

CHALMETTE BATTLEFIELD AND CHALMETTE NATIONAL CEMETERY

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE SOUTHEAST REGION

Cover Illustrations

Background: Aerial photograph of Chalmette National Historical Park, showing Chalmette Monument [bottom left], Malus-Beauregard House [bottom right], and the adjacent Fazendeville community [top], c. 1960

Inset: Canary Island descendants (“Islenos”) from St. Bernard Parish at anniversary celebration of the Battle of New Orleans, January 1998

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August 1999

Kevin Risk

Cultural Resources Stewardship Division
National Park Service
Southeast Regional Office

Foreword

We are pleased to add this volume to our growing library of Cultural Landscape Reports for park units in the Southeast Region. Many individuals and institutions contributed to the successful completion of this work. In particular, we would like to thank Superintendent Geraldine Smith, Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve, for the time and interest she gave to this project as the senior manager of the site. We would also like to thank the Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation, our partners in developing a professional research staff to serve the Southeast Region parks. Finally, we want to recognize the labor and dedication of Historical Landscape Architect Kevin Risk, author of this report. We hope that the study will be a useful tool for park management and for others interested in the history and significance of the Park's many cultural resources.

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INTRODUCTION

Management Summary

This cultural landscape report provides treatment recommendations for the Chalmette Battlefield and Chalmette National Cemetery Site, an administrative unit of Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve. The 142.9-acre property (park) represents a portion of the site on which the Battle of New Orleans was fought, serving both to commemorate the battle and to interpret the strategy of this decisive American victory during the War of 1812. The park includes the commemorative battlefield and the adjacent Chalmette National Cemetery, a designed landscape which itself occupies a portion of the former battlefield.

The park contains a number of features associated with the Battle of New Orleans, as well as some significant features not connected with the battle, notably the Malus-Beauregard House (c. 1833) and archeological resources related to post-battle land uses. For example, a trace of Fazendeville Road, a remnant of the black community of Fazendeville that existed on site from the late nineteenth century until 1964, remains within park boundaries. The interpretation of these non-battle-related features has proven problematic to the park's primary mission of interpreting the battlefield landscape, yet these features hold historical, cultural, and ethnographical significance in their own rights. In light of such concerns, the report provides:

- a) treatment recommendations for the landscape features, both battle-era and commemorative, associated with Chalmette Battlefield;
- b) treatment recommendations for the park's non-historic resources (visitors center, parking lot, tour road, comfort station, wayside exhibits, etc.);
- c) direction for interpreting the multiple layers of Chalmette's history, focusing especially on archeological resources and the site's proximity to the Mississippi River; and

- d) treatment recommendations for Chalmette National Cemetery and its associated features.

The park is anticipating bicentennial observances for two events of national historical significance: the first, in 2003, for the anniversary of the Louisiana Purchase; and another, in January 2015, for the anniversary of the Battle of New Orleans. The treatment recommendations provided will be incorporated into the park's long-range planning for these events.

Historical Summary

The park is composed of land that belonged to the historic Chalmette and Rodriguez Plantations. It was on these two properties that the primary action of the Battle of New Orleans--the last engagement of the War of 1812--was fought.¹ During the battle, which occurred on January 8, 1815, British troops advanced westward across the fields of Chalmette Plantation, attacking the American line entrenched behind a canal on the eastern boundary of the neighboring Rodriguez Plantation. The two-hour battle was an impressive victory for General Andrew Jackson and his outnumbered troops over British forces seeking to capture New Orleans from the east. The American victory is seen by many historians as a decisive statement of the young republic's right and ability to control not only the vital Mississippi River corridor, but also its own westward expansion, free of foreign impediment. The victory solidified American claims to the Louisiana Purchase. Furthermore, the rousing victory bolstered Jackson's popularity and helped to catapult him to national prominence and, ultimately, in 1828, the presidency.

Historic features associated with the Battle of New Orleans include: the Rodriguez Canal, which served as a line of entrenchment for Jackson's troops during the battle; the partially reconstructed

American rampart and artillery batteries; the site of the British attack and advance batteries; the Rodriguez Plantation archeological site; Chalmette Monument, erected in 1855 to commemorate the American victory; and Spotts Marker, erected in the 1890s to memorialize First Lieutenant Samuel Spotts's role in the battle. The Malus-Beauregard House, an architecturally noteworthy summer residence built in 1833, stands at the southern end of the commemorative battlefield, serving as a reminder of the site's post-battle, antebellum history.

Chalmette National Cemetery, a 17.3-acre designed landscape, is set apart from the battlefield within a brick-walled enclosure along the park's eastern edge. The cemetery was established in 1864 for the interment of Union soldiers killed during the Civil War in Louisiana. Historic features include the 1929 brick cemetery lodge, which now serves as park administrative headquarters; an ornamental iron entrance gate from the War Department-era (1864-1933); the distinctive post-and-panel brick walls that enclose the cemetery; the G.A.R. Monument, erected in 1882 to honor Union war dead; the linear rows of marble gravemarkers; and the allees of live oak and sycamore trees that line the cemetery drive.

Study Boundaries

The park is located in St. Bernard Parish, Chalmette, Louisiana, approximately six miles southeast of downtown New Orleans, in a highly industrialized corridor along the east bank of the Mississippi River (fig. 1). The property is bounded to the south by a broadly concave arc of the river and by the adjacent levee, which is maintained and administered by the Army Corps of Engineers. To the north, an approximately 200-foot-wide strip, containing highway, railroad, and several gas line rights-of-way, separates the park from the St. Bernard Highway (LA Highway 46). The Norfolk Southern Railroad line runs along this right-of-way just north of park boundaries. The former Kaiser Aluminum and Chemical Corporation's processing plant bounds the park to the east, and Chalmette Slip, a ship docking and storage facility, bounds the park to the west. Both of these properties are now owned by the St. Bernard Port, Harbor and Terminal District,

and a service road along the landward toe of the levee provides cross-park access between them. A sewage treatment facility, owned by the St. Bernard Parish Police Jury, stands as a 1.5-acre inholding at the park's southern end; it figures into this report because of its conspicuous and anachronistic presence on the battlefield landscape. The Mississippi River and St. Bernard Highway are the primary transportation links between the park and downtown New Orleans.

Scope of Work and Methodology

The overall goal of the historical research is to understand how various land parcels evolved (and were acquired) independently over time to compose the contemporary park. Significant periods of change in the landscape are documented, including limited investigation of the site's pre-battlefield landscape, the battlefield scene, Chalmette's post-battle history of subdivision and private ownership, and the battlefield's long

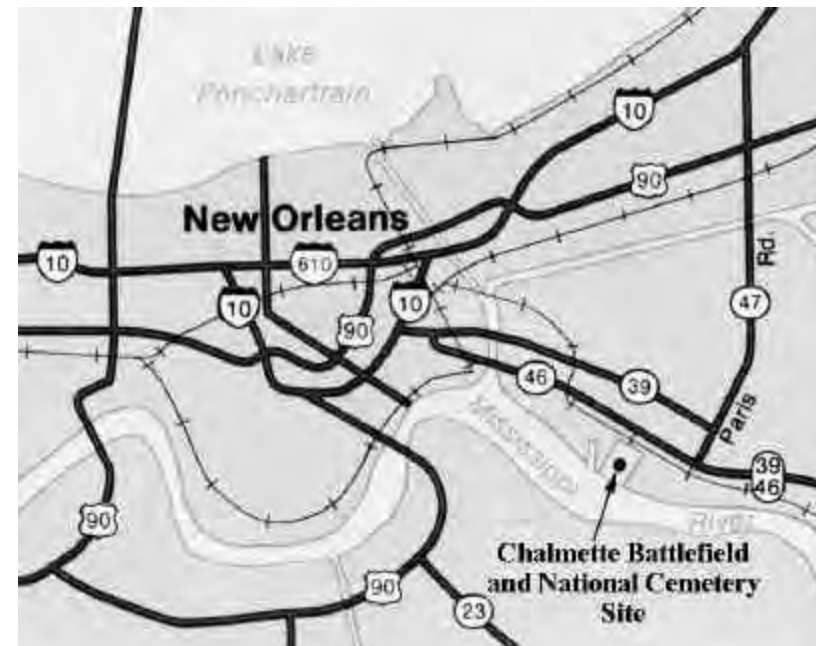


Figure 1. Regional context for the Chalmette Site. (GPO:1996--404-952/40170)

history of private and public commemoration. The research findings are used to draw comparison to the site's existing landscape conditions in order to assess what resources remain from the battle-era landscape and from latter cultural overlays. Based on this analysis, treatment recommendations are proposed to suggest how the battlefield's landscape resources can most effectively be treated and interpreted in the future. Because the National Cemetery differs in origin and purpose from the commemorative battlefield, the cemetery is addressed separately in the site history and analysis sections of the report, and separate treatment recommendations are provided.

The park's *Historic Resource Study* (1985) served as the essential starting point for understanding Chalmette's complex history. A number of secondary sources provided additional background information on early settlement patterns, regional geography, culture, and local history. Other park documents reviewed include the *Master Plan* (1969), the *Amendment to the General Management Plan/Development Concept Plan* (1990), the *Interpretive Prospectus* (1983), historical maps and drawings, archival photographs, archeological reports, and various early park documents, including "Quartermaster General's Reports" for Chalmette National Cemetery and "Superintendent's Reports" for Chalmette National Historical Park. Research techniques included site visits during September 1997 and January 1998, and staff interviews. Historical investigation was limited primarily to the review of pre-existing park research and documentation, supplemented by interviews and telephone conversations with persons having specific site history or resource information.

Summary of Findings

Given the highly industrialized context of its surroundings, Chalmette's landscape is not readily legible to the uninformed visitor; and it bears only the loosest resemblance to the landscape that existed at the time of the Battle of New Orleans. Furthermore, the site's connection to the Mississippi River and to a broader regional context--information critical for understanding the site's early development as an agricultural landscape, its evolution to post-agricultural land uses, and its present

condition as a relic landscape within a highly industrialized corridor--remains largely uninterpreted. The landscape treatments proposed are thus devised with multiple purposes in mind: to preserve the park's significant cultural resources; to provide a fuller and richer interpretation of the site's landscape features, context, and multiple layers of history; and to address such contemporary planning and management concerns as boundary buffering, vegetation management, and visitor use patterns.

A carefully selected program of rehabilitation is the most viable treatment approach for the commemorative battlefield. The urgent need for site buffering, a shift in visitor use patterns, and the tightened economies of site management require landscape treatments that address such contemporary problems, yet enhance the park's interpretive aims. In fact, primary and secondary interpretive themes are strengthened by revising visitor circulation patterns and defining separate spatial zones, or "character areas," in which differential interpretation can occur. Treatment recommendations also propose the removal or relocation of park-era infrastructure that compromises the spatial integrity and understanding of the historic battlefield landscape. Though not historically significant as a separate landscape, the riverfront is treated as a separate management zone because of its spatial isolation from the battlefield and because of its individual interpretive potential. Treatment recommendations suggest how the riverfront might be more fully incorporated into the park's interpretive program and the visitor experience.

Because of its developmental history, designed layout, and independent spatial integrity, Chalmette National Cemetery stands apart from the battlefield as a distinct designed landscape. Consequently, separate treatment recommendations suggest a rehabilitation of the cemetery's allees and planting patterns, based on historic documentation and photographs. Such improvements will further distinguish the cemetery from the commemorative battlefield and will provide much needed buffering from the Kaiser Aluminum property to the east.

Notes

1. The battle commonly referred to as the Battle of New Orleans (January 8, 1815) was the last of a series of engagements between American and British troops that occurred on the plantation properties along the Mississippi River southeast of New Orleans during the months of December 1814 and January 1815. Though their strategies and outcomes are certainly intertwined with that of the final battle, the earlier skirmishes--December 23, December 28, and January 1--will not be treated in this report, since they occurred on properties downriver from Chalmette Plantation, on land not currently owned by the National Park Service. A thorough account of the earlier conflicts and their spatial relationship to the later battle is provided in Greene's *Historic Resource Study* (1985), as well as in Betsy Swanson's unpublished *Study of the Military Topography and Sites Associated with the 1814-1815 New Orleans Campaign* (1985).

PART ONE: SITE HISTORY

A View from the Battleground, February 1819

The battle of the 8th terminated the campaign, but the attack of the British immediately on Landing, decided its ultimate event. This is generally known and believed. The retreat of General [Jackson] to the Lines at which the battle of the 8th was fought was a most judicious measure & worthy of Hannibal. These lines, or rather *this Line*, is now visible only as the somewhat elevated bank of a narrow canal from the Mississippi to the swamp. . . . This ditch & something of a bank extending from the river road to the swamp will probably remain for many years, because the ditch serves as a plantation drain. But the soluble quality of the earth & the exceedingly heavy rains of the climate would otherwise, in a few years, destroy every vestige of a work which saved the city & the whole country of the delta from conquest.

The field of battle is itself a level uninterrupted plain without cover or defence of any kind, immediately in front of the Line, on which it was necessary to sacrifice a great number of men before the Line could be approached. The event is known, & will live as long as the American history shall be read.¹

When architect Benjamin Henry Latrobe first visited the “famous Battle Ground” at Chalmette in February 1819, a mere four years had passed since General Andrew Jackson’s rousing victory at the Battle of New Orleans. And though the reverential tone of Latrobe’s remarks suggests the degree to which that campaign still loomed large in the public imagination, the landscape on which the battle itself had occurred was already starting to take on the air of a faded, if hallowed, relic. The canal, which had served Jackson as a ready-made line of defense during the battle, had reassumed its function as a “plantation drain,” its “something of a bank”--remnants of the earthen rampart thrown up along the western edge of the canal by the

American troops--perceptibly eroded by the ravages of climate and the on-going demands of agricultural use.² In fact, what had been the site of bloody conflict only four years prior had apparently regained the unassuming appearance of a working plantation landscape.

A set of pencil and watercolor studies made by Latrobe during his visit to the battleground attests to the weathered functionality of this rural agricultural scene (figs. 2 & 3). Captured in considerable detail are the structures and field patterns of two of the plantation complexes--the Macarty and Rodriguez Plantations--upon whose landscapes the primary action of the battle of January 8, 1815, or its auxiliary functions, occurred. The Chalmet Plantation--or Chalmette, as the name would eventually evolve--appears as a flat open field, devoid of structures and delineated by fencerows, that stretches back from the river into the right midground of the less-finished drawing (fig. 3). The only apparent reminders of the battle are the linear mounds of bare earth along a distant fence line,



Figure 2. Latrobe sketch of the Macarty house [left] and Rodriguez plantation [right], showing remnants of the American line [midground], (Latrobe, 1951).

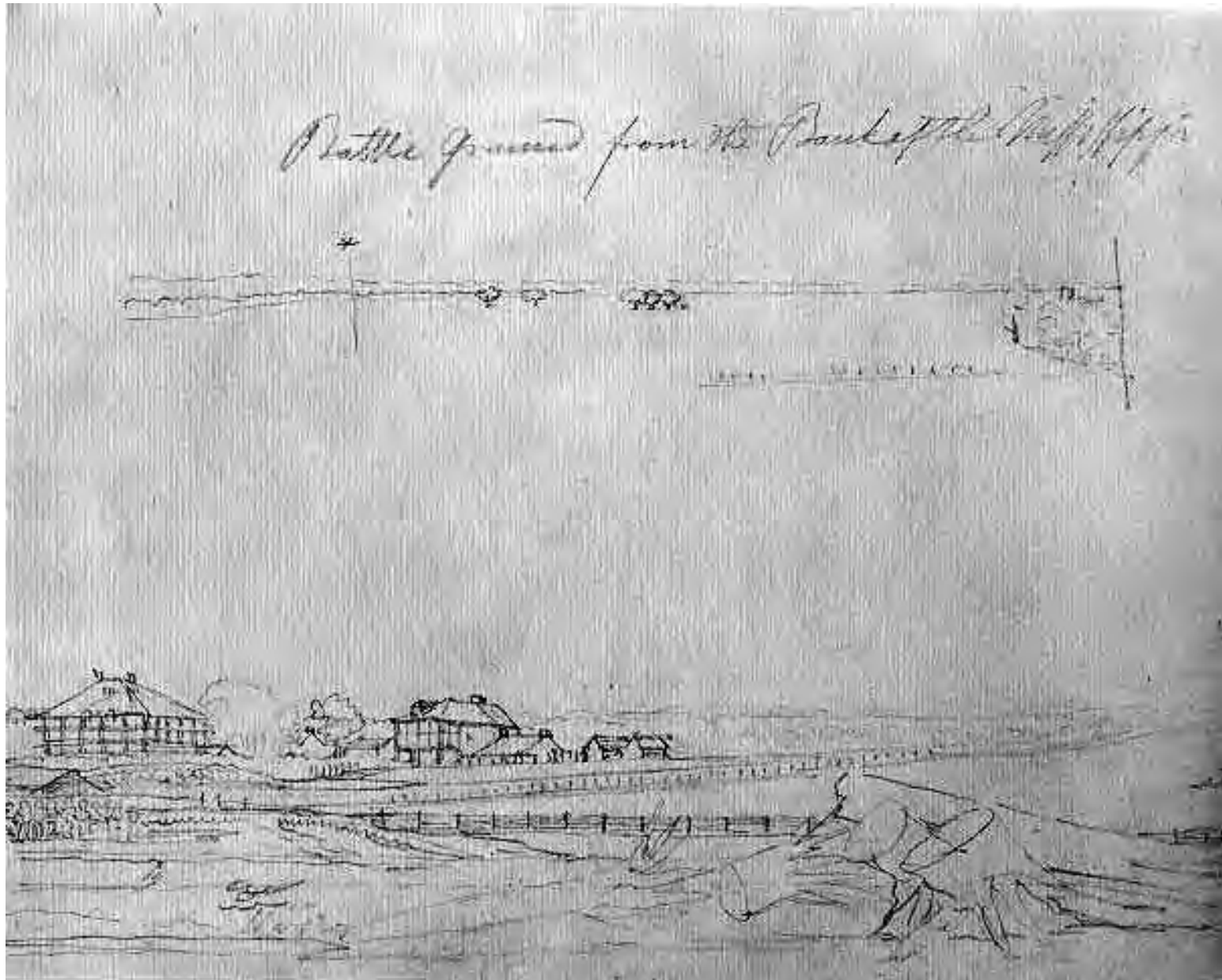


Figure 3. Latrobe's 1819 sketch of Chalmette Battleground as seen from the banks of the Mississippi River, showing the Macarty [left] and Rodriguez [middle] plantations and the fields of Chalmette Plantation [right], (Latrobe, 1951).

marking the presence of the canal and constructed embankment that provided Jackson his strategic line of defense. A few tree stumps strewn randomly and violently along the batture (or riverfront slope) of the levee suggest the unseen, yet cataclysmic, presence of the mighty Mississippi River.

These graphic and written observations from Latrobe's pilgrimage--made so few years after the Battle of New Orleans--offer an invaluable glimpse of the changing post-battle scene at Chalmette; they also serve as uncanny testimony to the resiliency of the physical landscape and the adaptability of human enterprise. In an era when the systematic preservation of landscapes as memorials to martial events was, as yet, unthinkable,³ and ecology, an unformulated science, Latrobe registers no incredulity that the landscape at Chalmette should have changed over the four years since the battle, or, more specifically, that the landscape should have been returned to its agricultural function. In fact, given the extremely harsh climatic conditions of southern Louisiana, the obviously impermanent nature of earthen military works, and the continued cultivation of the property's soil in the interim, it seems only logical that Chalmette's battlefield scene would have changed. The history books would provide lasting witness, Latrobe implies, to the singular event whose imprint the face of the landscape, in its dynamic state of evolution, could hardly be expected to retain.

What Latrobe could scarcely have imagined, despite his obvious foresight, is that a century and three-quarters later--and less than two decades before the bicentennial observance of the Battle of New Orleans--a fragment of Chalmette's "uninterrupted plain" would have been refashioned as a permanent memorial to that singular event (the battle) which played such a brief and flickering role in the landscape's material history. Yet, what would surely unsettle him more is to observe how little remains, within Chalmette's contemporary commemorative park, of the cultural landscape which he so vividly captured in image and word during his 1819 visit. The plantation houses, outbuildings, and fencerows

of Latrobe's sketches have vanished, replaced by later cultural imprints--a summer residence, a monument, a cemetery--with histories entirely their own. So, for the most part, has the "uninterrupted plain," punctuated now by the towering smokestacks and rusted metal of industrial development which, during the twentieth century, has claimed and transformed the former agricultural land along this vital river corridor below New Orleans.⁴ Highway and railroad transect the once open sweep of Chalmette's plain, transporting their own peculiar patterns of progress and change across the local landscape. The natural levee, too, has been transformed, superseded over time by engineered embankments of compacted earth and concrete which largely obscure the site's essential connection to the river--its geographical and developmental lifeline.

What, then, remains of the historic scene that Latrobe observed? The river, the alluvial ground, a trace of the Rodriguez Canal? And how can the story of the battle, a story that was still legible in the landscape of 1819, be adequately conveyed in a contemporary landscape devoid of many of its historic features and context? The Mississippi River is certainly one of the essential narrative threads weaving together the story of Chalmette's landscape as it evolved through time. Indeed, the river is the geographical baseline from which Chalmette's multi-layered story can best be understood; its course influenced the region's early settlement patterns, the development of a plantation agriculture based on sugarcane cultivation, even the more recent patterns of industrialization. And perhaps more importantly, the story of the Battle of New Orleans itself is inextricably linked to the river and to the piece of sedimented ground known as Chalmette that emerged over the ages from the river's turbulent flow. Along the Mississippi's watery course, through the meandering bayous and brackish backswamps, upon the alluvial plain and the levee's rise, we find the trace of Chalmette's intricately patterned story.

The Pre-Battlefield Landscape (to 1814)

Physiography, Natural Resources, and Climate

Though a landscape of subtle topographic relief, Louisiana's Mississippi River Delta region--the physiographic setting for the Chalmette site--is a complex and shifting matrix of rich alluvial bottomland, natural levees, lazy bayous, sluggish swamps, fertile marshlands, and meandering streams. The region's earliest inhabitants enjoyed a land of remarkable variety, where river, land, and ocean met to create a surprising diversity of habitat and an abundance of natural resources. The region's many waterways, especially the Mississippi and its tributaries and distributaries, provided natural arteries for exploration, transportation, and settlement within this fluctuating landscape of sediment and flow. The rich deposits of sand and silt left behind by regular flooding along the river's course created a highly desirable agricultural soil, which had a decisive impact on patterns of settlement and land use. European settlement would long be confined to the narrow ribbons of productive, relatively well-drained soil along the natural levees on either side of rivers and streams.⁵ Furthermore, the region's humid subtropical climate, strongly influenced by proximity to the Gulf Coast, necessitated unique cultural adaptations on the part of early inhabitants, both American Indian and European; many of these adaptations--crop cultivation, architectural forms, regional cookery, even modes of transport--are still strongly identified with the delta region of Southeastern Louisiana.

Presettlement Vegetation and Topography

The native flora encountered by early inhabitants to the region was likewise patterned through a complex interrelationship of soil, hydrography, and climate. Three broadly distinctive forest associations, corresponding to the characteristic topographic profile and hydrographic regime along the Mississippi River, can be identified.⁶ On the sandy batture slope rising from the river to the elevated natural levee, one would find a predominance of willows (*Salix* spp.), along with the pioneering cottonwood (*Populus deltoides*),

sweet gums (*Liquidambar styraciflua*), and sycamores (*Platanus occidentalis*). These species were adapted to the extreme fluctuations in moisture, due to periodic flooding, that are typical of this protective zone nearest the river. The elevated natural levees, accumulated ridges of alluvial soil up to 10 feet high along either side of the river, supported a second-bottom hardwood forest of deciduous and live oak (*Quercus* spp. and *Q. virginiana*), pecan (*Carya illinoensis*), magnolia (*Magnolia grandiflora*), beech (*Fagus grandifolia*), and hickory (*Carya* spp.), interspersed with thick brakes of native cane (*Arundinaria* spp.). Because the levee soil was especially favorable to agriculture and better drained than the more clayey inland soils, the fertile natural levee was where most early settlement occurred. Consequently, much of this zone--the open landscape at Chalmette is located on the natural levee--was cleared of its vegetation upon settlement.

