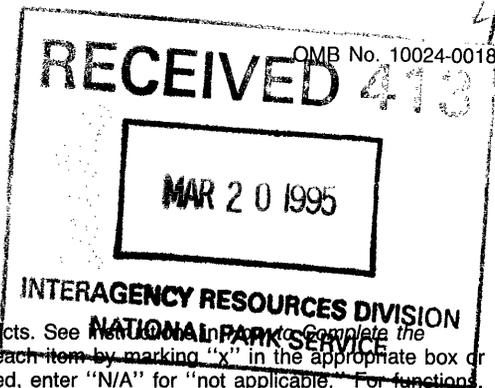


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See National Park Service instructions for completing the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Cherie Quarters Cabins

other names/site number River Lake Plantation Quarters

2. Location

street & number @ 1/2 mile from intersection of LA Hwy 1 and Major Lane  not for publication

city or town Oscar  vicinity

state Louisiana code LA county Pointe Coupee code 77 zip code 70762

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)  
Gerry Hobdy March 16, 1995  
Signature of certifying official/Title Gerry Hobdy Date  
LA SHPO, Dept. of Culture, Recreation and Tourism  
State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date  
\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:  
 entered in the National Register.  See continuation sheet.  
 determined eligible for the National Register  See continuation sheet.  
 determined not eligible for the National Register.  
 removed from the National Register.  
 other, (explain:)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper Ma J. M. [Signature] Date of Action 4/26/95

Cherie Quarters Cabins  
Name of Property

Pointe Coupee Parish, LA  
County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
2	0	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

NA

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/Multiple Dwelling

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

VACANT/Not In Use

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

No Style

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation brick, concrete  
walls weatherboard  
roof tin  
other

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

NA

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

NA

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

**Period of Significance**

c. 1840

**Significant Dates**

c. 1840

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

NA

**Cultural Affiliation**

NA

**Architect/Builder**

Unknown

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

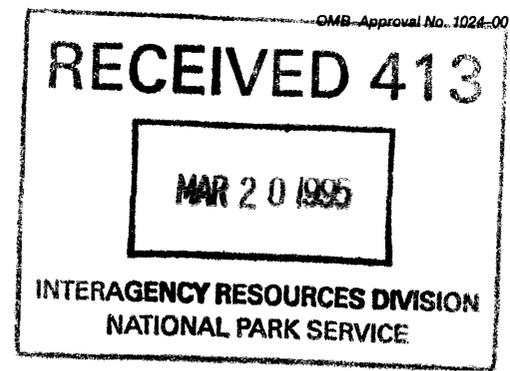
Name of repository:



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Cherie Quarters Cabins, Pointe Coupee Parish, LA  
Section number 7 Page 1



The Cherie Quarters Cabins (c. 1840) are two single story frame slave dwellings located on the east side of Major Lane, a narrow plantation road which intersects Louisiana Highway 1 near the Pointe Coupee Parish rural community of Oscar. Standing roughly 400 feet apart, the twin cabins are all that remain of the quarters for River Lake Plantation. (See the Historical Note in Part 8 for an explanation of the name change.) Although they have suffered some alteration and considerable deterioration, the buildings are nevertheless rare enough within the context of Louisiana to merit recognition by the National Register.

Listed on the Register in 1983, River Lake is a large raised Creole plantation house dating to c. 1820. It stands facing Louisiana Highway 1 and False River approximately .4 mile north of the site of the Cherie Quarters. Although archaeological and pictorial evidence shows that the quarters houses were originally placed fifty feet apart with dwellings standing on each side of the lane, the number of cabins on the site during the antebellum period remains unclear. Several twentieth century maps show differing numbers of cabins standing on the site at different dates. However, former residents of a thriving African-American community which called the quarters home in the 1930s assert that about thirty cabins existed at that time. Whatever the original number, by 1992 only six survived. In 1993 one of these survivors was moved intact to a historic house museum in Baton Rouge. Three others were dismantled and moved piecemeal; to date, these have not been reassembled. Thus, only two cabins survive on the original site of the Cherie Quarters.

