

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NCRS use only
received AUG 4 1980
date entered OCT 3 1980

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

1. Name

historic Lake Providence Multiple Resource Area (Partial Inventory)

and/or common Historic Resources of Lake Providence (Partial Inventory: Historic and Architectural Properties)

2. Location

street & number _____ not for publication _____
city, town Lake Providence _____ vicinity of congressional district 5th-Jerry Huckaby
state La code 22 county East Carroll Parish code 035

3. Classification

MULTIPLE RESOURCES

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

4. Owner of Property

name multiple ownership

street & number _____

city, town _____ vicinity of _____ state _____

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. East Carroll Parish Courthouse

street & number _____

city, town Lake Providence state La

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

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

date 1980 federal state county local

depository for survey records La. State Historic Preservation Office

city, town Baton Rouge state La

7. Description

MULTIPLE RESOURCES			
Condition	Check one		Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input 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 Survey:

The historic and architectural survey which resulted in the Lake Providence Multiple Resource Nomination was conducted by Jonathan Fricker, architectural historian for the Louisiana National Register Program, and East Carroll Parish historian Maude Van Fossen in cooperation with the East Carroll Historical Society during February and March of 1980. The town was covered exhaustively by car and low flying aircraft. Each structure which was possibly at least 50 years old was pinpointed, inspected and abstracted. The findings were then evaluated building by building for possible architectural and historical significance by a committee consisting of the aforementioned architectural historian and historian and Mrs. Betty Reed, President of the East Carroll Historical Society.

General Description:

Lake Providence is the seat of East Carroll Parish as well as the parish's only major town. It is situated on low flat delta land between the Mississippi River levee and the shores of Lake Providence, an oxbow lake which was created when the Mississippi changed its course. The town's most prominent land feature, the levee, has twice advanced to claim the downtown area. As a result, although the town of Providence (later changed to Lake Providence) dates from 1833, the present historic downtown commercial area dates from the early twentieth century.

This 2 1/2 block corridor of Lake Street set behind the levee consists of 1 and 2 story brick structures closely placed with open ornamental shop fronts and considerable decorative brickwork. Relatively well-preserved, the Lake Street corridor represents the heyday of Lake Providence as a river port, social center, and commercial focus for the parish. Records indicate that in its day it contained numerous saloons, dry goods stores, grocery and drugstores, an opera house, and three ferry landings. A more modern and considerably less concentrated commercial area consisting of parking lots, garages, convenience stores, drive-in banks, etc. stretches along Route 65, which is the main road into town.

The town's earliest extant residences date from the mid-nineteenth century. They are the Hamley house, the Delony house, Arlington, and the Bass house. Set along the lake, each in a general sense represents the cotton planter heritage of the town. Although styles vary from Federal to Italianate, all are relatively free of Gulf Coast influence, following instead architectural models from the eastern states.

Lake Providence experienced a modest wave of residential construction during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, which paralleled the construction of urban Lake Street. Few of the buildings it produced survive; however, the town still retains a significant compliment of large and pretentious residences of the period including two massive frame galleried houses sparingly trimmed in classical details, five substantial Queen Anne residences, three of which have turrets and curving galleries, and two unusually large bungalows.

The town's predominantly post-1940 residential area is "peppered" with approximately ten small and undistinguished early twentieth century residences. There are basically two reasons for this residential configuration. First, so many other houses dating from the early twentieth century have been lost. Secondly, in the early twentieth century the basic density was one or two houses per block; however, the post-1940 infill changed

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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

FOR HCRS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	AUG 4 1980
DATE ENTERED	OCT 3

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 2

the density to six to eight houses per block. As a result, the earlier houses are isolated from each other and do not form any distinct grouping. Therefore, they cannot be nominated as a historic district. Nor can they be nominated separately because, as modest local examples of Queen Anne and bungalow style residences, none have sufficient architectural or historic merit.

Historically the most pretentious residences have been built along the lake. As a result, a more or less continuous strip of large old residences comprise the Lake Providence Residential Historic District. There are also three individually nominated homes. Finally, the courthouse square, which is also being nominated, reflects the traditional role of Lake Providence as the parish seat of government and provides, with its broad lawns and mature oak trees, a parklike setting for the town center.