From the natural levees, the land gently sloped away to an extensive backswamp, where cypress (*Taxodium distichum*), tupelo gum (*Nyssa aquatica*), swamp oak (*Quercus michauxii*), swamp red maple (*Acer rubrum* var. *Drummondii*), and palmetto (*Sabal minor*) characterized the first-bottom or swamp forest. The width of the swamp zone and its distance from the river varied according to the gradient of the topography and the porosity of the underlying soils. In the immediate proximity of the Chalmette site, the natural levee was narrow, and as a result, the cypress swamps impinged more closely towards the Mississippi River than on the surrounding lands. These swamps connected to a series of bayous that extended from Lake Borgne, a major body of water to the northeast of New Orleans. This particular combination of topography and vegetation would play a major strategic role during the Battle of New Orleans. The three vegetative zones described, which provide a tangible ecological link to the presettlement landscape, persist today in undeveloped or released areas along the rivers and waterways, and can be observed to some extent along the edges of the Chalmette site itself.

Earliest Human Habitation

The earliest inhabitants of the Chalmette region were not the French who settled along the rivers and streams in the early eighteenth century, but seasonally nomadic native peoples who hunted the abundant game and fished the productive waters of the delta for at least three thousand years prior to European arrival.⁷ In fact, the archeological record for St. Bernard Parish--the civil jurisdiction within which the Chalmette site is located--has yielded sites dating back to 1740 B.C. Numerous tree-covered mounds and shell middens remain as testaments to the presence of native peoples in this ancient sedimentary region between the Mississippi River and the Gulf of Mexico.⁸ Though archeological evidence has never definitively established the occupation of the Chalmette site by American Indians prior to European settlement, it would be difficult to imagine, given the proximity of other documented sites within the parish, that the fertile banks of the Mississippi River at Chalmette were not, at some time, inhabited or even cultivated by earlier people. Their artifacts might well be preserved within the clayey subsoil of Chalmette's plain.

European Settlement and Land Patterns

French settlers arrived in southeastern Louisiana around 1700, introducing patterns of land division that were uniquely responsive to regional geographic conditions and constraints. The meandering course of rivers and streams served as the survey (cadastral) baseline along which property demarcations were made. Even today, the French system of survey and land division--a system based on the arpent measure of 192 feet--remains apparent in many areas, despite suburbanization and industrialization. Early maps of the Mississippi River show the characteristic wedge-shaped or linear parcels of land with their shortest dimension fronting the waterway (see fig. 4). These parcels were laid out to maximize the number of lots with river frontage, productive levee soils, and access to the backswamp's abundant supply of timber.

A typical French land grant included river frontage of 25 or fewer arpents (approximately 4800 feet) along the natural levee, extending to a standard depth of 40 arpents (7680 feet) towards the backswamp.⁹ Grants occasionally extended to a depth of 80 arpents, or, if the levee's backslope was sufficiently wide, a second range of less-desirable lots was created behind the riverfront parcels. The riverfront configuration of properties provided a transect through the essential natural resources needed for agricultural settlement: the well drained land along the levees was highly amenable to agricultural use, the rivers provided natural channels for the transportation of goods to market, and timber was readily available from the backswamps. The emerging port city of New Orleans provided the commercial center for the developing agricultural economy.

Growth and Influence of New Orleans

New Orleans was established in 1718, according to a plan envisioned by Jean Baptiste Le Moyne, Sieur de Bienville.¹⁰ The city was sited at a convenient portage between the Mississippi River and Lake

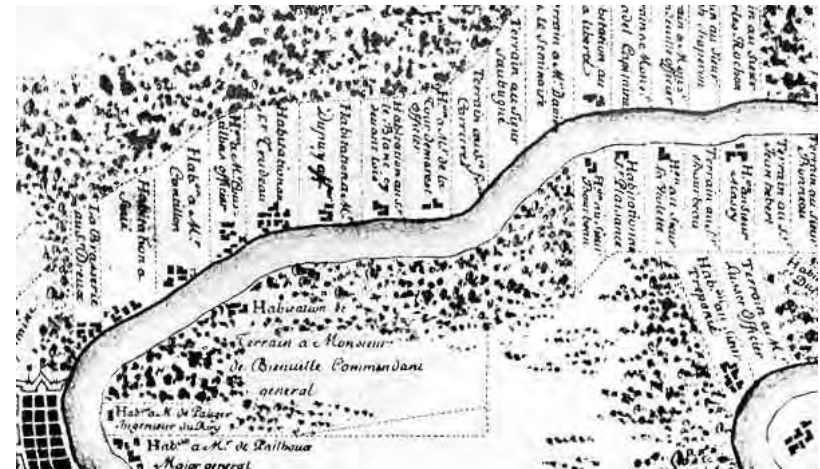


Figure 4. French Colonial map showing the plantation properties below New Orleans (Wilson, 2; original in the Newberry Library, Chicago).

Pontchartrain. Under the supervision of Adrien de Pauger, a French military engineer, the city was laid out as a compact and fortified grid along the elevated ground lying just to the north of a protected crescent-shaped bend in the river. Man-made levees were constructed along either side of the Mississippi River for some distance above and below the city to offer protection against flooding.

Though some 100 miles upriver from the mouth of the Mississippi, New Orleans quickly became the region's primary commercial center and, in 1721, its colonial capital. Land grants for the property along the Mississippi River were quickly conveyed; a 1723 map records multiple plantation holdings in the area that would later become the site of the Battle of New Orleans (fig. 4). This map depicts the emerging pattern of land grants and ownership along the river. It is the earliest known graphic depiction of the future battlefield site and shows the linear long-lot parcels that were characteristic of settlement along the river.

Plantation Agriculture

During the eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries, a mosaic of agricultural and rural land uses emerged along the river below the city. Large land grants were subdivided into smaller properties, and an agriculture based on indigo and, later, sugarcane developed. The natural levee was reinforced and canals and ditches were constructed between the river and backswamp to drain the frequently flooded soils.¹¹ The belt of cypress swamp that covered the lower inland elevations of these properties marked the extent of cultivable land, and provided a ready source of timber for fenceposts and other structures. A road along the levee near the riverfront provided access to and between the developing plantation properties.

The Battlefield Scene (1814-1815)

The park's present holdings include portions of two post-colonial-era plantations¹²--the Chalmette and Rodriguez Plantations--whose land ownership records have been traced from the first quarter of the 18th

century. From the time of the original French land grants, these properties changed hands repeatedly and were on several occasions subdivided into smaller parcels, due to shifting fortunes and changing family relationships. This (sometimes maddeningly) complex ownership history, which has been well documented in previous studies, is not traced in detail in this report.¹³ Furthermore, the report does not analyze in detail the military strategy occasioned by the local plantation topography. This subject matter is comprehensively treated in two earlier studies: Ted Birkedal's "Revised Historical Geography of the Chalmette Battlefield," a chapter of the larger archeological report *The Search for the Lost Riverfront* (draft); and Betsy Swanson's *Study of the Military Topography and Sites Associated with the 1814-15 New Orleans Campaign* (1985). These works should be consulted as the definitive sources for information regarding the topography and military features of the battlefield, including the specific locations, dimensions, and uses of the artillery batteries, agricultural ditches, and circulation routes. Birkedal's report provides especially detailed descriptions of these features, drawn both from battle-era accounts and from contemporary archeological research. The more specific aim of this report is to show how traces of the original agricultural land divisions, based on the French arpent system of survey, are retained within the present-day landscape at Chalmette, and how the site's unique physiography and landscape features played into the battle strategy.

The following discussion focuses on the Rodriguez and Chalmette Plantations; these properties served as the primary setting for the engagement between American and British troops that occurred on the morning of January 8, 1815, an engagement known since as the Battle of New Orleans. The Macarty Plantation, which served as Jackson's headquarters during the battle, was located immediately upriver from the Rodriguez Plantation, on the present-day site of the Chalmette Slip. Although the former Macarty property does not fall within contemporary park boundaries, it is referenced because of its importance for understanding the battle-era scene. The Mississippi Riverfront is treated in separate detail because of its importance to the battle and to the later evolution of the landscape on which the battle occurred.

The Rodriguez Plantation

The Rodriguez Plantation was the smallest of the properties on which the Battle of New Orleans was fought. Due to a series of subdivisions of the original land grant, the Rodriguez property was an unusually small piece of land for agricultural use (only half an arpent wide on the riverfront), and was perhaps not even a plantation in the strictest sense of the word, but rather a country retreat. The property contained a double-concession's depth of 80 arpents, extending some 5,000 yards inland from the riverfront towards the cypress swamps that fed into the numerous meandering bayous and wet prairies bordering Lake Borgne. Before subdivision from the larger grant, the property was likely used as an indigo plantation. An 1808 survey suggests that, after subdivision, the property was operated as a mill, by then-owner J.M. Pintard. In fact, the canal marking the property's eastern boundary--labeled "canal du moulin" (mill canal) on the survey map--is thought to have served as the race for a sawmill.¹⁴

Whatever the specific land use, the property was purchased by attorney Jean Rodriguez on September 29, 1808. In the act of sale, the property is described as follows:

One half arpent of land fronting the river with all its buildings and dependencies situated at four miles from this city, below and shown on one side of the residence of Mr. Guillermo Brown and on the other side that of Mr. Edouard Macarty, with a depth of eighty-one and in conformity with the act of sale of Mr. Pierre Denis de la Ronde to Mr. Laurent Sigur, the said half arpent of land forming an angle opening and always following the canal . . .¹⁵

According to this description, the property formed an angle that opened outward from the river, increasing in width from roughly south to north and following the line of a canal, certainly the Rodriguez Canal. Although their presence at the time of sale to Rodriguez is undocumented, at least two residential structures stood

on the property at the time of the battle: a galleried main house and a small cottage-style structure, perhaps a kitchen, to the east of the main house. These structures are depicted in Hyacinthe Laclotte's famous engraving of the battle (fig. 5) and in Latrobe's sketches (figs. 2 & 3). The foundations of these two structures were located during archeological testing in the mid-1980s, sited within a grove of live oak trees south of the Chalmette Monument.

At the time of sale to Rodriguez, the property exhibited the characteristic orientation and features of other larger plantations along the river, including the drainage canal running from river to backswamp and a rectilinear field pattern. Such features were mandated by law as much as by necessity:

The pattern of French settlement was both confirmed and reinforced by law. French, and in turn Spanish, law provided that the settler must clear his land to a depth of three arpents (600 feet) [sic], plant two heavy posts near the water for mooring river craft, construct and maintain a foot and bridle path on the levee, construct a wagon road 48 feet wide on the landward side of the levee, run ditches laterally from levee to backswamp and construct culverts where the ditches crossed the road.¹⁶

This description defines a landscape that was spatially oriented towards the river. Indeed, domestic structures were generally sited near the river, on the better drained soils of the natural levee and close to the road that ran along the landward side. Except for scattered trees in the fields and formal gardens or plantings around the houses, the landscape was generally open between the riverfront and the backswamp. Battle-era sources suggest that the houses were frequently ornamented with landscaped gardens, parterres of flowers, hedges, and fruit trees on their riverfront sides. The agricultural fields which extended north of the domestic complexes were transected by the lateral drainage canals which carried overflow water towards the swamp. It is reasonable to assume that the Rodriguez property, as well as the neighboring Chalmette property, conformed to these legal requirements.

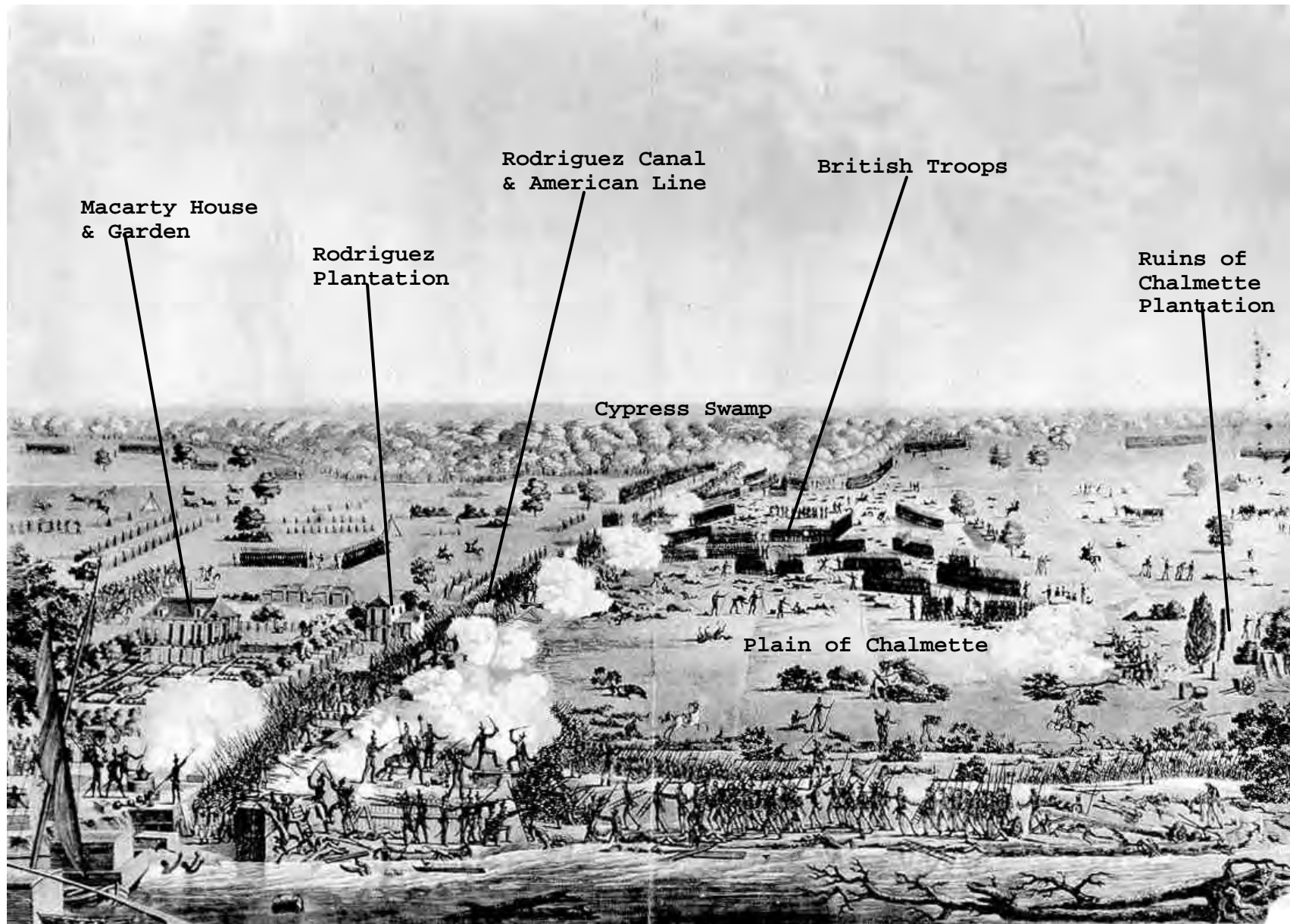


Figure 5. Hyacinthe Laclotte's engraving of the Battle of New Orleans, showing the American troops positioned along the Rodriguez Canal and the British forces attacking across the fields of Chalmette Plantation (Greene, 365; reproduced from original in New York Public Library). [Annotations by author]

Topography played a strategic role in shaping the strategy and eventual outcome of the Battle of New Orleans.¹⁷ In fact, Jackson chose the Rodriguez Canal as a point of retreat after an earlier skirmish with the British primarily because the cypress swamp trended towards the river at the boundary between the Rodriguez and Chalmette properties. This provided the narrowest front of defense for the American troops (approximately 950 yards between river and backswamp), and forced British troops to cross a narrow and vulnerably open plain clearly visible to Jackson from his lookout in the upper floors of the Macarty plantation house. British movements could be carefully monitored by the Americans, who were entrenched along the west bank of the Rodriguez Canal. This canal, which marked the boundary between the Rodriguez and Chalmette properties, served as a pre-existing ditch behind which Jackson and his troops could erect more substantial defenseworks of earth, wooden palings, and cotton bales.

As Birkedal notes, Jackson's troops would have removed any mature trees or vegetation from around the line of defense, either as a protective measure to maximize visibility or for use as fuel or construction material in the reinforcement of the American line. In fact, the Rodriguez property must have been significantly impacted by the encampment and preparatory activities that took place on site prior to the actual battle. Laclotte's engraving (fig. 5) and Latrobe's sketches (figs. 2 & 3) agree upon the generally open character of the Rodriguez landscape at the time of the battle and in the years immediately following.

The Chalmette Plantation

. . . the Chalmette Plantation occupied a somewhat rectangular piece of ground that stretched more than 1,000 yards along the Mississippi and ranged between 1,000 and 1,500 yards inland to the cypress swamp. The neighboring Rodriguez property was a wedge-shaped tract of small proportion, bordered on the Chalmette side by an old

millrace, or canal, that ran from the levee well into the swamp. The flat terrain of Chalmette was interspersed by buildings and groves near the river, but the vast majority of land was given over to sugar cane, which in December, 1814, had been harvested so that most of the broad fields were filled with stubble. Farther downstream the river turned gently to the left, and the structures and groves of adjacent plantations could be seen along the Mississippi. On the north end of the Chalmette property stood the cypress swamp. At the Rodriguez side of the tract the swamp was closest to the river, about one-half mile distant.¹⁸

The plantation of Ignace de Lino de Chalmet was subdivided into a number of rectilinear fields by a sequence of drainage ditches that ran perpendicularly from the river towards the backswamp. During the battle, these ditches--there were at least five between the British battery positions and the American line--were tactically employed by the British troops for protective cover and for refuge during retreats. The heavier vegetation that grew along the banks of these wet ditches--rushes, sedges, bushes, and small trees--provided defensive cover in the otherwise open landscape. A double ditch skirted the southern edge of the forested cypress swamp, collecting the water from the lateral ditches. The double ditch was bordered to the south by a fence, roughly demarcating a transitional zone of low swampy growth that extended to within 600 yards of the riverbank near the American line (see fig. 6).¹⁹

Chalmette Plantation was a large sugar plantation with 22 arpents of river frontage. At the time of battle, at least one of the fields was planted in sugarcane, which had only recently been harvested. First-hand accounts make mention of the stubble-covered terrain that the British soldiers' encountered in their advance across the plain of Chalmette. Other fields are described as weedy mixes of bottomland growth and such wetland species as sedges and rushes, with low bushes growing along the lateral ditch lines. These fields may have been used for pasturage or perhaps were lying fallow for the winter.

A secondary dirt wagon road, referred to in battle-era accounts as Center Road, crossed the fields of Chalmette Plantation, paralleling the river at a point south of the cypress swamp (fig. 6). This road served as a strategic route for British movement from the plantation properties to the east, and was the feature astride which the British constructed their advance artillery battery. The Chalmette plantation complex--the house and dependency structures--was located on property that is downriver from the current park. The house was destroyed during the battle. In summary, the battlefield at Chalmette was an open bottomland devoid of all but scattered trees, bordered to the north by the sweeping line of the cypress swamp, and to the south, by the Mississippi River and its adjacent levee.

The Mississippi Riverfront

At the time of the Battle of New Orleans, the Mississippi Riverfront was an integral part of the agricultural landscape that had developed along the river south of New Orleans. The sugarcane and indigo plantations of the region were dependent on the river as a vital

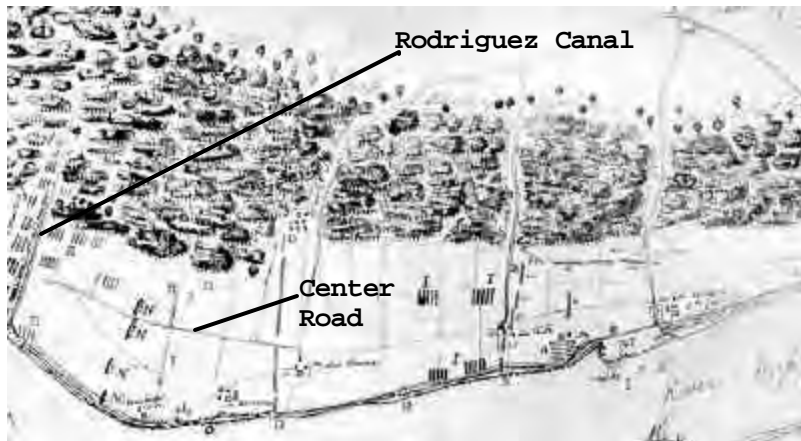


Figure 6. Map by Col. Alexander Dickson showing the terrain of the Battle of New Orleans, including plantation canals, the cypress swamp, plantation field patterns, Center Road, the Mississippi River, and the American position along the Rodriguez Canal (Wilson, 7). [Annotations by author]

transportation lifeline, and the fertile soils left behind by periodic flooding provided the medium for agricultural success. Furthermore, the fields were irrigated and drained by canals that ran from the river to the backswamp region, which covered the northern extremities of the plantations (fig. 6). The river was as much the progenitor of this fertile landscape as it was the perpetuator of its agricultural and economic viability.

Although the natural levees had been reinforced by individual property owners to protect against flooding since the early years of French Colonial rule, the Mississippi was very much a part of the battlefield landscape, both spatially and visually. Illustrations from the time of the battle, such as Laclotte's engraving, show a relatively unobstructed spatial connection between the riverfront and the fields of the Chalmette Plantation. Significant portions of the battle action, in fact, occurred upon the banks of the river, which also served as a vital transportation, supply, and strategic link for the opposing British and American forces. The river was the point of origin and the source of issue for the canals that transected the battle-era landscape and which played such a significant role in the movements and strategy of battle. The American schooner *Carolina* was positioned at a strategic point in the river to provide cover for the troops on the east bank. The American troops also constructed a battery and defensive line on the west bank of the river, roughly opposite the Rodriguez property.

The Post-Battle Landscape (1815-present)

In the introductory section to his "Historical Geography of Civilian and Post-Battle Features," Birkedal encapsulates the broad patterns of social and economic change that have altered the battlefield landscape since the early nineteenth century:

From the beginning of European settlement to the present, [the Chalmette Unit's] history has been reflective of the wider history of the city and St. Bernard Parish. Its fields produced indigo and later sugar as cash crops for the vast

plantations of the French and Spanish colonial periods. Early in the American era these same fields were broken-up and subdivided to meet a growing demand for small, landed estates among New Orleans' increasingly prosperous merchants and professional classes. Following the Civil War, the land use pattern shifted again; the handsome riverfront estates of the antebellum period gave way to the effects of adjacent industrialization. White industrial workers established homes along the once elite riverfront, and Black workers took up residence along one of the old plantation ditches and founded the community of Fazendeville. Perhaps because it was flanked by memorialized property, the land that was eventually to become the park unit escaped major industrial developments in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries.²⁰

Since the time of the Battle of New Orleans, the land that composed the battlefield has seen numerous subdivisions and changes of ownership. Because few physical traces remain of the land divisions that were intermediary between the battlefield landscape and the contemporary park, the history provided for the post-battle era focuses on features that remain within the park, e.g., the Malus-Beaugard House, traces of the Fazendeville settlement, and Chalmette Monument. A separate section provides an elaborated history of Chalmette National Cemetery.