Evidence that the cabins date to the antebellum period includes the types of materials used and the methods of construction. Each exhibits timber frame construction with walls held together by mortise and tenon joints, major sills hand hewn, and floor joists dovetailed into the sills. The ceiling joists and rafters displaying straight cut saw marks are nailed using a type of nail produced between 1830 and 1880. The surviving historic ceilings (see below) consist of loosely laid (not nailed) random width boards which rest on the ceiling joists. The exterior walls are covered by cypress clapboards. Because there is no interior wall finish, the timber frame is exposed.

Rectangular in plan, each cabin is raised approximately two feet above grade on large brick piers. Each is two rooms wide with a gallery on its facade. The gallery is open to the tin roof, which is pitched from front to back, has gable ends, and is pierced by a central chimney. The chimney shaft serves back-to-back fireboxes encased by extremely utilitarian brick wraparound mantels. Both rooms are pierced by front and rear doors, as well as by a

CONTINUED

**United States Department of the Interior**  
**National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Cherie Quarters Cabins, Pointe Coupee Parish, LA

Section number 7 Page 2

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window on one side. Most openings are covered by board shutters which retain much of their original hand forged hardware. Because each room was meant for a separate slave family, there was no door in the board and batten wall between the two spaces. This wall runs through the plane of the ceiling and extends to touch the plane of the roof--a curious element not seen in other houses of this period.

Because the Cherie Quarters Cabins were in use as dwellings until only a few years ago, they have experienced some alteration. For example, at some point both cabins received an eight foot deep rear addition with board and batten walls and a shed roof. The additions consisted of two rooms, making each cabin a four room structure. Electrical wiring and some plumbing were added during the 1940s. Some of the window openings have received glazed sashes. A few concrete piers have been installed to replace deteriorated brick members. Additional alterations to the northern cabin include:

- 1) the replacement of its gallery floor and posts, and
- 2) the installation of a storm door on its front left entrance; of wood and tin nailed around the foundation; and of paneling, wallpaper and linoleum on the interior. In installing the paneling, some windows were covered over on the interior. However, they remain exposed on the exterior.

Additional alterations to the southern cabin include:

- 1) the replacement of the floor, the cutting of a door between the two original rooms, and the cutting of a window between one original and one added shed roof room,
- 2) the installation of one modern door on the facade,
- 3) the loss of the original ceiling in the north room,
- 4) deterioration in the form of holes in the walls and floors, and
- 5) the loss of the original front porch posts.

Although deteriorated and slightly changed, the Cherie Quarters Cabins still easily convey their architectural identity. What is important about the quarters is not that they have experienced slight alteration but that they have survived at all. In summary, the Cherie Quarters Cabins are of such rarity and importance that they easily merit National Register listing.

**United States Department of the Interior  
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Continuation Sheet**

Cherie Quarters Cabins, Pointe Coupee Parish, LA

Section number 8 Page 1

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The two Cherie Quarters Cabins are of state significance in the area of architecture because they are rare surviving examples of a once common antebellum building type which has all but disappeared from the state.

The census schedules of 1860 reveal that there were approximately 1,640 holdings of 50 or more slaves in Louisiana on the eve of the Civil War. In addition, there were innumerable holdings of less than 50. This information, along with various other sources, indicates that at one time there must easily have been thousands of slave cabins across the state. They were a very predominant feature of the rural landscape, vastly outnumbering the plantation houses. However, today this situation is reversed. A number of antebellum plantation houses have survived, but it is highly unusual for a plantation to retain any slave dwellings. Although no comprehensive survey of slave quarters has been undertaken in Louisiana, staff knowledge concerning their numbers and locations indicates that only about 40-50 survive. As extremely rare examples of a once common antebellum building type, the Cherie Quarters Cabins are strong candidates for National Register listing.

Historical Note

The River Lake workers' cabins have been known as Cherie Quarters since some time after 1892, when Pervis Cherie Major purchased River Lake from the Arthur Denis estate. A member of an old False River family, Major hired a teacher for the black children who lived on his new property. Eventually, the workers' quarters acquired his name.