PROPERTIES NOMINATED:

1. Lake Providence Commercial Historic District (currently listed on National Register)
2. Lake Providence Residential Historic District
3. Arlington
4. Fischer House (currently listed on National Register)
5. Nelson House
6. Courthouse Square

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 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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates	n/a	Builder/Architect	n/a
----------------	-----	-------------------	-----

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph) Criteria A, B, C

Lake Providence's architecturally significant cultural resources encompass most building types and styles normally found in small parish seats at the turn of the century. In addition, there are some important structures from earlier periods. Most of these resources are significant as large and pretentious works of architecture in an area which is otherwise largely devoid of historic buildings.

The town's most outstanding residence, Arlington, is one of about 4 two-story, galleried, Greek Revival mansions in northeastern Louisiana. The Bass House, an Italianate villa, represents a mid-nineteenth century style rarely seen in Louisiana outside of New Orleans. Aside from the new courthouse (ca 1935), the old East Carroll Parish Courthouse is the only pretentious governmental structure in the vicinity and the area's only example of Romanesque Revival architecture. Typical of the town's larger Queen Anne residences is the Nelson House, which like its fellows has unusually well developed massing. Its large and prominent turret, for example, is rare in a state where most Queen Anne houses are simple "L" shaped boxes with applied details. Finally, the turn of the century commercial downtown area is significant not only for its relatively elaborate brickwork, but also for its unusually high proportion of surviving original shop fronts.

When the town of Lake Providence was formed in the 1830's, it was located in Carroll Parish, which had been created in 1832. The parish was divided into East and West Carroll Parishes in 1877. Lake Providence has always been the seat of government for the parish except from 1855 to 1870 when the seat was moved to Floyd (now in West Carroll Parish).

The antebellum years were the most significant ones in Lake Providence's history. As was the case in the South as a whole, cotton was indeed king in antebellum Carroll Parish. On the eve of the Civil War Carroll led the state in cotton production and was the state's second richest cotton producing parish. Seven of the top twelve cotton producers in the state were in the parish. Slaves comprised 77% of the population and there were 91 large slaveholdings (holdings of 50 or more slaves) in the parish.

Lake Providence was the largest town in the parish at the time and was the shipping center for much of the interior. A river guide of the period spoke of Lake Providence in 1856 as being "a very handsome village, population about 359, with a considerable trade in cotton and plantation supplies." "There were," continued the guide, "many fine plantations in the area around the lake." The only extant example in Lake Providence of the grand plantation homes of this era is Arlington, which stands as a symbol of the area's antebellum prosperity and grandeur.

In addition, Arlington is significant as the home of Edward Sparrow, an immensely wealthy cotton planter and Confederate politician. Sparrow owned Arlington from the 1850's when he purchased it until his death in 1882. He is buried there in the family cemetery.

Sparrow's accomplishments are numerous. Born in Ireland in 1810, Sparrow was one of the twelve largest cotton producers in Louisiana on the eve of the Civil War. Estimates on the number of slaves he owned vary from approximately 390 to approximately 460.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Title Searches, East Carroll Parish Courthouse
 Warner, Ezra J., and Yearns, W. Buck, Biographical Register of the Confederate Congress,
 Baton Rouge, LSU Press, 1975.

(CONTINUED)

10. Geographical Data

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

Acreege of nominated property _____

Quadrangle name _____

UTM NOT VERIFIED angle scale _____

UMT References

1. Residential District

A	1 5	6 7 0 5 3 0	6 6 3 1 3 0 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing
C	1 5	6 7 1 0 3 0	6 6 3 0 9 0 0
E			
G			

B	1 5	6 7 1 0 8 0	6 6 3 1 0 4 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing
D	1 5	6 7 0 4 8 0	6 6 3 1 1 9 0
F			
H			

(See continuation sheet)

Verbal boundary description and justification

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 East Carroll Parish Historical Society in cooperation with the Division of
Archaeology and Historic Preservation
 organization _____ date February, March, April, 1980
 street & number _____ telephone _____
 city or town _____ state _____

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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature *Edward Lavin*

title _____ date 5/23/80

For HCBS use only	
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register	
<u><i>Bill Groves</i></u>	date <u>4/3/80</u>
Keeper of the National Register	
Attest:	date
Chief of Registration	

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

FOR HCRS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	AUG 4 1980
DATE ENTERED	OCT 3

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

The 1860 Census lists Sparrow as having four holdings--3 in Carroll Parish (1 of which was a partnership) and 1 in Concordia Parish. His estate, as reported for the 1860 census, was \$1,248,050. Sparrow was thus one of the richest men of the South, both in wealth and slaves.