Subdivision and Private Ownership (1815-1964)

The Rodriguez Property

In 1817, Jean Rodriguez sold his riverfront property to Dame Marguerite Verret, presumably after repairing any damage sustained to its structures during the Battle of New Orleans. No mention is made in the deed of transaction between Rodriguez and Verret of the appearance or condition of the landscape or of any improvements that Rodriguez may have made to it. However, archeology suggests that the L-shaped grove of live oaks that stands south of the Chalmette Monument may date from this period; the archeological

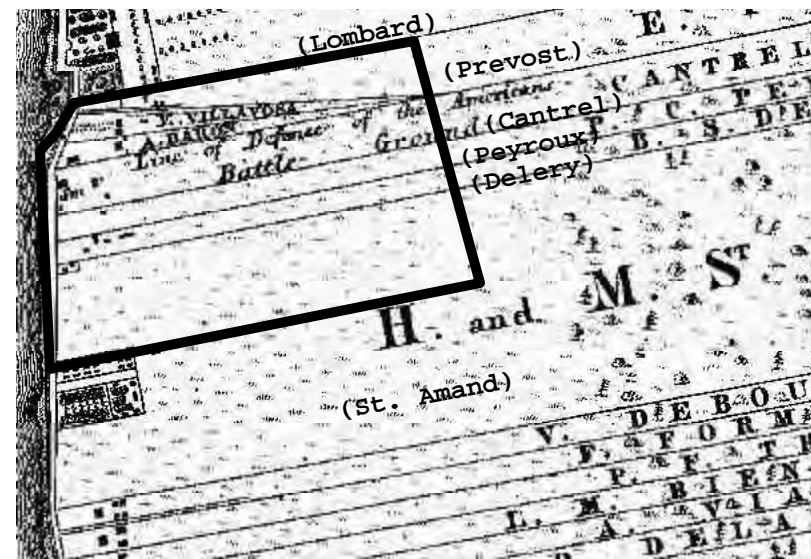


Figure 7. 1834 Zimpel map of New Orleans and vicinity, showing from top: the former Macarty plantation (here owned by J. Lombard); the former Rodriguez property (here owned by E. Prevost); the Villavosa, Baron, Cantrel, Peyroux, and Delery properties, subdivisions of the St. Amand plantation; and the core St. Amand property. The bold line overlay indicates the approximate extent of the contemporary park. (Map reproduced courtesy of Williams Research Center, New Orleans). [Annotations by author]

site of the Rodriguez plantation house is located within this grove of trees, suggesting that the trees might have been planted in relationship to that structure. Indeed, Rodriguez might have planted the trees while he was making improvements to the house and property in anticipation of their sale.²¹

The most keenly observed and, presumably, accurate record of the appearance of the landscape during this period are the two sketches that the architect Latrobe made during his visit to the battlefield in 1819 (figs. 2 & 3). Neither sketch depicts any trees in the immediate vicinity of the house, but trees that had only recently been planted would not be visible behind the mass of the house itself. The rest of the landscape between the river and the wooded swamp to the north of the domestic complex is depicted as open land, divided into

linear fields by fencerows stretching into the distance. The canal appears as a slight linear depression, with mounds of earth--the remains of the American rampart and battery positions--still visible to the southeast of the house.

After Madame Verret's death, the property passed to her son, Edouard Prevost, who held it until his death in 1849. Zimpel's 1834 map of New Orleans and vicinity shows the property under the ownership of Prevost (fig. 7). At Prevost's death, the property was purchased by Etienne Villavosa, owner of the adjoining downriver parcel (a portion of the former Chalmette Plantation), who sold it to Pierre Bachelot in 1852. In 1855, the state of Louisiana bought the property from Bachelot, in accordance with an 1852 act of the state legislature, for the purpose of erecting a memorial on the site of Jackson's victory. Construction of the Chalmette Monument commenced that same year. (See *Private Commemorative Efforts* p. 19, for further history of the monument and Rodriguez property.)

The Chalmette Property

In 1817, two years after the death of Lino de Chalmet, the 22-arpent Chalmette property was sold to brothers Hilaire and Louis St. Amand, wealthy free men of color. Under the St. Amands's proprietorship, the property was returned to sugarcane plantation, and the brothers established the production facilities and servants quarters (the St. Amands were slaveowners) necessary to maintain such an enterprise. The entire acreage remained intact until 1832, when the brothers subdivided the property into several smaller tracts in order to pay off debts.²² The Zimpel map (fig. 7) shows several of these subdivided tracts between the Prevost property and the core St. Amand property. These parcels were sold and developed primarily as residential lots, but by the late-nineteenth century, some also housed small commercial enterprises, including a sawmill on the Cantrel and Peyroux tracts.

In 1832, Alexander Baron bought one of the westernmost of the St. Amand tracts (the tract labeled "A. Baron" on the Zimpel map). Around 1833, he had a residence constructed on the property in the

French Creole style for his mother-in-law, Madeleine Pannetier (widow of Guillaume Malus). During the next seventy years, the house and property served as a country retreat for a succession of private owners: the Malus and Baron families; Caroline Fabre, widow of Michel Bernard Cantrelle, who, in the 1860s, modified the house in the Greek Revival style; the Spaniard Jose Antonio Fernandez y Lineros, who named the property "Bueno Retiro"; and Rene Toutant Beauregard, eldest son of Confederate General P. G. T. Beauregard. In 1904, the property was sold to the New Orleans Terminal Company by Beauregard. Early documents of sale indicate that the house had "a splendid orchard, containing every variety of rare fruit trees and vegetables, a beautiful flower garden, containing the choicest plants to be found."²³ An 1880 notice of sale describes the property as follows:



Figure 8 Malus-Beauregard House, riverfront facade and fenced yard with ornamental tree plantings, c. 1900. (#40-20-027)

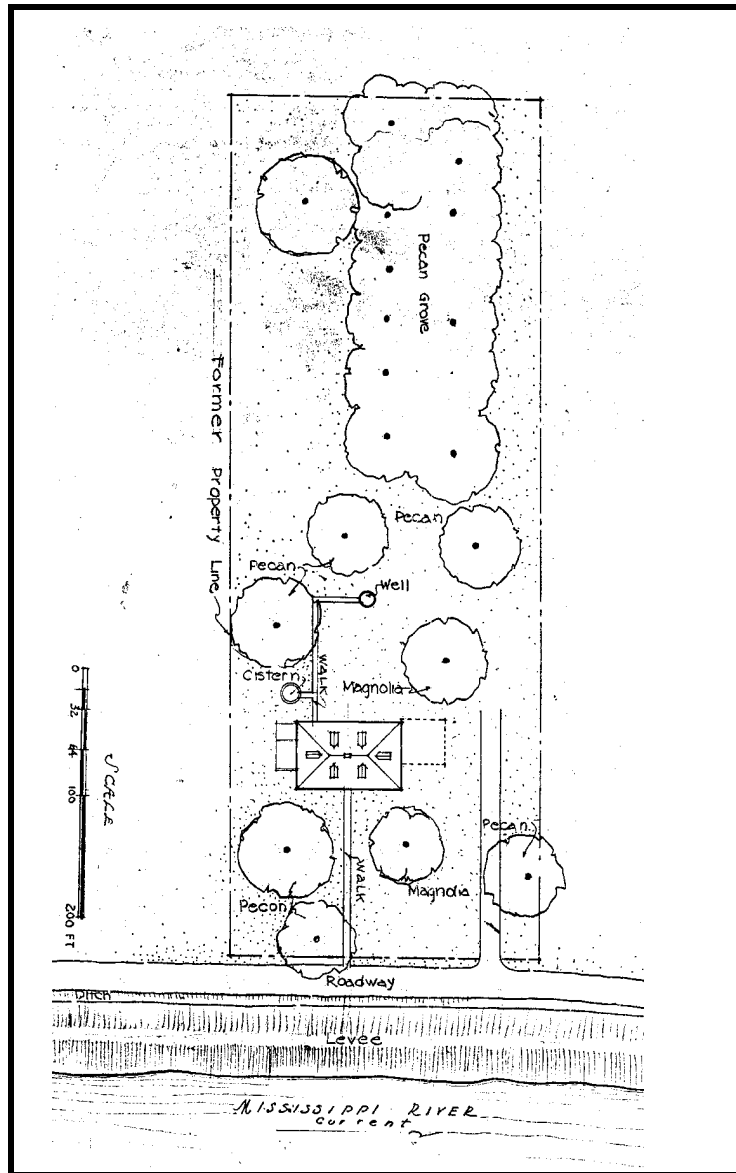


Figure 9 1934 HABS drawing documenting existing conditions for Beauregard House and grounds. (467/2005)



Figure 10. Malus-Beauregard House, view of riverfront facade showing lane to carriage house and picket fencing, c. 1900. (#40-20-011)

The property is improved by a substantial two-story Brick Mansion, and other dependencies, such as stabling and poultry houses, laborers' quarters, shaded by a magnificent lawn of magnolia and oak trees. The land is exceedingly rich and productive, and under cultivation for vegetables and flowers. The Orchard contains a fine assortment of fruit trees, comprising Orange, Mespilus, imported Pears and Pecan Trees, besides a large variety of Figs, Grapes, etc., thrifty and bearing, within half an hour's drive of the centre of the city. . . .²⁴

Historic photographs from the Beauregard period or slightly later depict the house and landscape features—fences, gates, walks, tree plantings, and dependency structures, including a carriage house and detached kitchen—that embellished the property (figs. 8 & 10).²⁵ After the sale of the property to the New Orleans Terminal Company in 1904, the house was used as a foreman's residence and its landscaped grounds deteriorated.²⁶ A 1934 HABS drawing shows the property boundaries, a central walk leading from the river road to the house, a pecan grove to

the north of the house, a carriage lane to the east, and several other small-scale features, including a well and cistern, to the north of the house (fig. 9).²⁷ In 1948, the Beauregard property was acquired by the State of Louisiana, and in 1949, was donated to the National Park Service for incorporation into Chalmette National Historical Park. (See further discussion of the Malus-Beauregard House and property under *NPS Administration*, p. 21.)

In 1861, after a complicated string of land transfers, another of the parcels subdivided from the St. Amand Plantation came into the possession of the City of New Orleans. (According to Chalmette's *Historic Resource Study*, this parcel originally contained the slave cabins of the St. Amand plantation and possibly a sugar house.²⁸) Because of the parcel's strategic riverfront location, defensive earthworks were constructed on the eastern portion of the tract at the outbreak of the Civil War to fortify the city against attack from downriver.²⁹ The city ceded the remaining western portion of the land to the United States government for use as a bivouac ground and cemetery. During the war, the land served as a refugee camp for slaves who had been freed by Union troops and as "a burial ground for former slaves, black hospital patients, and Union and Confederate troops" (see fig. 17).³⁰ Chalmette National Cemetery was formally established when the city donated the cemetery parcel to the United States in 1868. (See section on Chalmette National Cemetery, p. 24, for detailed cemetery history.)

A third tract subdivided from the St. Amand holdings--the tract marked as Delery on Zimpel's map (fig. 7)--came into the possession of Jean Pierre Fazende, a New Orleans grocer and free man of color, through inheritance in 1857. In the late 1860s, Fazende subdivided the portion of his property closest to the river and, during the 1870s, began selling individual lots. Fazende's subdivision evolved into the black community of Fazendeville. This linear village of small houses and lots stood on a narrow parcel of land between the Beauregard property and the Chalmette National Cemetery property (see cover photograph and fig. 11). During the mid-1960s, the National Park Service acquired, through purchase or condemnation, the individual properties that

composed the Fazendeville subdivision and eliminated the structures, incorporating the land into the battlefield park. The St. Bernard sewage treatment plant, which was constructed in 1959 and still stands at the southern end of the park, marks the southern terminus of the former Fazendeville Road (see figs. 15 & 16).

Due to the many subdivisions and changes in ownership that have occurred since the time of the battle, the contemporary park contains only the upriver (westernmost) portion of the original Chalmette Plantation. The downriver portion of the battle-era property, including the site of the plantation house and the slave quarters, lies under the Kaiser Aluminum plant, to the east of the National Cemetery. (For further information regarding the St. Amand period and the post-battle-era land divisions of the Chalmette property, refer to Greene's *Historic Resource Study*.)



Figure 11. View from top of Chalmette Monument, looking east towards the Fazendeville settlement [midground] and Chalmette National Cemetery [background], c. 1950. The mass of trees in the right foreground was located to the north of the Beauregard House. (#20-20-006)

Private and Public Commemoration (1840-present)

Private Commemorative Efforts

On January 8, 1840, a ceremony commemorating the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Battle of New Orleans was held at the site of the American victory, on the former Rodriguez (Prevost) property. Andrew Jackson, hero of the battle and by this time a former President of the United States, was scheduled to speak at the celebration, but was delayed several days in arriving. Popular legend holds that the cornerstone for a battlefield monument was laid during the ceremony, but this legend has never been substantiated by site or documentary evidence.

Official efforts to erect a memorial were apparently suspended until 1851, when the Jackson Monument Commission was established to solicit public and legislative support for a battlefield monument. The following year, the State Legislature appropriated \$5,000 to purchase a site for a monument. In 1855, the State of Louisiana acquired the former Rodriguez property and began construction of the Chalmette Monument, based on a design by local stone dealer Newton Richards. The monument was to be a stately Egyptian-style obelisk of marble, one hundred and fifty feet tall, but by 1859, funding for construction was expended and the monument was capped off at fifty-six feet with a make-shift wooden roof. Photographs and narrative accounts indicate that the unfinished monument and the landscape around it were much neglected and weed-choked during the last decades of the nineteenth century.³¹

In 1893, custodianship of the monument was placed in the hands of the Louisiana Society of the United States Daughters of 1776 and 1812 (Daughters), whose members were distressed about the neglected condition of the monument. Sometime during the Daughters' early custodianship, a caretaker's house was built southeast of the monument and a shell path was constructed from the River Road to the functioning entrance in the southern face of the monument.³² The Daughters also erected Spotts Marker, a stone loving cup-shaped memorial honoring a veteran of the New Orleans campaign, near the entrance path from River Road to the monument (see fig. 12).



Figure 12. River Road entrance to Chalmette National Monument site, c. 1934. Note Spotts Marker to the left rear of the entrance gate and the Villavosa house at the right edge of the photo. (#10-50-001)

Federal Intervention and War Department Administration

In 1908, upon repeated request from the Daughters, the United States Government appropriated funding for the completion of Chalmette Monument. Although construction recommenced that same year, the monument never attained its projected height; it was permanently topped off at just over one hundred feet. The Daughters, who had solicited the funding for the monument's completion, retained custodianship of the property until 1930, when it was relinquished to the federal government and placed under the administration of the War Department.

During the early decades of the 1900s, numerous changes were occurring on the land surrounding the monument property. Industrialization along the river was rapidly changing the patterns of land use and transportation. Around 1905, construction began on the

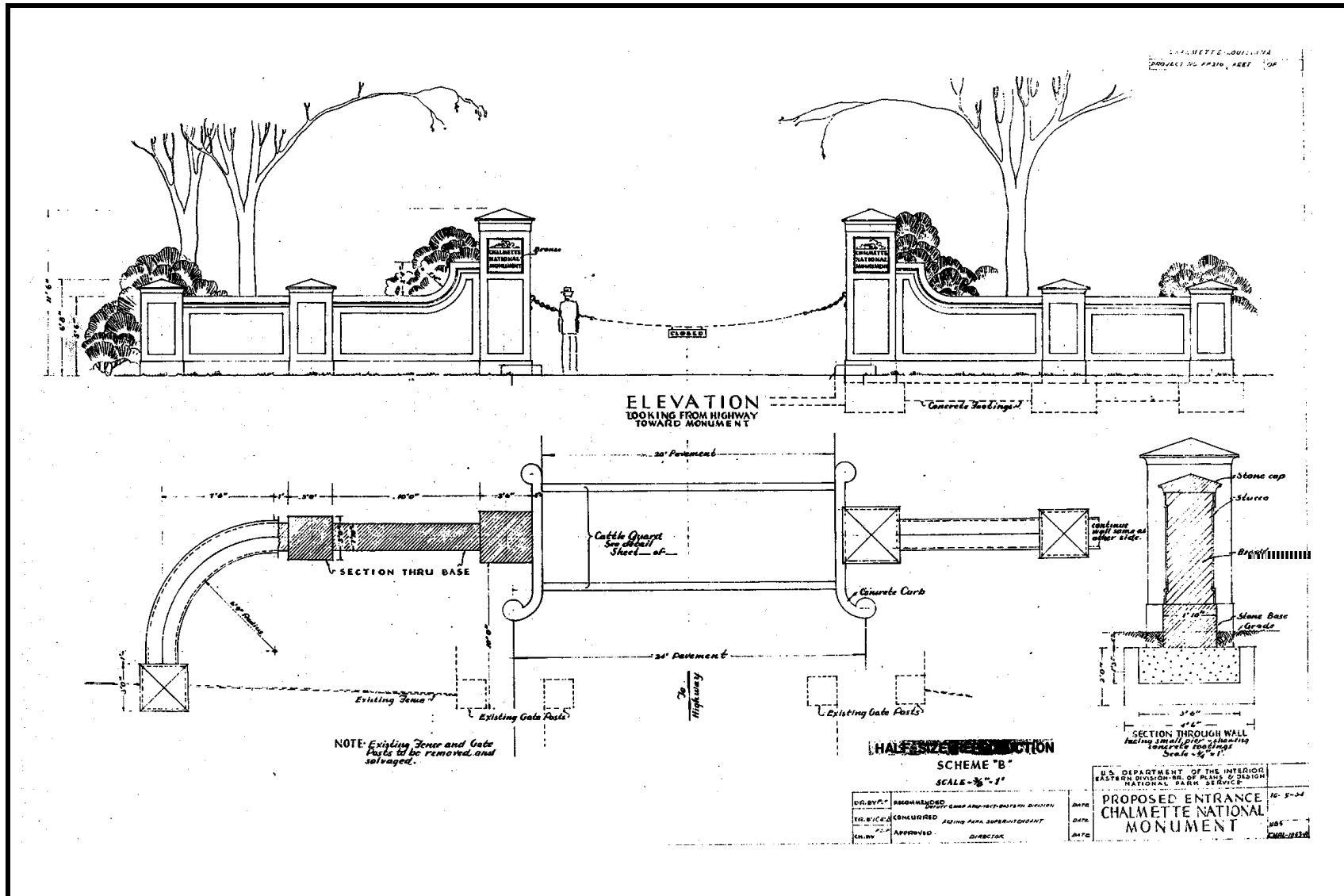


Figure 13. One of two proposed entrance plans (never implemented) for Chalmette National Monument, 1934. (467/1053A)

Chalmette Slip, a ship docking and storage facility located on the former Macarty property, to the west of the monument tract. In the late 1920s, the St. Bernard Highway was completed, just to the north of the Mexican Gulf (later, Norfolk Southern) Railroad line. At some point, the northern portion of the monument property (north of the present St. Bernard Highway) was sold, leaving that portion south of the railroad and public highway in the state's possession.

By the time the War Department acquired the site in 1930, the monument was accessed primarily from the east along River Road, by way of Fazendeville Road; the completion of the Chalmette Slip (c. 1908) had severed public access from the west. A 1934 photograph shows several site improvements, including an iron entrance gate and fencing, the path from River Road to the monument, and plantings along this path, that were implemented either before or during the War Department years at Chalmette (fig. 12). The War Department administered the Chalmette National Monument property until 1933.

National Park Service (NPS) Administration

In 1933, the Chalmette National Monument property was transferred from the War Department to the National Park Service. During the mid-1930s, the NPS implemented various site improvements, including the construction of an entrance drive from St. Bernard Highway, the paving of Monument Circle around the base of Chalmette Monument, and the construction of two visitor parking areas, separated by a grassy mall, south of the monument. Plans for a formal entrance gate to the park (fig. 13) were also prepared but were never implemented. In 1939, Chalmette National Historical Park, which included both the Chalmette Monument property and the National Cemetery, was established by act of Congress.

In 1949, the park acquired the adjacent Beauregard and Villavosa properties, initiating a broad-range plan for park development that envisioned the consolidation of all the land holdings between the monument tract and the National Cemetery. Soon afterwards, the park began to clear these tracts of existing trees and features. In 1958, the



Figure 14. Entrance drive to Chalmette National Historical Park from St Bernard Highway, showing railroad and utility rights-of-way and manicured landscape treatment, c. 1970. (#10-50-005)

Beauregard House was restored to its presumed mid-1800s appearance, and wings that had been added to either side of the main structure were removed. Historic yard features were apparently not preserved. Non-historic ornamental plantings of osmanthus, saucer magnolia, boxwood, and azalea were installed around the house and along new visitor pathways (see fig. 35, Core Area Existing Conditions). A footbridge was constructed across the Rodriguez Canal to provide access from the Chalmette Monument core area to the Beauregard House, where the visitor center was housed. The caretaker's house, which was located on the monument tract, remained until at least the 1940s, when the park presumably razed it. The house that stood on the Villavosa tract (see fig. 12) was also razed, probably in the 1950s.

Between 1960 and 1965, the park acquired through donation or condemnation the remaining parcels between the Beauregard tract

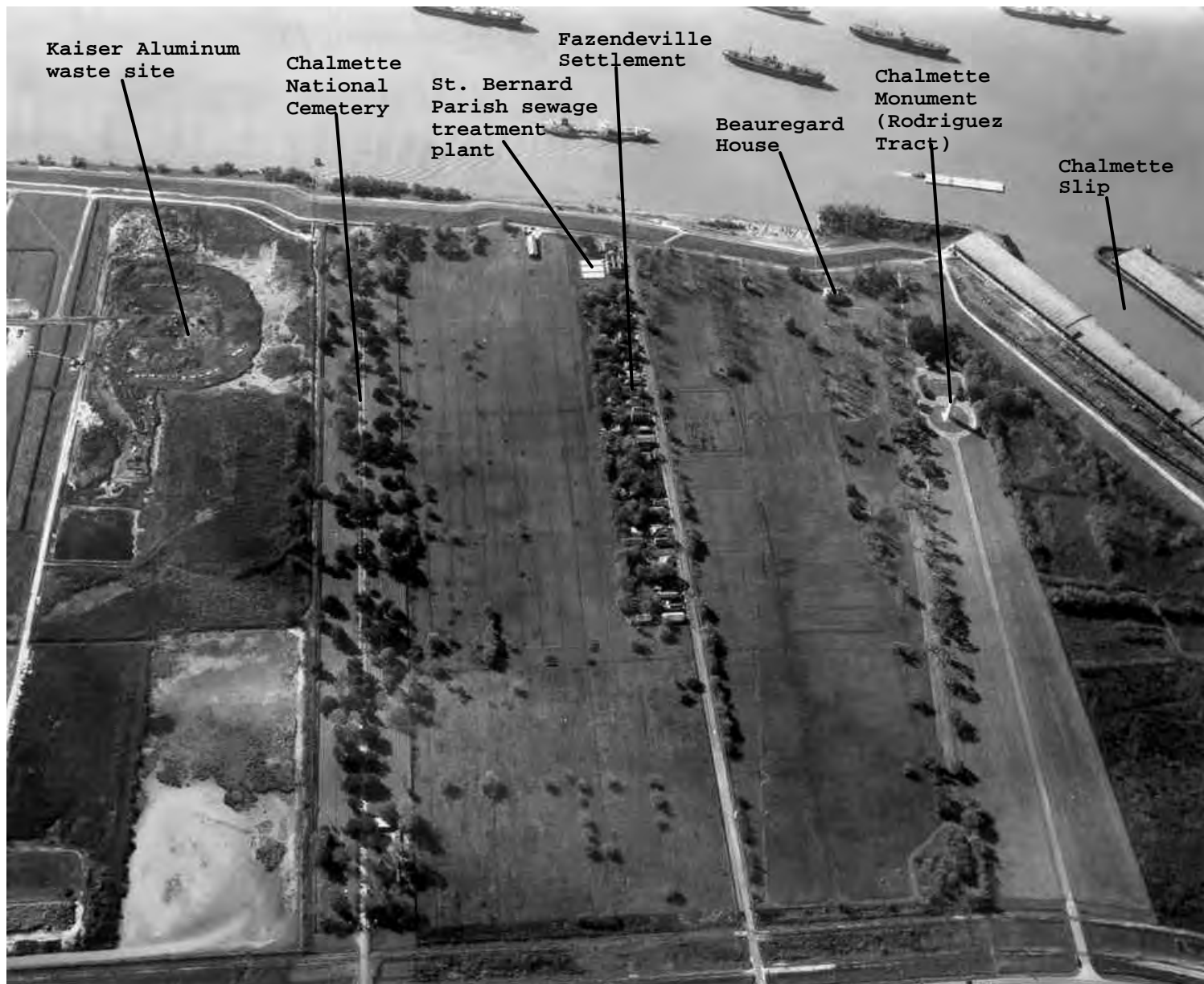


Figure 15. Aerial photo of Chalmette National Historical Park, c. 1960, showing industrialized site context and remnants of the linear land parcels that were incorporated into the contemporary park. (#10-10-001) [Annotations by author]

In her topographical study of the battlefield (1985), Betsy Swanson describes the changes that have occurred to the topography of the riverfront since the time of the battle. Natural erosion and deposition have altered a distinctive bend in the river that once had its apex near the American line. Downriver from the park, sedimentation has added to the east bank of the river while eroding away a portion of the west bank. The panoramic sight lines that Jackson would have enjoyed from his second-floor lookout at the Macarty Plantation have been altered by these topographic shifts and also by the growth of volunteer vegetation along the batture slope of the levee. The increased height of the levee itself, of course, has obscured the sweeping view lines that facilitated Jackson's surveillance of British movements on the plantations--Chalmette, Bienvenu, De La Ronde, Lacoste, Villere--downriver from the Rodriguez property.³⁴

Summary

The Chalmette Battlefield Site is composed of various land parcels, each with its own distinctive site history, acquired over a more-than-one-hundred-year period and assembled into the present commemorative/interpretive park. This piecemeal evolution is implicitly apparent in the observed landscape of Chalmette and in the disconnected way in which extant features--the Rodriguez Canal, the Malus-Beauregard House, Chalmette Monument, Spotts Marker, the reconstructed American rampart, the St. Bernard sewage treatment plant, and the Fazendeville Road trace--relate to one another spatially. These features date from multiple eras in the site's history, serving as reminders of various land uses, circulation patterns, or property divisions that have been lost. Although not landscape features per se, subsurface archeological resources, such as the Rodriguez Plantation complex and American battery positions, further add to the site's material complexity. Chalmette's landscape represents not a battlefield preserved whole-cloth, but a fragmented continuum of material history overlaid on the remnants of the former battlefield.