Cherie Quarters is the birthplace of Ernest J. Gaines, prominent African-American author of such noted works as The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman (1971), A Gathering of Old Men (1983), and A Lesson Before Dying (1994). Although the cabin in which Gaines was born in 1933 is no longer standing, the community which centered upon the quarters row exercised a major influence upon his writing.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

APR 25 1995

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Cherie Quarters Cabins, Pointe Coupee Parish, LA

Section number 8 Page 2

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The two Cherie Quarters cabins are also of state significance under Criterion A in the area of ethnic history because of their direct association with slave labor which, of course, was crucial to the state's plantation economy during the antebellum period. Plantations, which were originally developed in eighth century India, represent a distinctive form of agricultural practice which came to predominate in the states of the old Confederacy. Plantation regions, both in Africa and in the new world, relied upon several factors: 1) land available in large units, generally several hundred acres at least; 2) a marketable cash crop; 3) easy bulk processing techniques; 4) cheap transportation to bring the cash crop to national and even international markets; and importantly 5) an abundant supply of landless rural labor to work the crop.

According to cultural geographer Dr. Milton Newton: "Only slavery could fulfill the labor profile wanted by the planter. Indians failed as slaves because of disease, refusal to be enslaved, and the ease of escaping to a sympathetic group. Whites failed as slaves for the same reasons. (Blacks) succeeded as slaves because of their color, which made it easy to police for runaways and because of the horribly stringent 'selection' that capture and shipment levied upon their number. Weak, sickly, and truculent individuals were eliminated in the slave pens of Africa, in the slave ships and (in the) slave markets."

By their very nature, dwellings such as those at Cherie Quarters provide us a glimpse into what one historian has termed "the world the slaves made." And it is a rare glimpse, given the relative paucity of surviving resources of this type. One might note that surviving examples as well as a few other sources such as accounts from the period reveal that the cabins at Cherie Quarters appear to be typical for antebellum Louisiana.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Cherie Quarters Cabins, Oscar vicinity, Pointe Coupee Parish, LA

Section number   9   Page   1  

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**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Various historic maps depicting the site of the Cherie Quarters; copies in the possession of restoration expert Sid Gray, Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

Gray, Sid. "Description of Slave Cabins at River Lake Plantation," typescript, January 1995. Copy in National Register file.

Historic photograph of Cherie Quarters taken c. 1889, copy in National Register file.

Laney, Ruth. "Cherie Quarters at River Lake Plantation in Pointe Coupee Parish: Can Birthplace of Author Ernest Gaines Be Saved from Bulldozer?" Preservation in Print (September 1994: 20-22).

Staff knowledge of surviving slave cabins in Louisiana.

Site visit by National Register Staff.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Cherie Quarters Cabins, Pointe Coupee Parish, LA