In January, 1861 Sparrow was elected as an immediate secessionist to the Louisiana secession convention, which unanimously appointed him to membership in the Provisional Confederate Congress. In November, 1861 he was chosen to be one of Louisiana's two Senators in the Confederate Congress, a position he continued to occupy until the end. In fact, he was one of the eight men to be members of the Congress from the first day to the last. During the entire war period he was chairman of the powerful Committee on Military Affairs.

Despite difficulties with labor, floods, and low prices, cotton remained the major money crop in Carroll Parish in the postbellum era. In fact, in 1880 East Carroll topped every parish and every county in the South in productivity per acre. Instead of being worked by slaves, the parish's cotton plantations were now worked by tenant farmers and sharecroppers.

As it had been in the antebellum era, Lake Providence was an important commercial focal point for the area in the postbellum period. At the turn of the century the old downtown area was the place where the people of East Carroll Parish came to purchase needed goods and foodstuffs. People also came from parts of Mississippi by ferry. By all accounts ferry business was brisk. Knowledgeable old residents of the town report that Lake Providence was, indeed, the place where people came to shop. Newspaper advertisements from the turn of the century confirm this. For example, they list clothing stores such as T.J. Powell's, Nemo White's, Max Levy, S.W. Green, and Hill Bros. They list drug stores such as Guenard Drugs, City Drugs, and the Levee Street Drug Store. They also list coal for sale at Maguire and Schneider's landing, and foodstuffs for sale at S.A. McNeil Grocery Store. In addition, there was a fish market, a lumber mill, a cotton seed oil mill, several dry goods stores, and several hardware stores. The fact that the town's business supported so many stores and manufacturing concerns indicates the importance of Lake Providence as a commercial center for the area.

Lake Providence was also a place to come for amusement and diversion at the turn of the century. Old residents report that gambling was a daily activity in the back rooms of the commercial area from the late nineteenth century until the early 1950's, when the practice was broken up by Sheriff "Red" Gilbert. At any given time, there were ten to twelve saloons operating in town. An example was the Phil McQuire Billiards and Pool Hall, which was advertised as the sole distributor for the Live Oak Distillery Company of Cincinnati, Ohio. Another example was Van's Saloon, just back of the levee, which was frequented by blacks and had a reputation for rowdiness.

There was an opera house which gave regular musical performances. But even if there were no planned event such as a circus or musical, people still

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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

FOR HCRS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	AUG 4 1980
DATE ENTERED	OCT 3 1980

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8

PAGE 3

came to Lake Providence to meet friends and "watch the people." Old residents have reported that Saturday was a significant day in old Lake Providence. It was the day when families from the surrounding plantations came to town to shop. But more than a shopping trip, it was also a social occasion in which people mingled, received news of other families, picked up the mail, attended a movie or musical performance, and simply sat and watched passers-by.

Preservation efforts in Lake Providence do not look beyond registration of the town's eligible resources. It is hoped that a Register listing itself, with the Tax Act and recognition factors, will help provide for the ultimate survival and enhancement of the town's historic buildings.

There is no comprehensive plan for growth in the area. However, the survey information has been incorporated into the statewide survey for use by state and federal agencies in the planning process.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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

FOR HCRS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	AUG 4 1980
DATE ENTERED	OCT 3 1980

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 2

Pinkston, Georgia Payne Durham, A Place To Remember: East Carroll Parish, Louisiana, 1832-1976, Baton Rouge, Claitor's Publishing Division, 1977.
Hair, William Ivy, Bourbonism and Agrarian Protest, Baton Rouge, LSU Press, 1969.
Alexander, Thomas B., and Beringer, Richard E., The Anatomy of the Confederate Congress, Nashville, Vanderbilt University Press, 1972.
Menn, Joseph K., The Large Slaveholders of Louisiana, 1860, New Orleans, Pelican Publishing Company, 1964.
National Register Nomination Form, Lake Providence Commercial Historic District, Located in Lake Providence Commercial Historic District National Register File, State Historic Preservation Office, Baton Rouge.