Chalmette National Cemetery (1864-present)

Chalmette National Cemetery is located on land that belonged to the battle-era Chalmette Plantation and, later, the St. Amand Plantation. The City of New Orleans acquired the land in 1861, after a series of subdivisions of the St. Amand holdings. During the Civil War, a portion of the land was occupied by a line of Confederate earthworks, constructed to protect the City of New Orleans from attack along the Mississippi River.³⁵ In 1864, the city ceded a thirteen and one-half acre tract of this land to the United States Government for use as a bivouac ground and cemetery. In 1868, the cemetery--originally known as Monument Cemetery--was donated to the Federal Government and placed under the administration of the War Department as a national cemetery. The earthworks that extended onto the property and any buildings that remained from the St. Amand occupation were removed during the cemetery's early developmental period.

Under the War Department's purview, the cemetery was designed and landscaped in a fashion similar to other national cemeteries of the era. Burial plots were laid out in square sections separated by a gridded pattern of shell pathways (fig. 17), and ornamental trees and vegetation were added for embellishment. A central shell drive with a series of five circular nodes was constructed along the length of the cemetery, and a caretaker's residence and dependency structures were built at the southern end of the property, near the cemetery entrance.³⁶ During the nineteenth century, a brick receiving vault stood in the northernmost circle of the cemetery drive. In 1873, segmented brick walls were constructed along the cemetery's east and west boundaries, and around 1875, an iron gate was erected at the entrance. In 1882, the local chapter of the Grand Army of the Republic (G.A.R.), a veteran's group, erected a monument to the memory of Union war dead in the central node of the cemetery drive.

In 1892, the cemetery was expanded by the acquisition of the land between its original southern boundary and River Road. Consequently, the cemetery entrance was shifted to the south to reflect the new southern boundary. A new caretaker's residence and stable were constructed near the River Road entrance, and the older caretaker structures were apparently

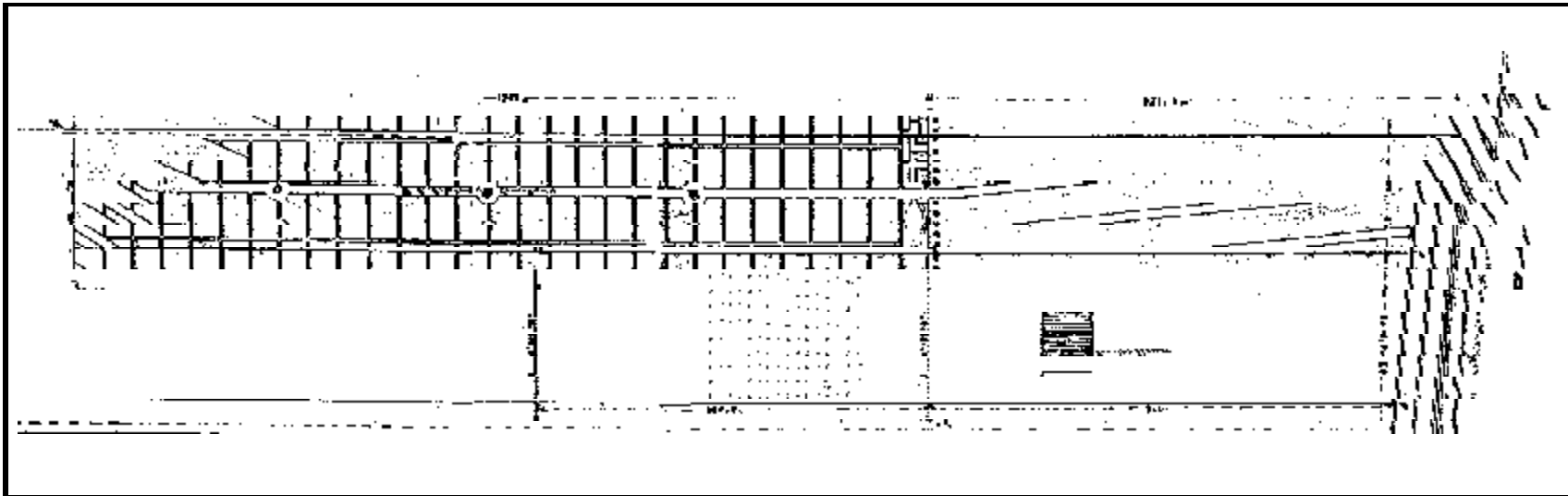


Figure 17. 1872 Plat of Chalmette National Cemetery, showing Freedmen's Cemetery [bottom center] and a Civil War-era powder magazine [bottom right] (Greene, 431; original in New Orleans Public Library).

demolished. The River (or Levee) Road served as the primary mode of access to both the cemetery and Chalmette Monument until the construction of the Chalmette Slip severed this access in 1908. Around 1909, the River Road was closed and the cemetery acquired the land extending north to the current St. Bernard Highway. This necessitated the establishment of a northern entrance to the cemetery. In 1928, a levee setback claimed the cemetery's riverfront entrance, a portion of the Levee Road, and the caretaker's house. (The brick stable building that had served the caretaker's house remained in the cemetery until the 1960s.) The decorative iron cemetery gate was probably placed at the main northern entrance at this time. A new brick cemetery lodge and carriage house were built in the northwestern portion of the cemetery in 1929. Sago palms (*Cycas revoluta*) were planted on either side of the central drive extending to the lodge complex, and additional ornamental plantings were established around the lodge itself (fig. 19). In 1933, the cemetery was transferred from the War Department's jurisdiction to the National Park Service and was incorporated into Chalmette National Historical Park.

The cemetery drive, which was originally surfaced with shell and edged with a brick curb and gutters (see fig. 18), was paved in the late 1950s. At this time, four of the five circles that had served as focal nodes along the drive--one of which had featured a flagpole--were removed. In 1956, the G.A.R. Monument was relocated from its position in the center of the cemetery drive to a new location in a terminal circle at the riverfront end. The flagpole was relocated to a park-like setting across the drive from the cemetery lodge building and flanked by a set of mounted gun carriages. Another set of mounted gun carriages, which once ornamented the riverfront entrance of the cemetery, were moved to a location just inside the iron gates at the St. Bernard Highway entrance. A brick maintenance shed was erected in 1957 at the southern edge of the newly expanded utility court serving the lodge building and carriage house. The caretaker's stable and a wooden rostrum, which had served as a staging platform for official ceremonies and commemorative events, stood in the southeastern portion of the cemetery until the late 1950s or early 1960s, when both were apparently removed (see figs. 20 & 22). The

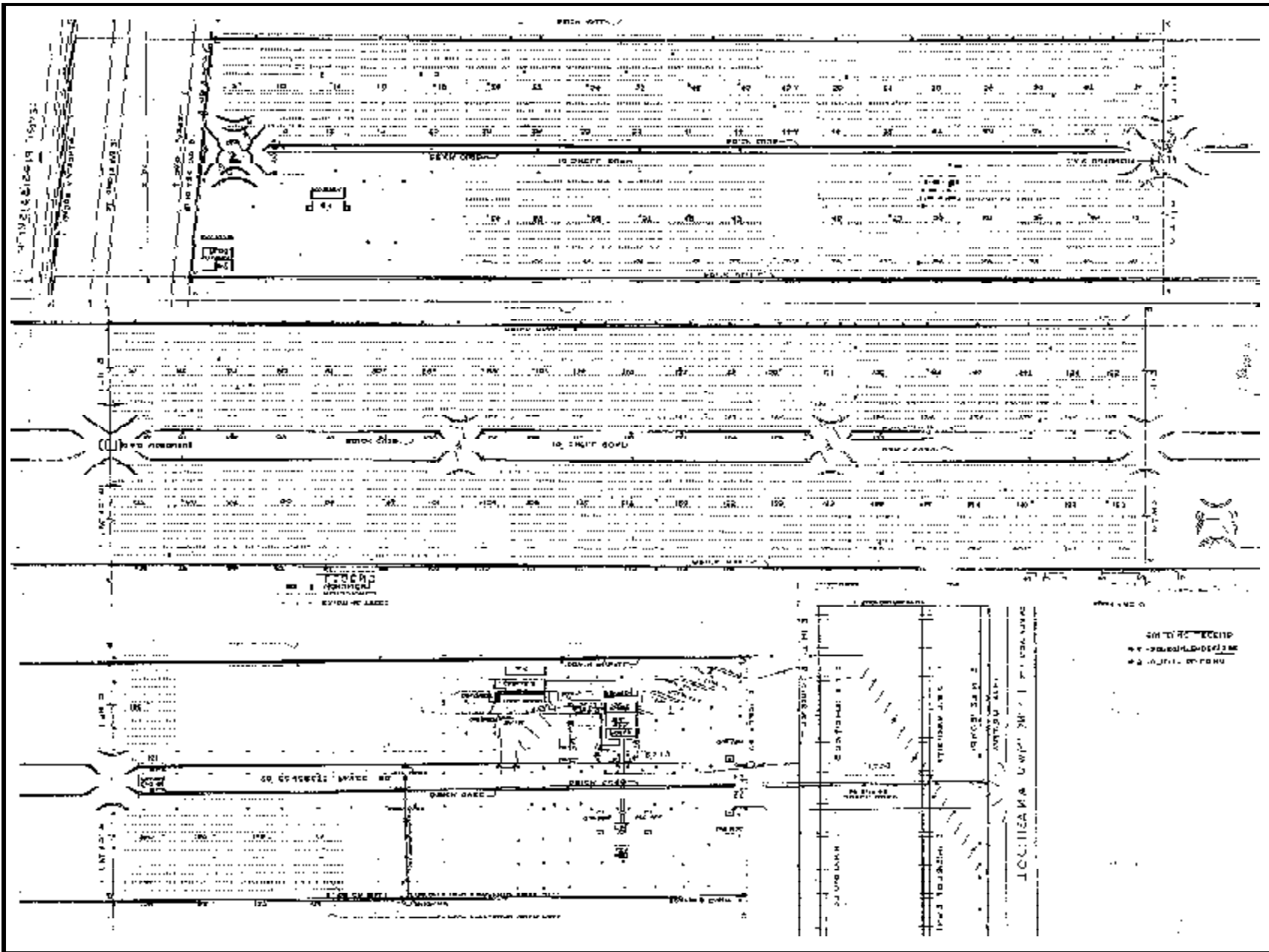


Figure 18. Topographic Base Map, Chalmette National Cemetery, detail of Shts. 1 & 2, 1953 (467/2016). Note: Existing tree plantings--primarily around the lodge complex and along the cemetery drive, walls, and alleys--are represented by solid, heavy dots. [Image edited by author]

cemetery, along with the battlefield property, was incorporated into Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve in 1978.

Early photographs and plans of the cemetery show six more-or-less parallel rows of tree plantings: one row just inside both the east and west walls, one lining either side of the central drive, and one along each of the medial axes, approximately halfway between the central drive and the cemetery walls, where the spacing of the grave markers is deliberately wider to accommodate such planting (figs. 20 & 22). Though records suggest that trees--notably live oaks, magnolias, and cedars--were planted in piecemeal fashion throughout the cemetery's early history, evidence indicates that a number of sycamore specimens were planted in 1927.³⁷ During the 1960s, two major storms--Hurricane Betsy in September 1965 and Hurricane Camille in August 1969--caused significant damage to the cemetery's tree plantings. It appears that many trees were lost or damaged during these storms (fig. 21); these trees were never systematically replaced, though a replacement plan was devised.³⁸



Figure 19. Incidental view of cemetery lodge and grounds from the south, showing young sycamore trees and sago palms planted along drive, and accent plantings (*Alocasia* spp. ?) in front of lodge, c. 1937. (#30-20-029)



Figure 20. Chalmette National Cemetery, showing the rostrum [left edge], the rows of marble grave markers, and the distinct rows of tree plantings, c. 1950(?). (#30-00-010)



Figure 21. Cemetery drive, showing storm damage from Hurricane Betsy, September 1965. (#30-90-015)



Figure 22. Aerial photo of Chalmette National Cemetery taken from the riverfront end, showing G.A.R. Monument [front center], the former caretaker's stable [right center], the six distinct rows of tree plantings, and the Kaiser Aluminum waste site [right], c. 1960. (#10-10-014)

Notes

1. Benjamin Henry Boneval Latrobe, *Impressions Respecting New Orleans: Diary & Sketches, 1818-1820*, edited with an introduction and notes by Samuel Wilson, Jr. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1951), 42-46. Latrobe, perhaps best known for his work on the Capitol at Washington, undertook several architectural commissions in New Orleans, including the design of the customhouse (1807) and plans for the city waterworks (1811-1820). His work on the latter brought him to New Orleans in 1819. During his ensuing residence (1819-20), he visited the battlefield at Chalmette on at least two occasions, capturing its landscape in both word and sketch.

2. This canal, commonly referred to as the Rodriguez Canal, was a drainage ditch, or mill race, marking the boundary between the Rodriguez and neighboring Chalmette Plantations. For Jackson, the canal was a strategic and defensible landscape feature, running from river to backswamp, along which his troops erected the earth and wooden rampart that would serve as the principal American line of defense against the advancing British.

3. The first landscape in the United States to be preserved in permanent commemoration of a military campaign was Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park, established August 19, 1890. Chalmette National Historical Park was established by Act of Congress on August 10, 1939.

4. Petrochemical and other heavy industry has consumed much of the former agricultural land along the river, altering the original patterns of property division and regretfully disposing with many of the plantation structures that once stood as witness to an earlier mode of existence. The Chalmette site is an exception--a rare remnant of open space, amidst the smokestacks, warehouses, and shipping docks, which unwittingly preserves the traces of the original agricultural land divisions.

5. Fred B Kniffen, "The Lower Mississippi Valley: European Settlement, Utilization and Modification," in *Cultural Diffusion and Landscapes*, ed. H. Jesse Walker and Randall A. Detro (Baton Rouge: Geoscience Publications, Dept. of Geography and Anthropology, Louisiana State University, 1990), 5.

6. *Ibid.*, 9. The three forest associations described follow Kniffen's general classification scheme for the vegetation of the Lower Mississippi Valley region. This scheme does not represent a comprehensive listing of all the plant species or local variation that might occur in each of these zones.

7. See Bennett H. Wall and others, eds., *Louisiana: A History* (Arlington Heights, IL: Forum Press, Inc., 1990), 5-10; Fred B. Kniffen, Hiram F. Gregory, and George A. Stokes, *The Historic Indian Tribes of Louisiana: From 1542 to the Present* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1987).

8. Coastal Environments, Inc., *Resource Management: The St. Bernard Parish Wetlands, Louisiana*, a study prepared for the St. Bernard Parish Police Jury (Baton Rouge, October 1976), 17.

9. Sam B. Hilliard, "Plantations and the moulding of the Southern landscape," in *The Making of the American Landscape*, ed. Michael P. Conzen (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1990), 121. See also Kniffen, "The Lower Mississippi Valley," 15.

10. Le Moyne, commonly known as Bienville, was lieutenant of the original 1699 French expedition to found a military outpost in Louisiana (Wall, 19-21). For an historical summary of the establishment of New Orleans, see Wall, 34-36. See also Kniffen, "The Lower Mississippi Valley," 14.

11. Due to a gradational increase in the underlying clay composition, the soil's natural drainage capacity decreased as the land declined from the natural levee to the backswamp. As a result, the most well-drained soils were those nearest the river. Ditches allowed positive drainage between the elevated natural levee and the backswamp, serving as overflow channels for frequent flood waters that would have otherwise inundated the fields. Indigo and sugarcane were especially suited to such soil conditions, able to tolerate frequent periods of inundation as well as the subtropical climate.

12. Louisiana's French Colonial period extended from 1699 to 1763, followed by a period of Spanish Colonial rule from 1763 until 1800. The French secretly reacquired the Louisiana Territory from Spain in 1800 and held it until the time of the Louisiana Purchase by the United States in 1803. Louisiana's colonial period thus extends from 1699 until 1803.

13. For a comprehensive account of the subdivisions and land use history of the Chalmette and Rodriguez properties, see Ted Birkedal's "Historical Geography of Civilian and Post-Battle Features" (draft); Jerome Greene's *Historic Resource Study* (1985); or Sam Wilson's *Plantation Houses on the Battlefield of New Orleans*.

14. Barthelemy Lafon's survey was commissioned by the neighboring landowner, Jean Baptiste Prevost. The survey map is reproduced in Greene's *Historic Resource Study* [1985], 377. The exact way in which the canal connected to the river is not well-documented; presumably a sluice gate or other mechanical device built in to the levee controlled the intake of water, providing sufficient flow to power the sawmill while preventing flooding of the surrounding fields.

15. P. Pedesclaux, September 29, 1808, New Orleans Notarial Archives, cited in Jill-Karen Yakubik's "Settlement and Occupation of the Chalmette Property," in Greene, *Historic Resource Study* [1985], 173.

16. From Surrey [1916], 92, cited in Kniffen, 15.

17. Birkedal's "Revised Historical Geography of the Chalmette Battlefield" provides a detailed analysis of the topographical features associated with the Battle of New Orleans. Note: Birkedal's draft report was not paginated; hence, the lack of precise page references.

18. Greene, *Historic Resource Study*, 4-5. Note: an original footnote was omitted in the citation.

19. Birkedal provides a detailed description of the cypress swamp and each of the major drainage ditches that transected the battlefield. Aerial photographs of the park show the traces of several of these drainage ditches.

20. Birkedal, *Search for the Lost Riverfront*. . . , n.p.

21. Ted Birkedal, personal conversation with the author, March 1998.

22. Birkedal's research suggests that the boundaries of these subdivisions generally followed the lines of the pre-existing drainage ditches on the Chalmette property.

23. Credit Sale, Mrs. Caroline Fabre, Widow of Michel Bernard Cantrelle, to J.A. Fernandez y Lineros, Act of Amadee Ducatel, Notary Public, July 5, 1866, bk. 9, fol. 180, New Orleans Notarial Archives; Notice of sale, unidentified newspaper, attached to conveyance. Cited in Greene, p. 285.

24. *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, March 27, 1880, cited in Greene, p. 286.

25. The detached kitchen is depicted in a photograph of the house from the 1890s reproduced in Greene's *Historic Resource Study*, p. 437.

26. Illustration 46 of the *Historic Resource Study* (p. 441) documents the deterioration of the Beauregard landscape during this period.

27. A sketchier HABS drawing from 1934 shows an approximate location for the detached kitchen and carriage house, as well as picket fence lines extending along two sides of the house (NPS 467/27001).

28. Greene, 261.

29. see Greene's *Historic Resource Study*, Chapter X, "The Civil War Earthworks at Chalmette," for additional information on the earthworks.

30. Ibid, 261-262.

31. For more detailed information regarding the construction and history of the Chalmette Monument, including photographs and sketches of the unfinished structure and its overgrown landscape, see Leonard V. Huber's *The Battle of New Orleans and Its Monument* (1983).

32. The 1902 drawing, "Monument to the Memory of American Soldiers, Battle of New Orleans," (NPS 467/9001) provides the earliest illustration of the shell pathway leading from River Road to the monument. Chalmette archives.

33. Birkedal, "Revised Historical Geography of the Chalmette Battlefield," n.p.

34. In her report, Swanson describes the strategic significance of the battlefield's riverfront orientation:

The swamp line at the 'Rodriguez Canal' encroached close toward the river and left a narrow space of natural levee to be defended by a breastwork. In front of the breastwork, the river curved upward again and the natural levee widened, exposing the entire British camp, the river, and the West Bank to view from the line. Because the river curved, the plantation buildings, where the British centered the operations of their camp, were not lined up one behind the other and hidden from the view of the American line. They were, instead, staggered backward in view as the river curved. From the dormers of the Macarty House, Jackson and his staff could observe with a telescope the operations of the British for some distance down the river [footnote omitted]. For this reason, General Sir Edward Pakenham moved his troops forward in the night and attempted attack at the first light of dawn on January 8th. (5)

35. The main body of these earthworks was located on land now occupied by the Kaiser Aluminum plant, to the east of current cemetery boundaries. All traces of this structure have vanished beneath the Kaiser site. For additional information, see Greene's *Historic Resource Study* (p. 155-167).

36. Ibid, 431. The *Historic Resource Study* includes an 1872 plat of the cemetery--the earliest known plan--showing the distinctive gridded layout, central drive, and caretaker structures (fig. 17). This plan also shows a Freedmen's Cemetery to the west of the National Cemetery and a Civil War-era powder magazine to the southwest.

37. A bronze marker at the base of one of these sycamores indicates their apparent origin and design significance: "Peace Tree--Planted on November 18, 1927, under the auspices of the National Association of the Survivors of the Battle of Shiloh. The Sycamore was chosen because of its white body and limbs, white being the emblem of peace--This marker placed May 30, 1964 by the Vieux Carre Chapter, D.A.R."

38. See NPS 467/3026 for proposed storm damage planting in the cemetery.

PART ONE: EXISTING CONDITIONS

For the purpose of recording existing conditions, the park has been divided into three spatially distinct zones (see fig. 25):

- 1) *Chalmette Battlefield*, which includes park land and features lying north of the riverfront service road, between the park's western boundary line and the western wall of Chalmette National Cemetery,
- 2) the *Mississippi Riverfront*, which includes park land and associated features lying between the north edge of the riverfront service road and the Mississippi River, and
- 3) *Chalmette National Cemetery*, which includes park land and features defined within the separate brick-walled enclosure to the east of the battlefield zone, as well as the narrow buffer strip with Kaiser Aluminum.

The historical significance of the Mississippi Riverfront is, of course, inseparable from that of the battlefield landscape, but the three-zone spatial scheme allows a more precise description of the park's landscape as it exists today and highlights management/planning concerns and use patterns in each of the three zones.

Chalmette Battlefield

The commemorative battlefield is divided into two subzones based on a property division that dates from the time of the Battle of New Orleans and is marked, now as then, by the line of the Rodriguez Canal (see fig. 27):

- a) the *Rodriguez (Chalmette Monument) Tract*, the wedge-shaped parcel lying between the park's western boundary and the east bank of the Rodriguez Canal, representing the southern portion of the battle-era

Rodriguez property (and the park's earliest commemorative parcel); and

- b) the *Chalmette Tract*, the roughly rectangular parcel lying between the east bank of the Rodriguez Canal and the western wall of Chalmette National Cemetery, representing the western-most portion of the battle-era Chalmette Plantation property.

Though the much sedimented canal still delineates the historic property line, the Rodriguez and Chalmette tracts are managed for interpretive purposes as part of the commemorative battlefield.¹ They are linked together spatially by the park loop road and by pedestrian paths which lead to park visitor facilities or distinct character areas, such as that associated with the Malus-Beauregard House. An overview of existing conditions is provided for the battlefield zone as a whole, followed by specific descriptions for the subzones and character areas, as deemed necessary for clarification.

Battlefield Overview

Boundaries and buffering

The commemorative battlefield is managed primarily as an open field, except for distinct clusterings of trees south of the Chalmette Monument and around the Malus-Beauregard House, and an area of second-growth woodland that buffers the battlefield from development to the north. To the west, the battlefield is buffered by a wooded area on the adjacent Chalmette Slip property. The engineered embankment of the Mississippi River levee rises to the south, where scattered trees and woody successional growth along the northern edge of the riverfront service road visually define the southern extent of the battlefield zone. The western wall of Chalmette National Cemetery delimits the battlefield's eastern edge. A provisional screen of trees surrounds the St. Bernard sewage treatment plant.