Section number 10 Page 1

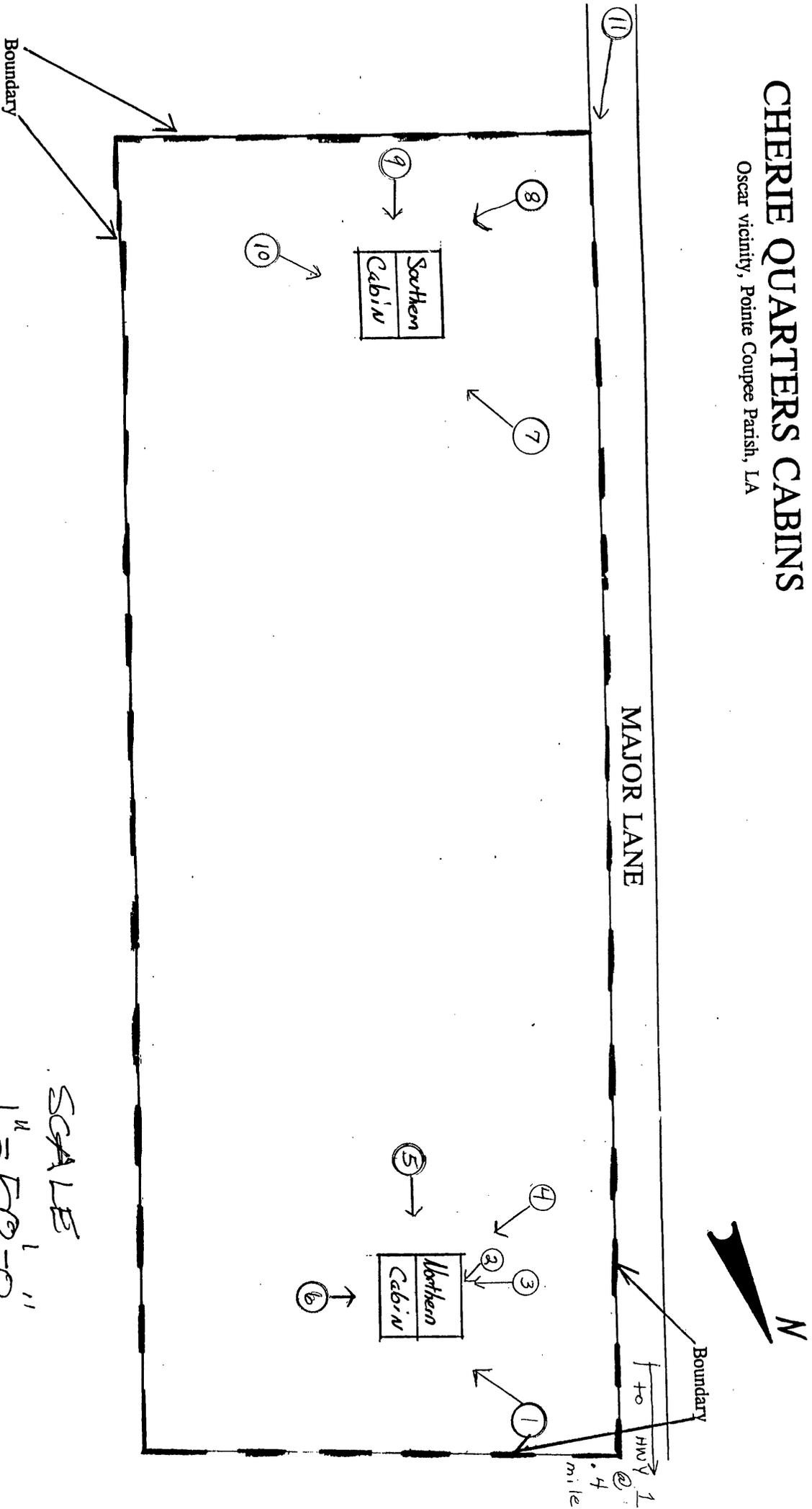
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**Boundary Description:** Please refer to enclosed sketch map.

**Boundary Justification:** Boundaries were drawn to encompass the nominated resources and their immediate setting while excluding extensive rural acreage. Because the cabins are being nominated under Criterion C as rare examples of a once common type, there is no reason to include plantation acreage. Had there been a number of buildings significant as an agricultural complex, it would have been appropriate to include such acreage. Please note that this approach was discussed in advance with NPS, as well as the decision to nominate the cabins on their own rather than as an addendum to the main house nomination. (The main house is almost half a mile away and was nominated for its architectural significance.)

# CHERIE QUARTERS CABINS

Oscar vicinity, Pointe Coupee Parish, LA



**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

**SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD**

**NRIS Reference Number:** 95000470

**Date Listed:** 4/26/95

**Cherie Quarters Cabins  
Property Name**

**Pointe Coupee      LOUISIANA  
County                      State**

**Multiple Name**

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**This property is listed in the National Register of Historic  
Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation  
subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments,  
notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included  
in the nomination documentation.**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature of the Keeper**

4/26/95  
\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date of Action**

=====  
**Amended Items in Nomination:**

Section No. 8

This nomination is amended to add Criterion A, for Ethnic  
Heritage--black.

This change was confirmed by phone with the Louisiana SHPO.

**DISTRIBUTION:**

- National Register property file**
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)**