Topography and drainage

Located on an ancient deposit of deltaic soil, the battlefield terrain is almost uniformly flat, relieved only by micro-scale undulations in the alluvial soil caused by human activity or the traces of old agricultural ditches and roadbeds which have left lasting impressions in the earth. Because of the plastic clayey subsoil and numerous micro-depressions, the battlefield zone frequently contains areas of standing water, particularly along the shoulders of the park roads where grading changes have altered and impounded natural drainage flows. Impounding is especially prevalent in the wooded thicket along the northern end of the battlefield, where the adjacent railroad embankment and St. Bernard Highway have permanently altered the natural river-to-backswamp drainage gradient. Clogged culverts underneath the railroad embankment further contribute to impoundment in this area. During a period of torrential rainfall in January 1998, significant ponding was also observed along the length of the American rampart, along the western wall of the cemetery, in the area between the Malus-Beauregard House and tour road, and along



Figure 23. Ponding along the northern shoulder of the visitor tour road after a heavy rainfall, January 1998.

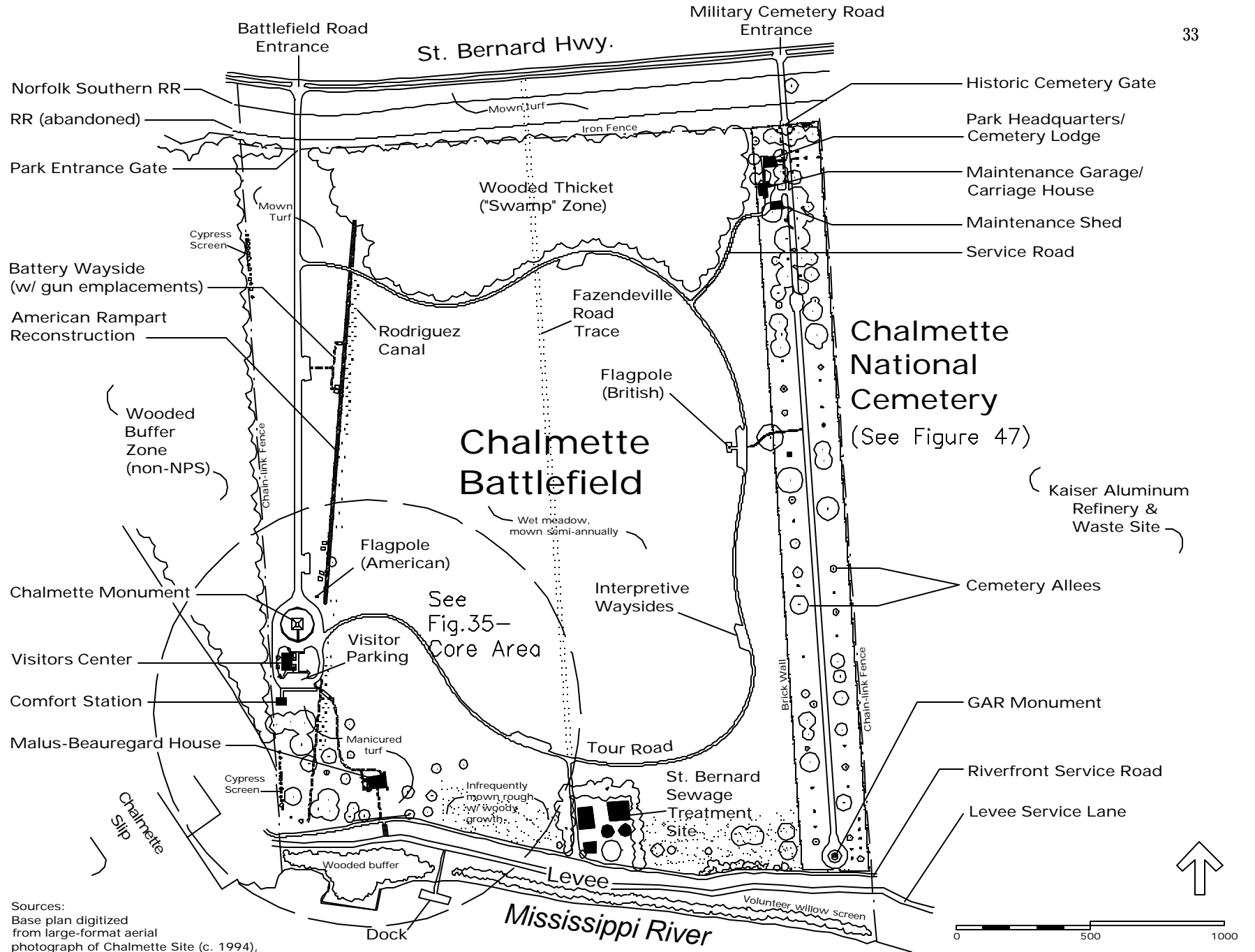
the western property line (fig. 23). Although this ponding may be temporarily inconvenient for visitors wishing to walk on the battlefield terrain, it causes no apparent damage and, in fact, simulates climatic conditions from the time of the battle, when the fields were waterlogged from heavy rains and flooding.

Vegetation management

The battlefield zone is maintained in primarily herbaceous cover by routine and frequent mowing. There is, however, some variation in the management regime for the Rodriguez and Chalmette tracts, the former receiving a noticeably more manicured turf grass treatment in keeping with its commemorative function and more intensive visitor use. In the last year, the park has experimented with a regime of less frequent mowing for the Chalmette tract, allowing much of the vegetation to grow to a height of several feet between cuttings, while maintaining shorter mown swathes along the shoulders of the tour road for safety and visibility (fig. 24). The less-frequent mowing, along with the numerous wet depressions in this area, probably accounts for the greater diversity



Figure 24. Mowing pattern on the Chalmette tract, showing taller vegetation in the central battlefield area and mown swathes along the visitor tour road.



Sources:
 Base plan digitized from large-format aerial photograph of Chalmette Site (c. 1994), detailed with field data collected during site visits, September 1997 and January 1998.
 Scale is approximate and should not be used for site construction purposes.

Battlefield Existing Conditions

Figure 25.

of herbaceous species found on the Chalmette tract and attracts some small wildlife, notably birds. The American rampart, which physically and visually demarcates the two tracts, is maintained in the same closely clipped turf as the Rodriguez tract. The present management regimes do not specifically reflect the park's interpretive themes.

Rodriguez (Chalmette Monument) Tract

This distinctively wedge-shaped tract contains the park entrance drive; the reconstructed American rampart; the Rodriguez Canal; Chalmette Monument and Monument Circle; the visitor center, comfort station, parking, and pedestrian paths; the archeological site of the Rodriguez Plantation; and Spotts Marker, as well as several interpretive waysides (see figs. 27 & 35).

Vegetation and vegetation management

Apart from the partial buffer of successional woodland growth along the northern boundary, the entire tract is maintained in turf grass, which is kept at a height of 2-3 inches, with occasional large trees. However, a 40-foot strip has been released from mowing along the park's western boundary to provide a more substantial buffer with the Chalmette Slip property, the industrial infrastructure of which is conspicuous above the existing treeline. (The advisability of this management treatment is examined in Part Two of the report, and alternative strategies for enhancing the park's buffering are addressed.) Near the northern end of the western boundary, a single row of cypress trees (*Taxodium distichum*) has been planted just inside the property line to provide screening for a gas line right-of-way which has opened an objectionable view line to the southwest through the adjacent property. At the southern end of the tract, a distinctly L-shaped clustering of live oak trees marks the location of the uninterpreted archeological site of the Rodriguez Plantation complex. In the southwestern corner of the tract, near the riverfront service road, another row of planted cypress trees provides an ineffective screen against the visual intrusion of the Chalmette Slip dock (fig. 26).

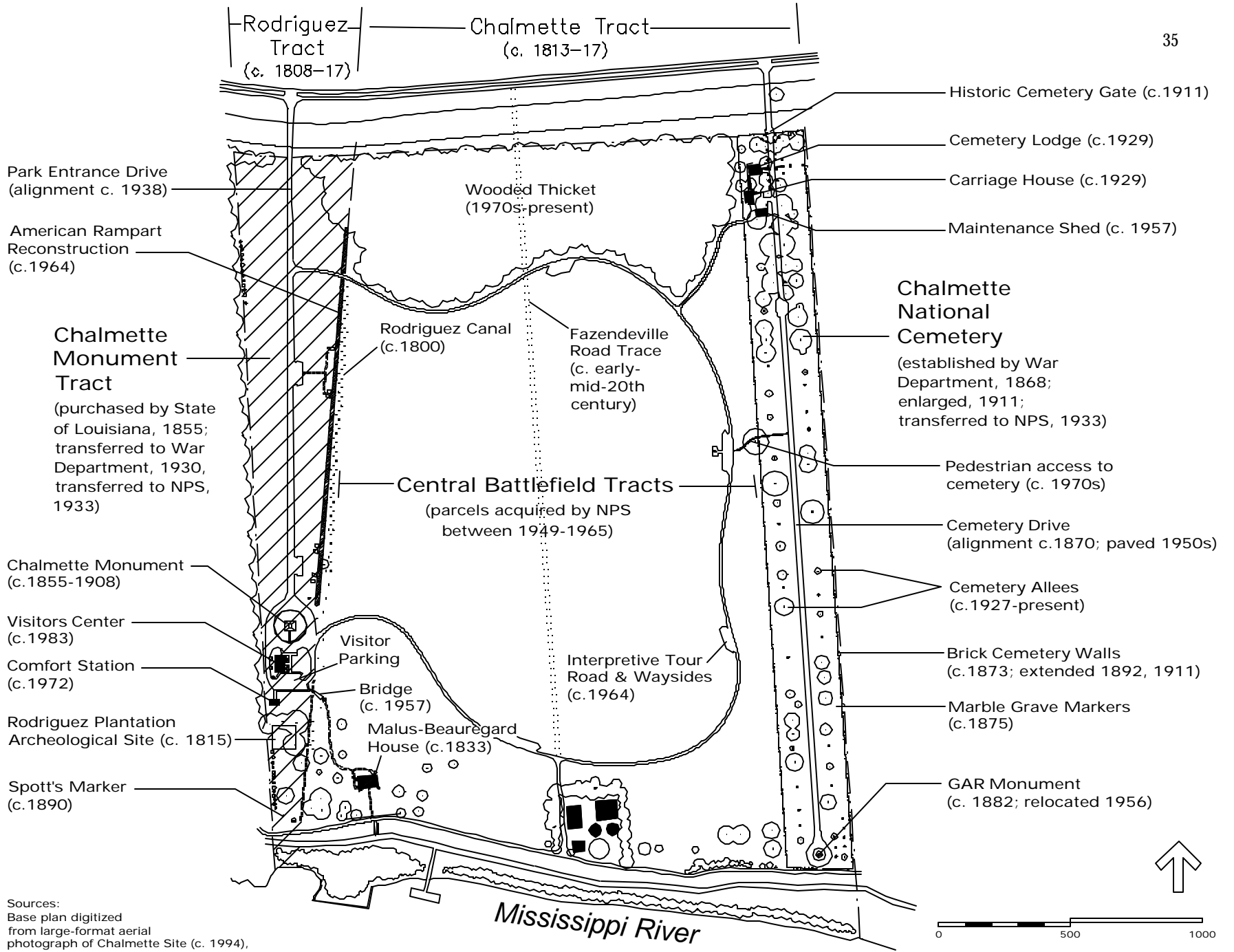


Figure 26. Riverfront service road and Chalmette Slip as seen from the southwestern corner of the battlefield. Note Spotts Marker in midground.

Battlefield Road entrance drive

The battlefield is accessed for vehicular traffic by an entrance drive--officially denoted as Battlefield Road--that leads from the St. Bernard Highway. Heavy industrialization along the highway corridor and to the east and west of the park significantly impacts the automotive approach sequence (fig. 28). The entrance drive crosses a succession of railroad and utility rights-of-way before passing through a nondescript metal gate in a fence marking the park's northern boundary. Low holly (*Ilex* spp.) hedges on either side of the entrance right-of-way and a dated brown park sign hardly distinguish the entrance drive from the drives of surrounding industrial properties (fig. 29). For first-time visitors, the context is jarring; the approach, decidedly uninviting.

Although the entrance drive is axially aligned with the prominent Chalmette Monument, too much of the site is visible at a single glance to keep one's view focused on the monument. Both the monument and the Malus-Beaugard House are clearly visible from the entrance gate, even though the latter feature is, for interpretive purposes, a



Historical Base Map

Figure 27.



Figure 28. The American Sugar Refinery, one of the industrial properties that neighbors the park, viewed from St. Bernard Highway.



Figure 29. Intersection of Battlefield Road and St. Bernard Highway as approached from the east.

problematic feature on the battlefield landscape (fig. 30). The entrance gate itself is noticeably underscaled and set far enough back from the highway as to have little visual impact. The lack of a proper spatial and experiential transition between the outside commercial/industrial realm of St. Bernard Parish and the battlefield's commemorative realm creates a distinctly unflattering first impression of the site.

From the park gate, the two-way Battlefield Road runs south towards the planned focal point of the Chalmette Monument, bisecting the wedge-shaped expanse of manicured turf that represents an intact portion of the historic Rodriguez property. Because the monument tract is wedge-shaped, narrowing from north to south, and is defined on its western edge by a continuous line of trees, the monument appears more distant from the entrance than it is in reality because of a slightly forced perspective. Inside the park gate, the swampy wooded thicket that covers the northern quarter of the battlefield zone sweeps irregularly to the southeast and along the north edge of the tour road, serving as an initial screen to the towering smokestacks of the Kaiser Aluminum plant



Figure 30. Malus-Beauregard House and Chalmette Monument as seen from Battlefield Road entrance drive.

to the east (fig. 31). Along the eastern edge of the entrance drive, beyond its intersection with the park tour road, paved vehicular turnouts mark the location of two interpretive waysides designed to display gun carriages and interpret battery positions along the reconstructed American rampart (fig. 32). The entrance drive terminates in a circular drive around the base of the Chalmette Monument; a connecting loop provides access to the visitor center and parking facilities to the south of the monument, and to the park tour road to the east.

Reconstructed American rampart and Rodriguez Canal

The American rampart, an in situ reconstruction of Jackson's earthen line of defense, emerges from the swampy woods to the east of the park entrance. From there, it runs in a line towards the southwest, breached once by the park tour road which crosses it at a point to join the entrance drive. The rampart is formed from compacted earth, mounded and edged with wooden palings along both the interior (western) and exterior (eastern) faces (see fig. 32). The turf-covered reconstruction is approximately three feet high on its western face and is of roughly uniform width and height along its entire length, though its cross-sectional profile would have been rough and irregular at the time of the battle.

The rampart, which follows the line of the Rodriguez Canal, originally extended from a position north of current park boundaries to the banks of the Mississippi River. During the 1964 "reconstruction," the rampart was terminated, for unknown reasons, at a point north of the Chalmette Monument. Obviously, some of the extreme southern end of the rampart has been lost to levee setbacks and riverbank erosion, but there is little logic for why the reconstruction, however inaccurate in profile and construction, was not extended to the riverfront service road. A single live oak tree, draped with Spanish moss, grows from the base of the exterior slope near the rampart's southern terminus, the lone tree in the central battlefield area.

At the base of the rampart's exterior (eastern) slope, a shallow depression in the earth marks the line of the Rodriguez Canal. The only man-made feature surviving relatively unaltered from the time of the



Figure 31. Wooded thicket to the north of the tour road with Kaiser Aluminum smokestacks in the distance.



Figure 32. American rampart showing battery position at interpretive wayside.

battle, this feature parallels the course of the rampart towards the southwest, oddly tapering in profile to level ground before it reaches the riverfront service road. The leveling off of this feature's profile at the southern end of the site, due to sedimentation and probable infilling at some point in time, hinders the visitor's understanding of the historical spatial relationship between the canal, rampart, and river. Because it is frequently inundated, the canal contains wetland species such as rush and cattail, which distinguishes it vegetatively from the remainder of the largely meadowy battlefield. The canal is twice interrupted by the park tour road and is traversed at a point near its southern end by a wooden footbridge and pedestrian path leading to the Malus-Beauregard House (fig. 33).

Chalmette Monument and Monument Circle

At the terminus of the north-south entrance drive, the marble shaft of the Chalmette Monument rests on a low median of manicured turf encircled by a roundabout of the paved drive (fig. 34). No plantings



Figure 33. Rodriguez Canal with footbridge leading to Malus-Beauregard House.

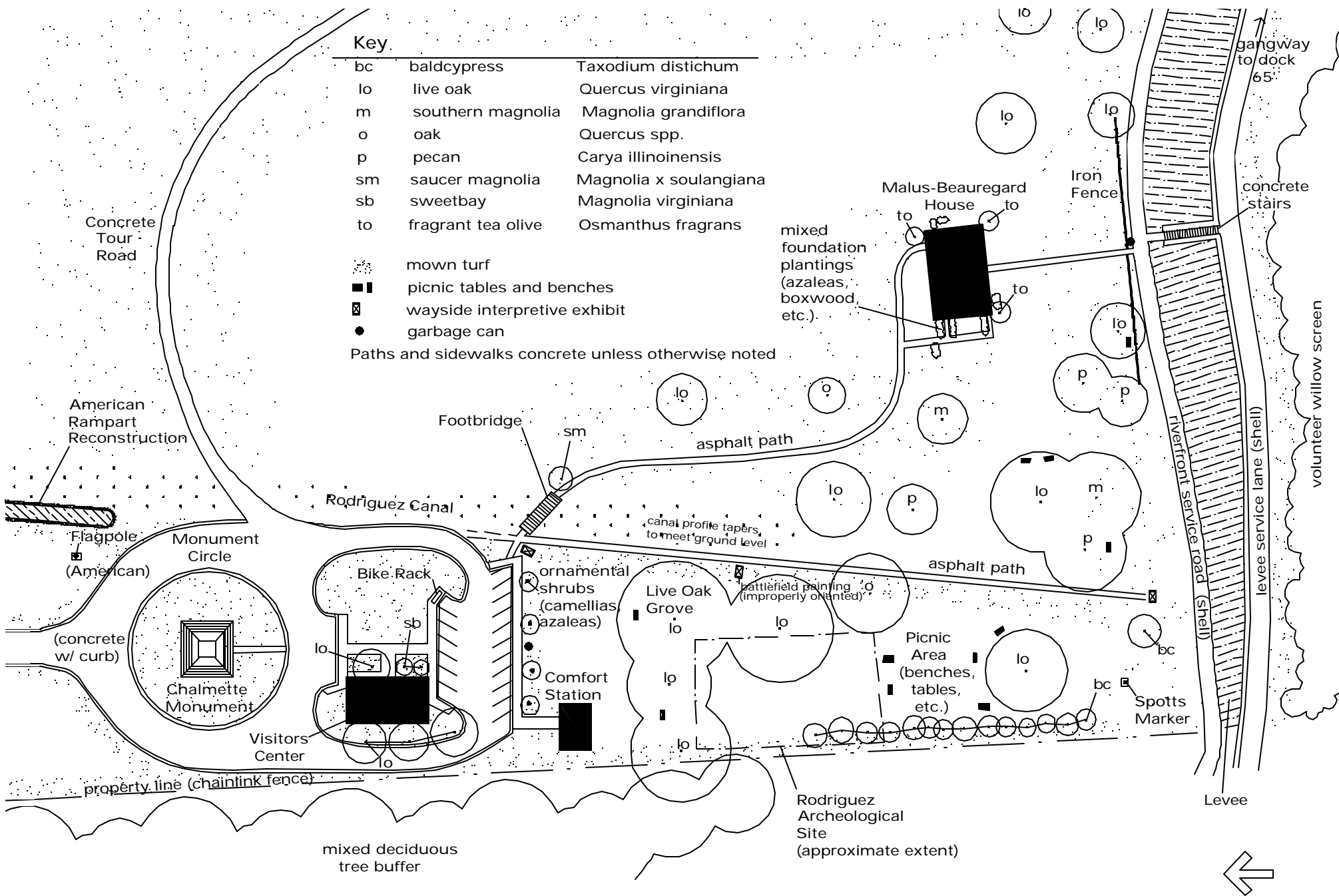
are present around the monument itself. The approximately 100-foot monument is supported by a stepped marble base which gives access to a door in the south face of the shaft, a reminder that the original entrance to the park was by way of a path from the Levee Road. On special occasions, such as the annual anniversary celebration of the Battle of New Orleans, visitors are allowed to enter the monument and climb a staircase to an observation platform near its top. From this vantage point, they receive an unparalleled view of the battlefield and the surrounding site context.

Visitor center, comfort station, and parking

A short connecting drive leads from Monument Circle to a paved parking lot south of the monument (fig. 34). The area accessed by this lot represents the park's educational and visitor services core (see fig. 35); in fact, the comfort station and visitor center are immediately adjacent. Along the southern edge of the parking lot, an irregular planting of camellias and azaleas, fixed garbage receptacles, and a

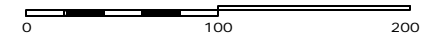


Figure 34. Chalmette Monument, Monument Circle, and Visitor Center as seen from visitor parking lot.



Sources: Base plan digitized from large-format aerial photograph of Chalmette Site (c. 1994), detailed with field data collected during site visits, September 1997 and January 1998.

Scale is approximate and should not be used for site construction purposes.



Core Area Existing Conditions

Figure 35.

conspicuous wayside bulletin board dot the mown turf (figs. 36 & 38). The comfort station is located at the southwest corner of the parking area. The separate visitor center building, a dark wooden structure with an east-facing porch, is built on a grassy oval median between Monument Circle and the visitor parking lot. A concrete walkway leads from the parking area to the visitor center's porch (see fig. 34). The area around the visitor center is shaded by several young live oak (*Quercus virginiana*) and sweetbay (*Magnolia virginiana*) trees planted along the front walkway and to the building's rear. Both the visitor center and comfort station are unfortunately sited, interrupting the setting for the Chalmette Monument, interfering with view lines from the north and south, and compromising the interpretation of the Rodriguez archeological site.

Pedestrian paths

From the southeast edge of the parking lot, a paved path leads south along the relic line of the Rodriguez Canal, terminating just short of the



Figure 36. Comfort station and visitor parking area, showing wayside bulletin board, pedestrian paths, and ornamental shrub plantings.

riverfront service road at an interpretive wayside placed along the western bank of the canal (fig. 37). On axis with the reconstructed American rampart--in fact, resting on the archeological remains of that feature's southern end--this path serves a limited interpretive function.² However, due to the presence of numerous mature oak, pecan, and magnolia trees, this area is nonetheless desirable to would-be strollers as one of the shadiest in the park. A second path leads southwest from the visitor parking area, crossing the Rodriguez Canal via a wooden footbridge and continuing towards the Malus-Beauregard House and grounds (see fig. 33). Both paths compromise the spatial understanding of the canal and American rampart, and potentially disrupt their archeological fabric.

Rodriguez Plantation archeological site

South of the comfort station, an L-shaped grove of live oak trees marks the approximate location of the Rodriguez house archeological site (fig. 38). The park provides no indication of the



Figure 37. Pedestrian path leading from visitor parking area to interpretive wayside near riverfront service drive [foreground]. Note trace of Rodriguez Canal to the right and pedestrian footbridge in the distance.



Figure 38. Live oak grove marking the approximate location of the Rodriguez archeological site, with picnic area to the south.

existence or location of this site, even though the corner dimensions of the main house and dependency wing were ascertained and apparently staked with rebar at the time of archeological investigations in the mid-1980s.³ The impressive girth and visible age of the live oak trees shading the site suggest that they too may date from the battle-era, or slightly thereafter. In fact, the trees could have been planted at the time repairs were made to the house a year or so after the battle.⁴ The area under the live oaks provides a shady respite in an otherwise open site. Consequently, it has been appropriated as a makeshift picnic area, complete with tables, benches, and garbage receptacles. This recreational use seems inappropriate for an area of the park so densely layered with archeological and interpretive significance, particularly since other less disruptive alternatives exist for accommodating this use. In addition to the Rodriguez site, the ruins of an earlier 18th-century domestic site have been identified under the southeast corner of the comfort station; this site, too, remains uninterpreted.



Figure 39. Spotts Marker

Spotts Marker

Spotts Marker, a stone loving cup-shaped memorial erected to honor a veteran of the New Orleans campaign, stands alone in an expanse of mown turf near the southwest corner of the park (fig. 39). Apart from the commemorative inscription on the marker itself, no interpretive signs explain the marker's history or its isolated present context. A lone cypress tree stands just to the east of the marker, near what was once the former riverfront entrance to the park. To the west, the Chalmette Slip dock and warehouse stand on an artificial embankment accessed by the riverfront service road (see fig 26).

Chalmette Tract

The Chalmette tract contains the visitor tour road, as well as distinctive character areas associated with the Malus-Beauregard House and the wooded thicket to the north of the tour road (see fig. 25). Though aerial photographs reveal the north-south traces of old agricultural ditches and the former Fazendeville Road within this tract, these features are currently uninterpreted and hardly detectable at ground level. This subzone also contains the 1.5-acre inholding of the St. Bernard Parish sewage treatment plant, which is slated for future acquisition and incorporation into park holdings.⁵

Vegetation and vegetation management

Like the Rodriguez tract, the Chalmette tract is maintained primarily in low herbaceous vegetation, but unlike the former, it is not mown as frequently or as closely. As a result, this tract exhibits a greater diversity of vegetation, including some native grasses, low successional species, and wet meadow species which thrive in the old road traces and ditch depressions that transect the tract from north to south. A strip along the southern end of the tract, north of the riverfront service road and extending east from the Malus-Beauregard House, contains some low woody successional growth and a few mature live oaks near the western cemetery wall, indicating a less frequent mowing regime for that area than for the grassy central battlefield (fig. 40). The grounds surrounding the Malus-Beauregard House, in the southwest corner of the tract, are maintained to a more manicured, turf grass appearance, presumably as a concession to more intensive visitor use in this area. Small ornamental trees and shrubs set in the turf around the house further distinguish this area from the remainder of the Chalmette tract, which, because of slightly lower-lying topography, more resembles a wet successional meadow.

Interpretive tour road

A one-way, paved tour road loops through the central portion of the Chalmette tract, departing from the Battlefield Road entrance drive at



Figure 40. View of the Chalmette tract/central battlefield area looking north from the riverfront service drive. Note less frequent mowing in foreground.

a point just south of the Chalmette Monument and curving counterclockwise through the grassy core of the park to reconnect with the entrance drive near its northern end. This paved drive provides vehicular access to a sequence of four interpretive waysides that provide information on the British strategy and troop movements during the Battle of New Orleans. Paved vehicular turnouts, designed for 7-10 cars, provide temporary parking for the wayside exhibits along the interior of the loop, but judging by the grass growing through the pavement, these turnouts are little used. At the southern end of the loop, a short service drive provides access to the St. Bernard sewage treatment plant and riverfront service road (fig. 41). To the west of the third wayside stop, a flagpole displaying the British flag rises from a low earthen mound. To the east of this same stop, a short path provides pedestrian access to the national cemetery through a break in the cemetery wall. A service drive connects the northeast corner of the tour road to the cemetery lodge/park headquarters building and



Figure 41. Drive leading from south end of visitor tour road to St. Bernard sewage treatment facility [background] and riverfront service road.

maintenance area located at the north end of Chalmette National Cemetery (see fig. 25).

Because the park is the primary public open space in St. Bernard Parish, the loop road serves an important recreational function for the local population, who find this paved circuit through the battlefield an amenable and convenient walking, jogging, and biking path. To emphasize the feature's importance as a recreational resource, Gary Hume, a former Chalmette site manager, recalled that many of the parish children had learned to ride their bikes at Chalmette.⁶ In fact, during three separate site visits during 1997-98, recreational use of the park's loop road was a predominant source of visitation, particularly in the late afternoons and early evenings. Because of this consistent recreational use, safety and visibility along the loop road figure prominently into the park's mowing schedule and regime. The park is still experimenting with the proper balance between a less-frequent mowing schedule and the need for adequate pedestrian visibility in this area.

Woodland swamp

To the north of the tour road, a swampy, second-growth woodland buffers the battlefield from the Norfolk Southern Railroad line and St. Bernard Highway to the north. This swampy thicket is composed of a variety of wet-adapted species such as hackberry (*Celtis laevigata*), willow (*Salix nigra*), elderberry (*Sambucus canadensis*), rough leaf dogwood (*Cornus drummondii*), and groundsel tree (*Baccharis halimifolia*). This wooded area also provides the most sheltered and probably diverse wildlife habitat in the park. The swamp sweeps in a sinuous line from a point just east of the Battlefield Road entrance, skirting along the northern edge of the tour road as it curves through the north-central portion of the battlefield (see fig 31). In addition to a critical buffering role, the thicket serves as an interpretive foil for the historic cypress swamp that existed somewhat north of present park boundaries at the time of the Battle of New Orleans. However, the existing thicket, regenerated on land that was formerly cleared, does not contain the cypress trees that characterized its historic predecessor.

During a January 1998 site visit to Chalmette, heavy rains had left this wooded area largely inundated, with water standing in ditches and channels along the park's northern boundary fence. The railroad embankment to the north has significantly altered drainage flow from this area, creating a topographic impoundment that perpetually contains standing water. The former Fazendeville Road remains visible as an earthen trace running from north to south through the thicket; its location is marked by a gate where the thicket meets the tour road. Other ditches and channels--some possibly of historic interest--transect this area. Though not currently interpreted by the park, the spot where British General Pakenham fell in combat during the Battle of New Orleans is presumably also located within this wooded area.

Malus-Beauregard House and grounds

The zone surrounding the Malus-Beauregard House represents a distinct character area within the larger Chalmette tract. Several mature pecan, magnolia, and live oak trees stand in the mown turf to the east

and west of the house, remnants of the domestic-scaled landscape that once surrounded this formerly private estate, as well as indications of its original riverfront orientation (fig. 42).⁷ Ornamental shrubs such as boxwood, holly, and azalea dot the grass at the base of the house's east, west, and riverfront facades, the result of NPS-era "improvements" to the grounds. Azaleas and several small trees border the path leading from the visitor center to the house. A paved path leads from the riverfront service road to the riverfront gallery of the house, passing through a small metal gate in a fence that marks the southern extent of the grassy zone around the house. Though all the grounds immediately surrounding the house are closely manicured, to the east, a less frequently mown zone containing a mix of herbaceous and woody growth snakes along the northern edge of the riverfront service road towards the sewage treatment plant and the western cemetery wall (see fig. 40). To the north of the house, a treeless field sweeps up to meet the tour road, some 550 feet distant; consequently, the north side of the house has an unobstructed view of the central battlefield zone and the



Figure 42. Malus-Beauregard House and surrounding grounds as viewed from riverfront side. Note ornamental shrubs, iron fencing, and walkway.

tour road. The present levee severs the spatial and visual connection between the house and the river. Furthermore, levee setbacks and riverbank erosion have claimed a portion of the southern end of this once private estate.

Mississippi Riverfront

The riverfront is defined as a separate spatial zone not only because it is isolated from the battlefield and cemetery by the engineered bulk of the levee, but also because it represents a zone of multi-jurisdictional use. In fact, although the land underneath belongs to the park, the levee itself is maintained and administered by the Army Corps of Engineers. Furthermore, the park shares jurisdiction of the riverfront service road with the parish authorities who own the sewage treatment plant and the industrial properties on either side of the park.

Riverfront service road

A shell-paved road runs along the landward toe of the levee, providing cross-park service access for the St. Bernard Parish sewage treatment plant and the parish-owned industrial properties on either side of the park. In addition, the service road provides an internal park conduit for maintenance vehicles between the southern end of the cemetery and the southwestern end of the battlefield, as well as an overflow parking area for park personnel and special events participants. A short access drive to the west of the sewage treatment facility connects the service road to the park tour road (see fig. 41). The riverfront road marks the southern extent of the grassy battlefield zone.

Levee

The Mississippi Riverfront is separated from the park by the mass of an engineered levee and sea wall that were constructed after the Army Corps of Engineers took over the administration of the protective levee zone in 1928. The levee's flattened crest is traversed by a narrow service lane, maintained and used by the Corps of Engineers. A low concrete wall runs along the landward edge of the crest, providing a

partial screen for the service lane from below (fig. 43). A break in the wall allows pedestrian access to a concrete stairway that descends the levee embankment to the Malus-Beauregard House. Though it is possible for pedestrians to walk along the levee crest towards the National Cemetery, the odor from the sewage treatment plant is at times objectionable. Furthermore, no access is provided from the levee crest to the cemetery. A screen of volunteer willows (*Salix nigra*) on the batture (riverfront) slope of the levee significantly obscures views of the river to the east and southwest, and a dramatic view of distant New Orleans from the southwest corner of the park (fig. 44). The lack of buffering at the Battlefield Road entrance is evidenced from atop the levee as a conspicuous gap in the treeline that runs along the northern edge of the park (see fig. 59). The rear of the garage in the cemetery is also visible from the southern end of the park and the levee crest (see figs. 40 & 68).

Due to the flatness of Chalmette's landscape and the presence of the 14-foot-high levee along the park's southern end, the river is no



Figure 43. View along the levee crest, showing service lane and concrete wall that borders the landward edge of the crest.



Figure 44. Volunteer willow screen on the batture slope of the levee.

longer a visible component of the landscape at Chalmette. Visitors who arrive by car might easily leave without knowing that the river flows along the park's southern boundary. The visitors who arrive twice daily by riverboat experience more fully and richly the historic connection between park and riverfront, especially as the levee provides an elevated vantage point over both the battlefield and river. In fact, the crest of the levee provides the most effective location for viewing the park's landscape in its entirety and for interpreting the strategy of battle and the importance of the river to the development of the site.

Tourboat docking facility

On the riverfront southeast of the Malus-Beauregard House, a privately-owned dock provides an alternate entrance point to the park for visitors who arrive by riverboat twice daily from downtown New Orleans (fig. 45). These privately concessioned tours deliver up to 120 visitors at a time to the metal docking platform on the batture-side of



Figure 45. Riverboat arriving with passengers to the Chalmette docking platform.



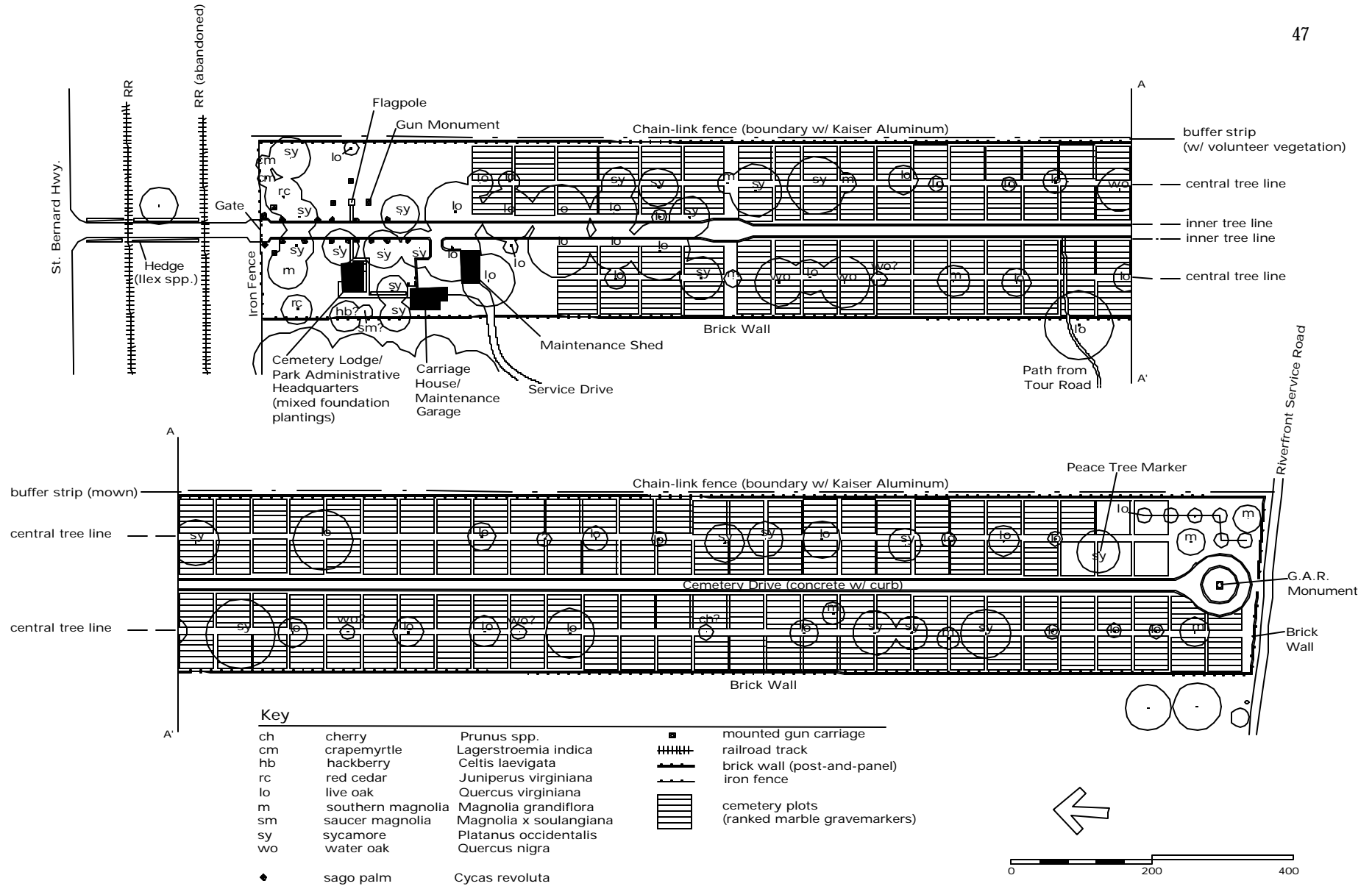
Figure 46. Catwalk from the Chalmette dock to the levee crest. Note Malus-Beauregard House and Chalmette Monument in the background.

the levee. A ramped metal gangway provides access from the docking platform to the service lane atop the levee (fig. 46). At the head of the gangway, the visitors are met by a park ranger who conducts a brief interpretive overview of the battlefield from the grounds of the Malus-Beauregard House. After walking west for a distance along the crest of the levee, the visitors descend a concrete stairway to the riverfront service road. From there, they enter the gate that leads to the Malus-Beauregard House. Handicapped access between the docking platform and the park has recently become an issue; accessibility is currently limited by the lack of an appropriate ramp or lift from the levee crest.

There are no interpretive waysides or directional signs at the dock, along the levee crest, or along the riverfront service road. Consequently, visitors who arrive to the park by car are neither discouraged or encouraged to mount the levee or to visit the riverfront, and many leave the park without ever seeing the feature--the Mississippi River--that played such a critical role in the development of the site.

Chalmette National Cemetery

The National Cemetery is clearly defined as a separate landscape within the larger park, both by its consciously designed layout and by the brick-walled enclosure that sets it apart from the commemorative battlefield. Some 2,800 feet in length from north to south and 250 feet from east to west, the cemetery is an essentially linear landscape, characterized by north-south rows of grave markers, a central drive with a circular roundabout at the southern end, partial allees of sycamore, live oak, and magnolia, and the distinctive post-and-panel brick walls that define the eastern, southern, and western boundaries (fig. 47). Though the original riverfront entrance has been lost to levee setbacks, the linear north-south spatial configuration has remained a distinguishing feature since the cemetery's establishment. A gated opening in the southern cemetery wall provides access to the riverfront service road and serves as a reminder of the cemetery's



Sources: Base plan digitized from large-format aerial photograph of Chalmette Site (c. 1994), detailed with field data collected during site visits, September 1997 and January 1998. Internment [sic] Plan, Chalmette National Cemetery, 1963, NPS 467/2026; also, 467/2016, 467/3001, 467/3011, and 467/3026.

Scale is approximate and should not be used for site construction purposes.

Chalmette National Cemetery Existing Conditions

Figure 47.

former riverfront orientation. The park has also opened a section of the western wall to accommodate a path that provides pedestrian access to the cemetery from the battlefield tour road.

A bifurcated mound discovered in the northeastern portion of the cemetery during a 1984 survey is very likely the remains of the British advance battery from the Battle of New Orleans; and the perceptibly linear alignment of earth that extends from this mound across the battlefield to the west, the remains of Center Road.⁸

Cemetery drive

The cemetery is accessed at the northern end by an entrance drive--officially denoted as Military Cemetery Road--that leads from St. Bernard Highway (fig. 48). Like the main park entrance, this drive is impacted by industrial and commercial development along the highway, most notably by the towering smokestack of the Kaiser Aluminum plant to the east and by the utility and railroad rights-of-way



Figure 48. Entrance to Chalmette National Cemetery, showing holly hedges, ornamental iron entrance gate, and allees of sycamore and live oak.



Figure 49. Iron entrance gate to Chalmette National Cemetery, with a glimpse of cemetery lodge/park administrative headquarters in background.

that must be crossed to enter the cemetery. Low holly hedges border either side of the drive as it leads from the highway to the cemetery gate, and a volunteer willow grows from a culvert to the east, the only tree along the barren right-of-way sequence. A graveled area just outside the northern boundary fence, on an abandoned railroad embankment, provides provisional parking for local citizens who use the cemetery drive and park tour road for recreation, primarily after park closing hours. The elaborate iron entrance gate, a feature from the early War Department years at Chalmette, establishes a memorable and ceremonial entrance point to the cemetery (fig. 49).

Passing through the iron gate, the entrance drive runs the length of the cemetery, terminating in a paved roundabout at the southern end. The G.A.R. Monument stands on a grassy mound at the center of this roundabout, the focal point of the entrance drive (fig. 50). The drive's surface is recessed in relationship to the ground level in order to accommodate the backwards (river-to-backswamp) drainage gradient that is characteristic of properties along the river. Furthermore, the



Figure 50. G.A.R. Monument, sited at the southern terminus of cemetery drive. Note smokestack of Kaiser Aluminum plant in the distance.

road is crowned in the center, allowing storm water to run off into the curbed concrete gutters that edge either side. Although the drive can narrowly accommodate two-way traffic, an elliptical widening of the drive in the cemetery's northern third provides a pull-off and assures a comfortable passing point for oversized vehicles. A partial alley of sycamores and live oaks lines the northern end of the drive.

Cemetery lodge/ park headquarters & maintenance complex

The park administrative office, housed in the 1920s-era brick cemetery lodge, is located southwest of the cemetery entrance gate (fig. 51). The lodge building is sited in a cluster arrangement with a detached brick carriage house, which serves as the maintenance garage and office, and an open brick maintenance shed, which serves as vehicle storage, to the south-southwest (fig. 52). A small paved utility court just south of the headquarters provides parking for the administrative and maintenance staff who work in this area. To the east, the utility court connects to the cemetery entrance drive. A short service drive leads from the west edge



Figure 51. Cemetery lodge/park administrative headquarters viewed from northeast. Note foundation plantings and sago palms along drive [foreground].



Figure 52. Carriage house/maintenance garage [center], utility court, and vehicle storage shed [left, beneath trees].

of the utility court to the battlefield tour road, passing through a security-gated opening that the park has created in the western cemetery wall. The grassy area just outside the cemetery wall, which is visible from the extreme southern end of the battlefield, appears to be used as a provisional maintenance yard and storage area for lawn mowers and other equipment.

The grounds around the brick lodge building are maintained in closely mown turf (see fig. 51). A few ornamental shrubs have been planted along the building's foundation, and a partial holly hedge screens a heating unit along the south wall. Concrete paths lead from the entrance drive to the lodge's east-facing front porch, from the utility court to the front porch, and from the garage and utility court to the lodge's rear entrance. A boxwood hedge lines the rear entrance path. Apart from the sycamores that line the cemetery drive, only a few trees, including a large magnolia, stand in the yard surrounding the lodge and along the northern boundary fence. In fact, the area to the north of the lodge has an unbuffered view through the iron boundary fence of residential and commercial development across the St. Bernard Highway. There is also an inadequate vegetative buffer to the south of the vehicular maintenance shed, whose rear wall is highly visible from within the middle third of the cemetery. Across the entrance drive from the lodge's front walkway, a similar walkway leads to a flagpole set in a small park-like area containing mounted artillery tubes and a park bench. Vertically-mounted artillery tubes also flank either side of the entrance drive just inside the cemetery gate. There are no grave markers in the northernmost portion of the cemetery.

Vegetation and vegetation management

The northern third of the cemetery has a shady, almost tunnel-like atmosphere due to the number of mature sycamore and live oak trees that overhang the entrance drive from either side (fig. 53). An irregular procession of sago palms (*Cycas revoluta*) lines the drive to its intersection point with the utility court, some 200 feet inside the gate. Especially noteworthy is a partial allee of mature live oaks that lines the drive for some 300 feet, from a point just beyond the utility court entrance. The



Figure 53. Live oak allees and sago palms along cemetery drive near lodge complex.

southern two-thirds of the drive is more open due to a gap-toothed, fragmented pattern of tree planting that is also offset a greater distance from the drive than in the northern third of the cemetery (figs. 54 & 55). Many of the trees in the southern portion of the cemetery--primarily live oak, sycamore, and magnolia--appear to have suffered storm damage or environmental stress, especially the sycamores, many of which have truncated limbs and branches. Borer holes are also apparent in some of the sycamore specimens. The park has recently planted live oak saplings to fill in some of the larger gaps in the lower cemetery planting, presumably replacing sycamores that have died or been downed in storms, but these trees are still very small and do not appear to have been planted according to any overall long-term

replacement scheme. The lack of a consistent tree canopy in the southern end of the cemetery opens undesirable viewlines of the Kaiser plant to the east, both from within the cemetery itself and also from within the larger park (fig. 55); it also leaves the cemetery visually open to the battlefield along its western boundary (fig. 54).

The cemetery is maintained exclusively in mown turf, although the more visited northern end, near the administrative headquarters, seems to receive a slightly more manicured treatment. As a result of this intensive mowing regime, the cemetery, unlike the central battlefield and wooded thicket area, exhibits very little botanical diversity and provides little shelter or habitat for wildlife. Because the ground in the cemetery is hummocky and dotted with low, closely-spaced grave markers, achieving a uniformly manicured appearance requires significant mowing with a string-trimmer. Judging by the taller tufts of grass observed between the individual grave markers during site visits, trimming appears to occur on a less routine basis than general mowing between the more widely spaced rows of markers or in the relatively



Figure 54. Gap-toothed allees near southern end of cemetery, view towards Chalmette Monument. Note closely spaced rows of gravemarkers.

open areas of grass at the extreme northern and southern ends of the cemetery. At the southern end of the cemetery, an approximately 8-foot-wide strip of mown turf, maintained by the park, separates the eastern cemetery wall from a chain-link fence that marks the edge of the Kaiser Aluminum property. No vegetative buffer has been established along the chain-link fence, even though the open view of the Kaiser site to the east disturbs the cemetery's potentially meditative setting (fig. 55). At the northern end of this strip, a volunteer screen of small trees and brushy vegetation buffers the cemetery from a large retention pond on the Kaiser property.

Notes

1. There has been some debate as to whether the canal now known as the Rodriguez Canal was actually part of the Chalmette property at the time of the Battle of New Orleans, and hence has been historically misidentified. Greene, in fact, lends credence to this supposition [*Historic Resource Study*, (66-67)]. In any case, the canal did mark the boundary between the two properties.



Figure 55. Unbuffered view of Kaiser Aluminum plant from southern end of cemetery. Note chain-link fence dividing the properties.

2. The battery positions located in this area by archeologist Ted Birkedal during mid-1980s excavations are not currently interpreted for visitors.

3. Personal conversation with archeologist Ted Birkedal, February 1998.

4. Ibid. Birkedal noted that this pattern of tree planting was similar to that found around other houses of the era (early nineteenth century).

5. See 1969 Master Plan.

6. Personal conversation with Gary Hume, January 1998.

7. Some of these trees stood on the adjacent Villavosa property (refer to photo 40-20-008 in the Chalmette photographic archives).

8. Birkedal, *Revised Historical Geography*. . . , 61. Birkedal provides detailed descriptions of these features, including their dimensions and locations within the cemetery.

PART ONE: ANALYSIS OF INTEGRITY AND HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

In order for a landscape to have historical significance, it must retain a level of physical integrity capable of conveying its significant historical and cultural associations. This implies a certain continuity of land use and management over the years, and at least partial preservation of significant landscape features and spatial relationships from a comparative period in the landscape's past. Integrity is evaluated, in fact, by comparing a landscape's present condition with its condition during a selected historic period, often referred to as the period of significance. Historical significance can then be attributed based on the measure of integrity retained from the period of significance. (It is important to note that the interpretive significance of a landscape is distinct from its historical significance, the latter being based on the integrity of existing features and physical characteristics; interpretive significance may be substantial even when the physical integrity of the landscape is not). When a landscape has multiple periods of significance, this comparative analysis must be repeated for each significant period in the landscape's evolutionary development in order to determine the most appropriate preservation strategy.

The following seven criteria, established by the National Register of Historic Places, are those typically used to evaluate historical integrity: *location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association*. Though these criteria were developed to evaluate historic structures, they can also be selectively extended to the analysis of historic landscapes. For battlefields in particular--typically vernacular landscapes converted to provisional military use--*location, setting, feeling, and association* are the criteria most applicable for evaluating integrity. For designed landscapes, such as Chalmette National Cemetery, the remaining three criteria, *design, materials, and workmanship*, are also meaningful and relevant to the evaluation. These criteria provide a baseline methodological framework for comparing the landscape's existing conditions to its conditions during the period of significance.

In order to be eligible to the National Register of Historic Places, a landscape must, in addition to possessing an adequate measure of integrity, meet one or more of the following criteria for historical significance:

- a) be associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history;
- b) be associated with the lives of persons significant in our past;
- c) embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- d) have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Even though the Chalmette Battlefield Site is already listed in the National Register of Historic Places, its historical significance will be reexamined in light of the integrity of the landscape as assessed in this report. Chalmette National Cemetery has never been evaluated for eligibility to the National Register independently of the battlefield; the cemetery is listed as a contributing feature to the park unit's historical significance in current documentation.¹

Because of their distinct developmental histories, Chalmette Battlefield and Chalmette National Cemetery will be evaluated separately for landscape integrity and historical significance. Furthermore, a portion of the battlefield--notably the Chalmette Monument tract--will be examined for its integrity and significance as a commemorative landscape. The Malus-Beauregard House and

grounds, a character area that represents a later period of significance, will also be analyzed briefly for integrity and significance independent of the battlefield landscape.

Chalmette Battlefield

Evaluation of Landscape Integrity

The best-preserved battlefields appear much as they would have at the time of battle, making it easy to understand how strategy and results were shaped by the terrain. All properties, however, change over time and nearly all battlefields will contain noncontributing properties. The impact of noncontributing properties on a battlefield as a whole depends not only on their number, but also on their nature and location and the size and topography of the battlefield.²

In order for the landscape of Chalmette Battlefield to have historical significance, it must retain a certain measure of integrity from the selected historic period, in this case, from the time of the Battle of New Orleans (1814-1815). However, apart from a few battle-era maps and Laclotte's much reproduced engraving of the battle (fig. 5), little graphic documentation--and obviously no photographs--exists to record the appearance and condition of the landscape at the time of the battle. To make such an analysis, it is necessary, then, to examine the eyewitness descriptions, plans, and illustrations from the time of the battle in light of later accounts of visits to the battlefield (such as Latrobe's 1819 visit), historic property records, existing features on the battlefield landscape, and recent archeological and historical research on the battlefield terrain.³

Because the battle was fought on a vernacular landscape temporarily appropriated for military use, not on a designed landscape, a standard evaluation of integrity based on all seven National Register criteria is problematic. Battlefield landscapes can only be construed as designed landscapes in the most abstract of senses, particularly as battle actions are fluctuating and given to strategic revision based on prevailing environmental conditions. In lieu of a comprehensive analysis, the

following discussion focuses on the four criteria most pertinent to the battlefield: *location*, *setting*, *feeling* and *association*. This is followed by a concluding statement about the integrity of the battlefield landscape.

Location--

As existing features and archeological evidence confirm, the park contains a critically important portion of the land on which the Battle of New Orleans occurred. The Rodriguez Canal is perhaps the most solidly identifying landscape feature, having survived at least partially intact from the time of the battle. The heaviest concentration of American activity occurred along the canal and contiguous rampart, and on the Rodriguez property to the west. The discovery of the Rodriguez archeological site during archeological testing in the 1980s further attests to the accuracy of location.⁴ However, archival records show that the present park boundaries do not correspond to any precise land divisions from the time of the battle. (Obviously, battles are not confined to strict property divisions, but the Battle of New Orleans has become inextricably identified with the fields of Chalmette Plantation, even though much of the American activity took place on the neighboring Rodriguez property, and some, across the river on the west bank.) In fact, the battle and its auxiliary functions were spread over a significantly wider territory, both in extent along the river and in depth from its banks, than is presently represented by the commemorative battlefield. The river's course has itself shifted over time, eroding away 200 feet or so of the battlefield's southernmost extent and altering the riverfront topography and view lines that were critical to Jackson's advance surveillance of the enemy and to his defensive strategy.⁵

None of the Macarty Plantation, which served as Jackson's headquarters in the days leading up to the battle, is included in park property; in fact, the remains of that plantation complex lie somewhere beneath the water of the Chalmette Slip. And although the battlefield does include a goodly portion of the fields across which the British attack advanced--terrain which came to be known collectively as the Chalmette Plain or Plain of Chalmette after the battle--the land on

which the Chalmette plantation complex itself stood is not included in park holdings. The Rodriguez Plantation complex remains only as an uninterpreted archeological site south of the Chalmette Monument.

Setting--

The battlefield's natural setting has been dramatically altered by surrounding industrialization, which has erased the formerly rural, agricultural context. In addition, progressive reinforcements of the levee have severed the landscape from its connection with the river. The presence of a highway and railroad to the north of the park has further altered the distinctive spatial character of the former battlefield land. Strategically open view lines, across the once sweeping Chalmette Plain and along the curve of the river, have been blocked by industrial infrastructure or wooded areas to the east and west of the park. The cypress swamp, which spatially defined the northern extent of the battlefield and played a critical role in Jackson's battle strategy, was lost to timbering in the nineteenth century. Consequently, the woodland thicket that exists today does not contain cypress trees and only loosely approximates, for interpretive purposes, the boundaries of the original swamp. The levee has blocked views of the Mississippi River to the south.

Because of the relatively small size of the site, the battlefield setting is also noticeably interrupted by the presence of non-contributing park era infrastructure, especially the visitor tour road, which circumscribes a portion of the central battlefield, and the visitor center/comfort station/parking complex. The tour road introduces automobiles into the battlefield setting and hinders understanding of the rectilinear land patterns that prevailed at the time of the battle. The visitor center, parking, and comfort station are clustered in unfortunate proximity to the Rodriguez archeological site. Though not owned by the park, the St. Bernard sewage treatment plant is another non-contributing feature which intrudes into the battlefield landscape. The Malus-Beauregard House, a post-battle era construction, poses yet another interpretive challenge to the park; its anachronistic presence at the southern end of the battlefield confounds a clear understanding of the battle-era landscape patterns. Chalmette Monument and Spotts Marker are also

post-battle-era additions to the battlefield landscape, but they contribute to a more defined commemorative setting on the former Rodriguez tract (see *Chalmette Monument Tract*, p. 58).

Feeling--

Despite the many changes to its context, setting, and features, the battlefield does maintain some sense of its formerly rural, agricultural character. Though not managed to simulate any particular agricultural patterns, the grassy field in the center of the battlefield conveys a feeling of openness that is noticeably lacking in the surrounding industrial and commercial development. Without attempting to analyze the accuracy of Laclotte's representation of the battle landscape against contemporaneous written accounts, the openness depicted in his battle-era painting is at least spatially suggested by the contemporary landscape, and the cypress swamp, by the existing thicket. Furthermore, the unrelieved flatness of the terrain elicits an instinctive appreciation for the scale of combat that occurred upon this soil and for the vulnerable position of the troops as they faced off across the Chalmette Plain. Especially after a heavy rain, when the battlefield is soaked in pools of standing water and the soil is mucky, it is easy to imagine the physical discomforts and strategic difficulties that the soldiers faced in the days leading up to the battle.

Association--

Chalmette Battlefield is inextricably linked in public memory to the Battle of New Orleans and to the historic personage of Andrew Jackson. The name itself, which derives from the battle's association with Chalmette plantation, conveys something of both the military and agricultural history of the site. The park preserves some of the material legacy of this history: a portion of the Chalmette and Rodriguez properties, and key battle-era features. The relic line of the Rodriguez Canal is a reminder of the agricultural landscape that pre-dates the Battle of New Orleans, yet it also recalls the strategy of Jackson and the American troops who used it as a line of entrenchment. The reconstructed rampart, too, serves as an interpretive reminder of the American efforts during the battle.

Conclusion

Because the park contains only a portion of the land on which the Battle of New Orleans was fought, even partial restoration of the battlefield scene would be problematic, especially given the dramatic changes to the surrounding site context and alterations to the park property itself. Significant battle-era features, such as the Rodriguez Plantation complex and the field patterns of the Chalmette Plantation, have been lost to time, while other extant battle-era features, such as the Rodriguez Canal and American rampart, have been modified by erosional processes, misguided park development, or partial reconstruction efforts. The site's topography, drainage patterns, and circulation have been altered by construction of a levee, highway, railroad, park facilities, and infrastructure within or immediately adjacent to the park. Even the site's visual and spatial connections to the Mississippi River, which played such a prominent role in the site's development and in shaping the strategy of battle, have been obscured by progressive reinforcements of the levee. Vegetation patterns likewise have been altered in response to changes in property ownership and boundaries, climatic disturbances, and the shift in local land use away from agriculture towards industrial, commercial, and suburban development.

Considering the many contextual, physical, and spatial changes to Chalmette's landscape over time, it is questionable whether the battlefield, in its present form, fully conveys the historical associations for which it is set aside. One certainly must wonder whether Jackson or Latrobe would, today, recognize the scene of battle, especially since the plantation complexes and field patterns that characterized the battle-era landscape have vanished and the engineered levee has blocked the view of the Mississippi River from the battlefield. As for the battle-era features that remain, the reconstructed American rampart bears only a stylized resemblance to the provisional rampart of bare earth, wood, and cotton bales that was constructed by Jackson's men.⁶ In fact, the 1985 National Register amendment for the Chalmette Unit lists the reconstructed rampart as a non-contributing element to the historical significance of the battlefield landscape, due to its inaccuracy of profile and material. The only original manmade landscape feature to remain from the time of the battle, the Rodriguez Canal, has also lost much of its historic profile and no longer connects topographically to the river or

backswamp. Nothing remains of the original cypress swamp or the agricultural field patterns of Chalmette Plantation.

Based on the analysis of existing resources, the battlefield landscape displays substantially diminished integrity from its period of greatest significance, the period leading up to the Battle of New Orleans (1814-1815). The existing landscape is, in fact, most reflective of the era of park development that extended from 1964, when the tour road was constructed, the American rampart reconstructed, and the Fazendeville tract acquired and incorporated into NPS holdings, to the mid-1980s, when the current visitor center was completed. The Fazendeville acquisition gave the park its present configuration and consolidated the park's holdings between the western boundary of the Rodriguez tract and the eastern boundary of the National Cemetery, excluding, of course, the St. Bernard sewage treatment plant tract. The completion of the visitor center marked the last major addition to the park's interpretive infrastructure. After examining the physical, archeological, and documentary evidence, it is obvious that the existing landscape is more a commemorative/interpretive park than a battlefield preserved in accurate historic detail.

Evaluation of Historical Significance

Because the battlefield displays compromised spatial integrity and limited material integrity from the period of the Battle of New Orleans, its historical significance as an integral landscape is undeniably diminished. However, it is the only remnant of the former battlefield landscape in public ownership--in fact, practically the only portion that has not been consumed by industrial or suburban development--and as such, holds obvious historical and interpretive significance despite its diminished integrity. Furthermore, the park contains the most strategically important portion of the battle-era landscape, and the key corner of American activity. Scholarship has firmly established the Battle of New Orleans as a seminal event in the history and evolving consciousness of our nation; consequently, the landscape on which the battle occurred has lasting patriotic and interpretive appeal.

Agricultural land patterns--

Chalmette Battlefield is one of few sites in this heavily industrialized region to display both the meadow-like openness of earlier agricultural land use patterns and the physical trace of colonial-era land divisions based on the French arpent-unit of measure. In fact, the Rodriguez (Chalmette Monument) tract represents the southern end of the battle-era Rodriguez property, a half-arpent-width parcel which had been subdivided from a larger holding some years prior to the battle. The Rodriguez Canal marks the original property line between the Rodriguez and Chalmette Plantations, and is a relic of the agricultural landscape and plantation mode of life that was predominant in this region at the time of the battle. The central battlefield zone represents a portion of the fields of Chalmette Plantation, across which the British troops attacked. Although the park does not contain the full extent of either the Rodriguez or Chalmette properties, the site is nonetheless a significant remnant of the agricultural landscape that existed at the time of the Battle of New Orleans.

Archeological resources--

In assessing the integrity of battlefields significant under Criterion D, if significant archeological features are present . . . integrity of setting and feeling may not be necessary for the property to retain its ability to convey important information.⁸

Despite a weak measure of integrity based on existing landscape resources, Chalmette Battlefield has proven to be especially rich in archeological resources. Birkedal's previously cited archeological report, in fact, emphasizes the importance of the site's archeology for understanding both the Battle of New Orleans and the region's social and economic development.⁹ Investigation of the archeological resources dating from the Battle of New Orleans--the American rampart and battery positions, agricultural drainage ditches and road alignments, the British battery positions, and the Rodriguez site--could yield fresh insights into military and social aspects of the battle itself and the importance that landscape features played in the strategy and tactics

of the campaign. In addition, certain archeological resources, such as the Fazendeville Road trace and the Rodriguez Plantation site, hold clues for understanding 18th and 19th-century social and economic life in this region of Louisiana.

Conclusion

Though the landscape has been much altered over time, the remnant battlefield still contains topographic traces of the agricultural land patterns that existed at the time of the Battle of New Orleans. The Rodriguez Canal and other remaining battle-era resources, including those archeological, serve as identifying landmarks on the battlefield terrain and should be preserved for interpretive purposes and future scholarly study. Much of the landscape's battle-era significance, in fact, resides in the integrity of archeological resources. These resources have the potential to enhance scholarship and, ultimately, to heighten the public's understanding of the battle and the terrain on which that event occurred.

Furthermore, the Mississippi Riverfront should be reconsidered as a feature that contributes to the historical significance of the battle-era landscape, and, as such, should be more fully incorporated into the park's interpretive program. The action of the Battle of New Orleans was largely shaped by the terrain on which it occurred; that terrain was in turn shaped by the river. In order for visitors to understand the history of the landscape at Chalmette and its complex evolutionary development, the park must present a more comprehensive interpretation of both the river and the terrain on which the battle occurred, while protecting the significant historic resources within its possession.

Character Areas

The battlefield landscape exhibits secondary levels of significance based on the post-battle features that remain on site. In fact, features such as Chalmette Monument, Spotts Marker, and the Malus-Beauregard House have significance as reminders of military commemorative efforts and antebellum land use. The park acknowledges the necessity of interpreting its secondary resources and the desirability of conveying something of the

historical and cultural continuum that exists at Chalmette. To this end, two landscape character areas have been identified as meriting separate analysis based on their individual developmental histories and interpretive significance:

- a) the *Chalmette Monument Tract*, which represents the park's earliest commemorative parcel, and
- b) the *Malus-Beauregard House and grounds*, which occupy the southwestern-most portion of the historic Chalmette Plantation property.

These character areas correspond not only to historically significant property divisions but also to potentially discrete interpretive zones within the park. A differential management regime, based on variations in mowing pattern, schedule, or planting detail, might be employed within these areas to more effectively interpret the site's evolution from colonial-era plantation, to battleground, to antebellum land use, and finally, to commemorative battlefield.

Chalmette Monument Tract

In addition to direct battle-era associations, Chalmette Battlefield has a long and rich commemorative history, the material origins of which date to the purchase of the Rodriguez tract by the State of Louisiana in 1855. This wedge-shaped parcel represents the southern portion of the battle-era Rodriguez property, where Jackson and his troops constructed their defense works and successfully repelled the British attack of January 8, 1815. Indeed, Chalmette Monument rises as an explicit memorial to the American troops who fought on this site and as an iconic symbol of Jackson's decisive victory. Although the park does not contain the full 80-acre depth of the Rodriguez property's original double concession, the distinctive wedge shape that has become the Chalmette Monument tract is a recognizable reference point on almost all the historic maps and remains clearly visible in aerial photographs of the park (see fig. 15).

Preliminary research indicates that the construction of Chalmette Monument, begun in 1855, represents one of the earliest examples of on-site battlefield commemoration in the United States.⁷ Indeed, the monument symbolizes a 19th-century impulse to memorialize the American victory on the site where the battle occurred; yet, in a broader sense, it also represents an early manifestation of a patriotic sentiment that would produce the first military parks as commemorative landscapes, some years after the Civil War. Thus, the monument tract has historical significance as an early prototype of the commemorative military park and as a site-specific example of a commemorative landscape that has evolved over time.

Obviously, the monument was sited with some consideration to the effect of its location on the property; its symmetry of placement as a focal point on the wedge-shaped tract is still apparent in plan and from the air. Until Spotts Marker was added to the southern end of the tract sometime during the 1890s, the monument was the only expressly commemorative feature on the landscape. A shell path leading from River Road to the monument and a caretaker's house were also added in the 1890s, but these features were at some point removed, as were the trees that lined the eastern edge of the tract prior to the acquisition of the Beauregard property (see fig. 11). The existing entrance drive alignment and Monument Circle date from 1938, representing the National Park Service's early vision for developing the property as a national monument site. These latter features remain essentially intact, creating a strong axis from the highway to the monument and contributing to the integrity of the monument's commemorative setting, which is further distinguished by the still-distinctive wedge shape of the tract.¹⁰ The early NPS-era parking configuration--two parking bays separated by a grassy mall south of the monument--was altered when the visitor center was constructed.

From 1855 until the acquisition of the Beauregard tract in 1949, the Chalmette Monument tract constituted the full extent of the commemorative landscape at Chalmette. Consequently, the period of significance for this commemorative landscape is defined by these dates, 1855-1949, with the benchmark for treatment defined as 1938,

the end of the early NPS development era. The monument tract is currently managed, for interpretive purposes, as part of the larger battlefield that includes the Beaugard and Fazendeville tracts and other subdivisions of the Chalmette tract. However, the monument tract possesses sufficient integrity as a commemorative parcel to merit separate treatment consideration; its distinctive wedge-shaped configuration and the axiality of the monument's setting should be preserved and highlighted by park management practices.

Malus-Beaugard House and grounds

Erected in the 1830s as a suburban retreat for a prominent New Orleans widow, the house is one of the last survivors of a string of country dwellings that lined the banks of the Mississippi River outside of New Orleans during the mid-19th century. According to historical accounts and archival documentation, the residence was embellished with landscaped grounds and gardens, notably on the riverfront side. When the park acquired the former Beaugard property in 1949, an allee of pecan trees extended from the north side of the house towards the St. Bernard Highway (see fig. 9). The house was restored by the National Park Service in 1958 and the remnants of its domestic landscape were gradually altered to reflect the park's concern with recovering the battlefield scene. The house now stands perplexingly out-of-context at the southwestern edge of the Chalmette tract.

Although archival photographs show the dependency structures and domestic-scaled landscape that surrounded the house in the late-19th and early-20th centuries (see figs. 8 & 10), these features have long since vanished as the house and grounds have been absorbed into the commemorative battlefield zone. The landscape of the house is now maintained as a manicured extension of the battlefield landscape and retains no integrity and, consequently, no historical significance according to National Register criteria. Although there is little documentation or justification for restoring a specific period setting, the park should reemphasize the house's original riverfront orientation by rerouting circulation paths and by distinguishing the house and grounds from the battlefield zone as much as possible. Such measures

as reestablishing the historic fence line and planting trees in the riverfront yard and to the rear of the house, as suggested by historic documentation, could aid in the interpretation of the Beaugard property, as well as provide a valuable visitor amenity in the form of additional shaded gathering spots.

Chalmette National Cemetery

Evaluation of Landscape Integrity

As a designed landscape that evolved over a period of many years, Chalmette National Cemetery possesses qualities of *design, workmanship,* and *materials* that must be holistically examined in order to determine the integrity of the existing landscape. Although the design features that most strongly characterize the present cemetery were acquired or constructed over a nearly seventy-year period (1864-1930), they contribute to an overall coherence of spatial intent that reflects the cemetery's origins. The earliest cemetery plans, in fact, convey a spatial design that bears obvious resemblance to the current cemetery layout: a narrow linear configuration that was determined as much by the pre-existing land divisions as by overt design intent.

Location--

The cemetery is located on land that belonged, successively, to the battle-era Chalmette Plantation and, later, the St. Amand Plantation. The City of New Orleans acquired this land in 1861, after a series of subdivisions of the St. Amand holdings. During the Civil War, a portion of the land was occupied by a line of Confederate earthworks, constructed to protect the City of New Orleans from attack along the Mississippi River.¹¹ In 1864, the city ceded a thirteen and one-half acre tract of this land to the U. S. Government for use as a cemetery. The present 17.3-acre cemetery contains most of the original acreage that was set aside for wartime burial, plus additional land that was acquired to the north when the St. Bernard Highway was constructed. A small piece of land at the cemetery's south end, including the riverfront entrance, was lost to a 1928 levee setback. The cemetery has maintained a characteristic 250-foot width since its establishment; only the length has changed, from the original 2375 feet to the current measurement of nearly 2800 feet.

Design--

The cemetery's formal plantings, its array of War Department-era features, its gridded arrangement of grave markers, and its roughly

symmetrical layout--rectilinear, bisected by a central drive with terminal roundabout at the southern end--clearly mark it as a designed landscape. Though the northern and southern boundary limits have changed slightly over time, the distinctive linear layout and the post-and-panel brick walls that enclose the cemetery have been defining characteristics since the late nineteenth century (see fig. 17).¹² The remnant allee of trees along the drive and the gridded arrangement of grave markers further contribute to the overtly patterned character of the cemetery's landscape, representing design elements that were introduced in the late nineteenth century. Except for a short section of sycamores and live oaks lining the drive from the entrance gates to a point just south of the lodge complex, only the two medial rows of sycamores and oaks remain today, and these are gap-toothed, due to tree losses at the southern end of the cemetery. The cemetery lodge complex represents a design element common to many national cemeteries; its presence contributes to the cemetery's overall spatial design.

Setting--

Like the commemorative battlefield, the cemetery has experienced significant alterations to its once rural setting and context due to industrialization of the neighboring properties. The presence of the Kaiser Aluminum plant to the east represents the most significant alteration to the cemetery's original setting, and is a jarring visual and olfactory intrusion in this contemplative landscape. Twentieth-century levee setbacks have claimed the original riverfront entrance to the cemetery and have severed any visual or spatial connection to the Mississippi River at the southern end. The construction of the St. Bernard Highway to the north permanently altered the cemetery's original riverfront orientation. As for vegetation, early photographs show a shadier, more verdant cemetery than presently exists (see figs. 20 & 22). In fact, many of the trees in the southern portion of the cemetery have been lost to storms, disease, or stress,¹³ leaving that end of the cemetery visually exposed to both the Kaiser Aluminum plant to the east and the battlefield park to the west. The relative lack of planting along the northern boundary fence allows objectionable views of commercial and residential development across the St. Bernard Highway.

Materials--

The walls of brick that enclose the cemetery on three sides introduce a material motif that contributes to the cemetery's overall spatial coherence; they are also a typical design feature of many early national cemeteries. Though constructed at a much later date than the walls, the cemetery lodge complex repeats the use of brick, establishing a material link with the earlier wall construction. Marble is another historically significant material that is repeated throughout the cemetery, in the low rows of grave markers that pattern the landscape. Some of the tree species mentioned in early inspection reports of the cemetery are still present, notably magnolia (*Magnolia grandiflora*) and a few cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*). Several specimens of sycamore planted in 1927 still line the drive near the entrance gate and the medial axes at the southern end of the cemetery. The cemetery also contains a partial allee of old live oaks lining the drive near the lodge. For reasons unknown, the ornamental shrubs and herbaceous garden plants--roses, spiraea, viburnums, pittosporum¹⁴--mentioned in early cemetery records are no longer present.

Workmanship--

The brick post-and-panel walls (1873), which surround the cemetery on three sides, are stately examples of the nineteenth-century workmanship that was employed to embellish the early cemetery. The decorative iron gates (c. 1875), too, though they have been moved from their original position at the riverfront entrance to their current position at the St. Bernard Highway entrance, are reminders of an earlier era in the cemetery's history and represent a level of craftsmanship that is rarely seen today. The cemetery lodge, carriage house, and maintenance shed, though not exceptional in design, do epitomize a standard of workmanship that was characteristic of the War Department's administration of the national cemeteries, most of which have similar structures. Early documents confirm a range of ornamental species planted within the cemetery, but much of the cemetery's planted vegetation has suffered deterioration over the years. Some of the trees, particularly the sycamores, are in need of replacement due to disease or stress.

Feeling--

Although the cemetery stands apart in atmosphere from the larger battlefield park, the significant loss of a mature tree canopy in the southern portion of the cemetery has disrupted the more contemplative and shady character still felt at the northern end. The southern portion of the cemetery feels, in fact, rather exposed and barren, primarily due to the looming industrial presence of the Kaiser Aluminum plant's waste site along the eastern boundary. The northern portion of the cemetery, near the entrance and cemetery lodge, retains a more consistent tree canopy; its shadier, tunnel-like atmosphere is more in keeping with the desired design character.

Association--

The cemetery is significant not only for its developmental association with the Civil War but also because it contains veterans and casualties of many later wars--the cemetery remained open for burials until 1945--in which the United States was involved. In addition, the cemetery is significant for its design lineage. With its distinctive linear layout, its stately brick walls, and its central drive, the cemetery is a unique and site-responsive example of the national cemetery as conceived and designed by the War Department administration (1868-1933).

Evaluation of Historical Significance

Established for the interment of Union soldiers killed during the Civil War in Louisiana, Chalmette National Cemetery (or Monument Cemetery, as originally named) has obvious historical significance for its association with that nation-rending event and the memorialization efforts surrounding it. The cemetery contains over 15,000 burials, including casualties and veterans of the Civil War, Spanish-American War, World War I, and World War II, as well as a few casualties of the Vietnam War and several veterans of the War of 1812. The land on which the cemetery is sited also at one time contained the remains of over 4000 Freedmen, refugees, and other black individuals, who were later disinterred and reburied in an unidentified spot outside the western cemetery wall in order to provide burial space for military personnel.

Although the cemetery stands on a portion of the former Chalmette Plantation property, its developmental origins suggest no more explicit association with the Battle of New Orleans than its presence on former battlefield land would suggest. In fact, the cemetery's rectilinear shape reflects a post-battle land division dating from after the subdivision of the St. Amand Plantation in 1832. Because of its distinct developmental origins and spatial configuration, the cemetery clearly stands apart from the commemorative battlefield landscape, even though it has long been administratively managed as part of the larger battlefield park.

Conclusion

Based on the National Register criteria for the evaluation and nomination of designed historic landscapes, Chalmette National Cemetery draws significance both from its developmental association with the Civil War and from the aesthetic qualities embodied by its design and construction as a War Department National Cemetery. The period of significance for the cemetery landscape is thus defined by the years of the War Department's administration, 1868-1933, with the benchmark for treatment purposes falling between the years of 1929, when the present lodge complex was completed, and 1933, when the War Department turned over administrative control of the cemetery to the National Park Service. The features which contribute to the cemetery's significance include the post-and-panel brick walls, the iron cemetery gate, the cemetery lodge complex (currently park administrative headquarters and maintenance complex), the G.A.R. Monument, the gridded arrangement of grave markers, and the relic allees of trees which line the drive. Though its materials are non-historic (the focal circles were removed and the original brick curb and gutters replaced by concrete when the drive was paved), the paved drive contributes to the cemetery's overall spatial design and retains, by its location, the axial line of the original shell drive.

Because they predate the cemetery, the topographic traces of the British advance battery and Center Road do not contribute to the integrity of the cemetery landscape itself. However, they are significant

features in the history of the larger battlefield landscape and should be preserved and interpreted. The wayside trail that allows access to the cemetery from the battlefield loop road is a non-contributing feature that, ideally, should be removed. The service drive connection between the maintenance court and the battlefield loop road is another non-contributing feature. In conclusion, based on the relative spatial integrity of its features, Chalmette National Cemetery should be evaluated and nominated for eligibility to the National Register of Historic Places independent of Chalmette Battlefield, and the cemetery landscape should be rehabilitated to reflect its historical significance and to enhance its distinctive contemplative character.

Notes

1. Chalmette Battlefield was administratively listed to the National Register as an historic district in 1966. However, proper documentation for the battlefield's registration was not recorded until 1985, when Jerome Greene completed an amendment to the original nomination, which was approved and accepted in 1987 under the designation of Chalmette Unit, JELA. This unit designation includes both the commemorative battlefield and the cemetery.

2. Andrus, National Register Bulletin 40, 11.

3. Betsy Swanson's *A Study of the Military Topography and Sites Associated with the 1814-1815 New Orleans Campaign* (1985) provides an insightful assessment of the role that terrain played in shaping the strategy of the Battle of New Orleans. Her report provides the most comprehensive analysis of the battlefield topography of which the author is aware.

4. NPS Archeologist Ted Birkedal located both the Rodriguez archeological site and the site of American Battery 3 during testing in the mid-1980s. This discovery disproved an assumption about the battlefield that had been perpetuated since the park's establishment in the 1930s--that a significant portion of the southern battlefield, including the Rodriguez site and Battery 3, had been lost to riverbank erosion. His findings demanded the revision of an errant historical geography that had been unquestioningly accepted into the park's interpretive program. Birkedal's findings and the archeological sites he discovered have yet to be fully incorporated into the interpretive program at Chalmette; the report generated from this work, *The Search for the Lost Riverfront: Historical and Archeological Investigations at the Chalmette Battlefield, Jean Lafitte National Historical Park* (1998), remains unpublished.

5. Swanson [1985], 16-19.

6. In his unpublished report, Ted Birkedal provides a detailed hypothetical reconstruction of the original rampart, based on analysis of archeological testing performed at the park during the mid-1980s and on consideration of battle-era narrative accounts describing the rampart, its materials, profile, and method of construction.

7. Though unconfirmed by archival or site evidence, tradition holds that the cornerstone for the Chalmette Monument was laid in 1840, during an on-site celebration of the 25th anniversary of the Battle of New Orleans. This would date the earliest commemorative efforts at Chalmette to 15 years prior to the beginning of construction on the monument. Further research is necessary to establish the full developmental context and historical significance of the park's commemorative landscape.

8. Andrus, NR Bulletin 40, 12. Criterion D applies to sites that "have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history."

9. Ted Birkedal, *The Search for the Lost Riverfront* . . . [1998].

10. When the Chalmette National Monument tract was transferred from War Department administration to National Park Service jurisdiction in 1933, preliminary plans were devised for an open, tree-lined mall which would sweep from the St. Bernard Highway south to highlight the monument as a focal point in a formal park landscape (see General Development Plan for Chalmette National Monument, NPS 467/1003A). These plans were apparently never implemented; the park already had its sights set on acquiring the adjacent properties to the east, including the Beauregard and Fazendeville tracts.

11. The main body of these earthworks was located on land now occupied by the Kaiser Aluminum plant, to the east of current cemetery boundaries. All traces of this structure have vanished beneath the Kaiser site. For additional information, see Greene's *Historic Resource Study* (p. 155-167).

12. The earliest maps of the cemetery (1864) show a distinctive linear layout much like the present cemetery: a long north-south axis with central drive, and a narrow east-west cross-section. The brick walls were apparently completed in 1873 (*Historic Resource Study*, Greene, 269).

13. Hurricane Betsy (September 1965) and Hurricane Camille (August 1969) both caused significant damage to the trees in the cemetery. Comparing aerial photographs taken before the storms to photographs taken afterwards, it appears that many of the trees missing from the southern end of the cemetery were lost to these storms.

14. Larigan to Barnard, May 21, 1867. NA, RG 92, General Correspondence, National and Post Cemeteries, Chalmette, File 977/1867, cited in Greene, *Historic Resource Study*, 263.

PART TWO: TREATMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

Goals

Given the unique overlay of features from different eras, the aim of management at Chalmette should be to preserve significant historic resources--both battle-era and later resources--and to interpret these resources in a manner that conveys a sense of the site's complex historical development. Because of striking changes to the site context, restoration of an accurate battlefield scene is obviously not possible. Alterations to battle-era resources have further diminished the spatial and material integrity of the landscape. The challenge is to devise landscape treatments and management strategies that can further the park's multiple interpretive aims, while addressing such contemporary problems as inadequate boundary buffering and the presence of non-contributing features on the battlefield. The primary interpretive theme, the Battle of New Orleans, should be emphasized by landscape management treatments that preserve and highlight battle-era resources, but secondary interpretive themes, such as the commemoration of the battle, the Mississippi Riverfront, post-battle land uses, and the National Cemetery, can be enhanced by creating distinct experiential and interpretive zones within the park. By diversifying and enhancing the visitor's experience of the landscape at Chalmette, the park could ultimately heighten understanding of that landscape and its history.

Foremost, the cemetery should be distinguished from the battlefield by a landscape treatment that emphasizes its separate spatial and developmental identity and that enhances its distinctive contemplative character. Visitors should be encouraged to experience the cemetery as a separate landscape, complete with its own entrance sequence, rather than as a wayside attraction along the battlefield circuit. Enhanced tree plantings within the cemetery will help to screen the cemetery and the larger park from the Kaiser Aluminum plant to the east, and the cemetery, from the battlefield zone to the west. The Malus-Beauregard House and grounds, too, should be distinguished from the battlefield landscape as a secondary

interpretive zone and a possible visitor orientation site, an especially important function for visitors arriving by riverboat, who have limited time to see the park's historic resources and to visit the official visitor center. Creating an interpretive landscape setting for the Malus-Beauregard House would highlight the house's distinct historical identity and original riverfront orientation. Altering the pattern of pedestrian circulation to the house would further emphasize the house's function as a separate educational site.

Though not expressly justified by historic documentation, enhancing the entrance sequences to the battlefield and cemetery would dramatically improve the visitor's first impression of the site. Tree plantings, lighting, and new signs at both entrances, and a new gate at the Battlefield Road entrance, would help to distinguish the park as a place of national historical significance. Such improvements would also provide additional buffering from the visual intrusion of the highway and industrial development surrounding the park. Moreover, the commemorative significance of the Rodriguez (Chalmette Monument) tract would be spatially highlighted by an improved entrance sequence that strengthens the formal, axial approach to the monument along Battlefield Road. The entrance sequence from the tourboat docking platform should also be improved, with park and interpretive signs of comparable quality to those developed for the St. Bernard Highway entrance.

Inaccurate or dated waysides should be removed, and new waysides/orientation sites should be developed to highlight battle-era features, uninterpreted archeological resources, and the park's multiple interpretive themes. Tours of the battlefield could be revised to begin at the riverfront, allowing visitors a broader and more comprehensive overview of the site's development. The park could also further its interpretive goals by removing or relocating non-contributing features, such as the visitor center, the comfort station, and the tour road, which interfere spatially with historic resources and hinder an understanding of

battle-era landscape patterns. Lastly, visitors should be encouraged to move through the park as much as possible on foot, to experience firsthand the topography and ecology of the landscape settings--the Mississippi Riverfront, the "cypress swamp," the fields--that shaped Chalmette's history.

Summary of Management Strategies

The following management strategies reflect not only historically-based cultural landscape concerns but also contemporary interpretive and planning issues normally addressed in an *Interpretive Prospectus* or *General Management Plan*. Given the park's multi-layered history and the inadequacy of the existing planning and interpretive documents, it seemed important to address all the issues that affect the visitor's experience of the cultural landscape at Chalmette, whether strictly historical or not. Hopefully, these recommendations will serve as the catalyst for a new *General Management Plan* and *Interpretive Prospectus* rather than as a substitute for those documents.

- Preserve battle-era resources, including those archeological, and rehabilitate features to reestablish/enhance the legibility of battle-era landscape and circulation patterns:
 - a) establish differential mowing regime to highlight battle-era land patterns on the Chalmette tract,
 - b) establish wayside to mark the Rodriguez Plantation archeological site,
 - c) enhance spatial legibility of the Rodriguez Canal with vegetative planting,
 - d) update/enhance interpretation of American rampart and battery positions,
 - e) locate and interpret British advance battery, Center Road alignment, and battle-era ditch lines,

f) conduct additional archeology on battle-era features as necessary to enhance park's interpretive program.

- Preserve and highlight the distinctive commemorative features and spatial layout of the Rodriguez (Chalmette Monument) tract. The monument tract has significance and integrity as a commemorative landscape setting distinct from the remainder of the battlefield.
- Improve the entrance sequences to the battlefield and cemetery. The entrances are currently inauspicious and bland, especially for a commemorative park of national importance. The approach sequence should establish the park as a historically significant place set apart for public use and should distinguish the property from its surrounding industrial context.
- Define the Malus-Beauregard House and the Mississippi Riverfront as secondary interpretive zones through differential vegetation management, the creation of new interpretive waysides, and a reorientation of circulation to create distinct spatial zones. Provide greater visitor interaction with each of the site's historic landscape zones, i.e., a) riverfront/batture, b) battlefield/natural levee, c) "cypress swamp."
- Relocate/remove non-contributing park infrastructure, notably the visitor center and existing parking, the comfort station, and the interpretive loop road, all of which are in unfortunate proximity to the park's primary historic resources or which interfere with the interpretation of battle-era land patterns.
- Create a riverfront wayside/interpretive site to provide better site orientation to visitors arriving by riverboat and to encourage visitors who arrive by car to visit the riverfront. The vehicular orientation and layout of the park does not adequately address the large constituency of park visitors who arrive twice daily by riverboat from New Orleans. A reorientation of interpretive efforts toward the riverfront would allow visitors an approximation of the historic arrival sequence and would emphasize the river's importance to the battlefield scene and to the site's later development.

A. Establish formal planting of live oaks along right-of-way to entrance gate.

B. Install new entrance gate, sign, and (spot)lighting.

C. Create interpretive wayside near entrance to introduce battlefield themes.

D. Release zone from mowing to allow thicket succession to sweep across entrance drive and northern portion of Rodriguez tract.

E. Acquire portion of adjacent western tract as permanent buffer with Chalmette Slip.

F. Differentiate monument tract from Chalmette tract using more frequent, "manicured" mowing regime to delineate distinctive wedge shape. Avoid buffer planting on monument tract.

G. Reinterpret battery positions to reflect current archeological research

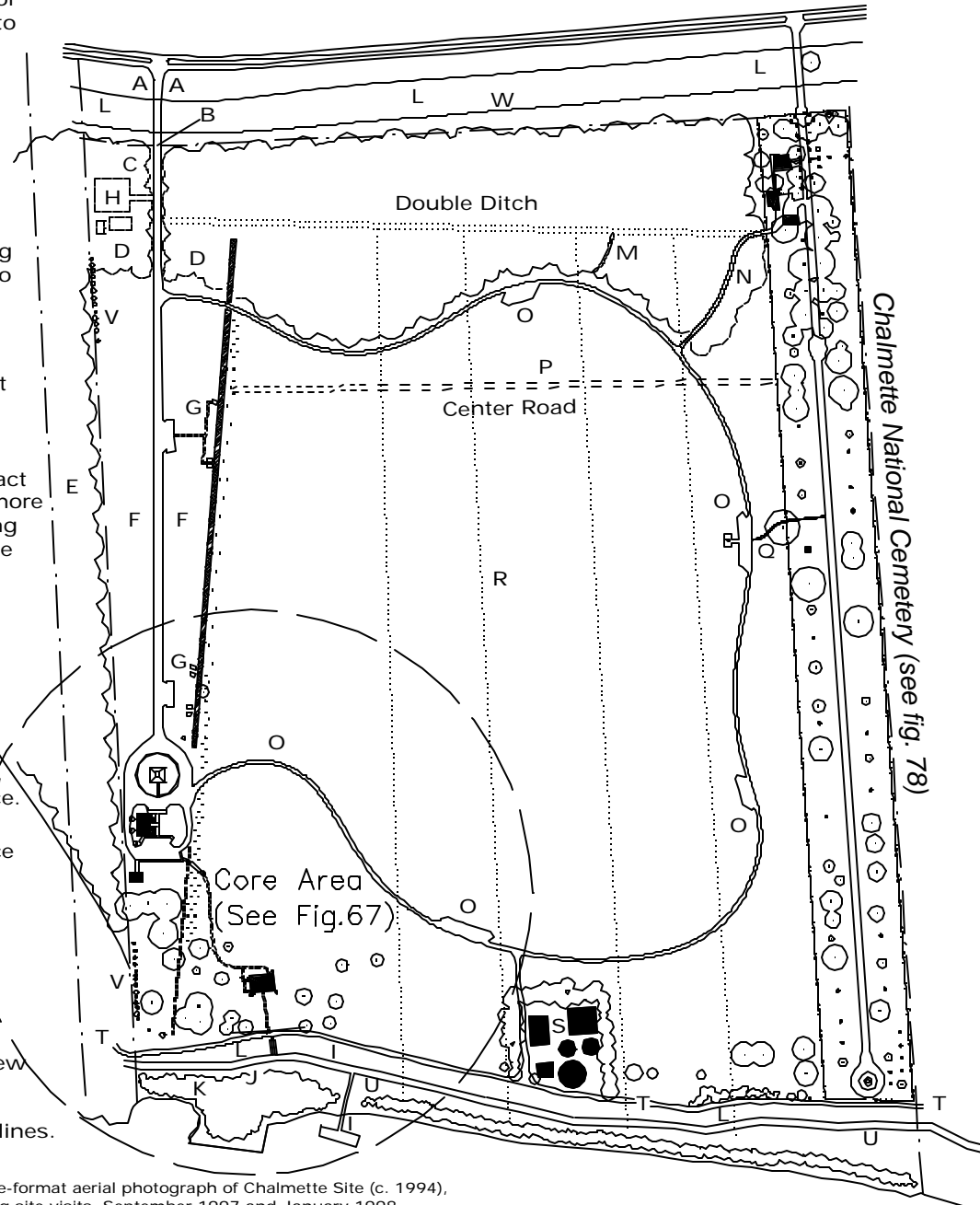
H. Relocate visitor center, comfort station, and parking, possibly to area near entrance.

I. Improve approach sequence from dock/riverfront with signs, lighting, and interpretive waysides.

J. Establish riverfront orientation site (open-air pavilion).

K. Open sightline towards New Orleans through willows.

L. Bury above-ground utility lines.



M. Create path through existing thicket to double ditch and site where General Pakenham fell.

N. Release zone from mowing to provide better screening for service drive. "Jump-start" succession in this area with native tree planting.

O. Downgrade existing tour road to pedestrian use only and remove wayside parking areas.

P. Interpret Center Road alignment as mown path; use for pedestrian access across battlefield.

Q. Remove path from tour road to cemetery. Reseed with native grass mix. Repair breach in cemetery wall.

R. Mow Chalmette tract in longitudinal strips perpendicular to river to more accurately convey historic land patterns and to de-emphasize tour road. Reestablish/interpret battle-era ditch lines.

S. Eliminate sewage treatment plant and incorporate inholding into Chalmette tract.

T. Negotiate restricted hours on service use of levee road; or designate alternate service route around park (see W).

U. Establish pedestrian trail along levee, ideally offering cemetery access from riverfront.

V. Remove planted tree screen.

W. Secure alternate service route along northern park boundary.

Sources: Base plan digitized from large-format aerial photograph of Chalmette Site (c. 1994), detailed with field data collected during site visits, September 1997 and January 1998. Scale and treatment locations are approximate; additional detailed drawings required for site construction purposes. Refer to Part Two text for complete treatment recommendations.

Figure 56.

Battlefield Treatment Recommendations

- Preserve/enhance existing vegetative buffers along park's northern, eastern, and western boundaries, including the "cypress swamp" zone. Because of the intrusions associated with surrounding industrial development, maintaining and enhancing buffer areas is crucial to the park's interpretive mission and to future planning efforts. Releasing additional areas from mowing to allow the "cypress swamp" to sweep across the entrance drive and the northern portion of the Rodriguez tract would provide buffering along the entrance sequence, create spatial and experiential variety for park visitors, and complete the line of the swamp as seen from the southern end of the battlefield.
- Rehabilitate historic planting patterns in Chalmette National Cemetery in order to enhance the cemetery's distinct spatial character and developmental identity, and to buffer the site from surrounding industrial development. Encourage visitation to cemetery as separate landscape experience.

Chalmette Battlefield

Proposed Preservation Strategy

As defined by the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes* (1996), rehabilitation is

the act or process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features which convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values (48).

Given the many changes to the Chalmette property and its context, a program of rehabilitation that addresses contemporary management, planning, and interpretive concerns while preserving significant cultural resources is the most viable overarching treatment approach for the commemorative battlefield landscape. The urgent need for site buffering, a shift in visitor usage patterns, and the tightened economies of site management indicate landscape treatments which could



Fig. 57. Battlefield Road entrance.



Fig. 58. Battlefield Road entrance showing proposed live oak allees [digital simulation by author].

potentially ameliorate these problems, yet not interfere with, and ideally even enhance, the interpretive aims of the park. Both the park's primary interpretive theme--the Battle of New Orleans--and secondary interpretive themes--the Mississippi River; the Malus-Beauregard House, antebellum life, and post-battle land uses at Chalmette--could be strengthened by revising visitor circulation patterns and defining distinct spatial zones in which differential interpretation could occur.¹ Treatment recommendations also suggest future changes to park-era infrastructure (i.e., visitor center, comfort station, and tour road) that compromises the spatial integrity and understanding of the battlefield landscape.

Specific Treatment Recommendations

Rodriguez Tract

1) Enhance/rehabilitate Battlefield Road entrance sequence:

- Establish formal planting of live oak trees (*Quercus virginiana*) along either side of right-of-way from St. Bernard Highway to park entrance gates (figs. 57 & 58), and remove existing holly hedges. This would reinforce the formal axial approach focused on the Chalmette Monument and would provide a much needed focal point from the St. Bernard Highway, as well as screening for the railroad and utility rights-of-way that must be crossed to enter the park. The trees should be evenly spaced so as to avoid utility lines, and should be paired along the drive to create a consistent shaded canopy. As an accent planting, yucca (*Yucca aloifolia*), which is depicted in archival photographs of both the park and cemetery, would be a regionally appropriate and low-maintenance species to use at the entrance.
- Install new entrance gate, fencing, and (spot)lighting to establish a more ceremonial entrance point to the battlefield. The present fence and gate do not adequately convey the significance of the site. The new entrance gate design could follow, with only slight modification, the design proposed in a 1934 NPS plan (467/1053A), "Proposed Entrance, Chalmette National Monument" (see fig. 13).



Figure 59. View towards Battlefield Road entrance, showing existing gap in wooded buffer zone.



Figure 60. View towards Battlefield Road entrance, showing buffering effect of releasing additional zone to woodland succession. [digital simulation by author]

- Negotiate with local utility companies to have above ground utility lines (electric, etc.) buried, especially along the park entrance sequence, as well as along the riverfront service road.
 - Install new park signs, both at highway entrance and at park gates (perhaps incorporated into structure of gate itself).
 - Create an interpretive wayside to introduce the battlefield and to set primary interpretive theme of the Battle of New Orleans (site orientation). This function could be incorporated into a new or relocated visitor center site near the entrance.
- 2) Release an additional zone from mowing to allow the “cypress swamp” to sweep across the northern portion of the Rodriguez tract and the Battlefield Road entrance drive, both for spatial diversity and for additional visual buffering of the St. Bernard Highway from within the park (figs. 59 & 60). This would also help to filter/screen the view of the Malus-Beauregard House from along the entrance drive. This process could be ecologically “jump-started” with selective native tree planting to simulate early successional conditions.
- 3) Establish/confirm the location of the historic battery positions along the reconstructed rampart using the archeological findings of Birkedal and others. Adjust interpretive waysides to reflect the new battery positions. The wayside parking areas (2) along the entrance drive should be maintained; existing paths from these parking areas should be rerouted to the newly established battery positions. Unless littering is a serious concern, remove the obtrusive garbage receptacles at the wayside parking areas, or replace them with a less conspicuous design that does not visually disrupt the view towards the rampart and battlefield. Maintain the existing live oak tree growing on the southern end of the rampart, but do not replace this specimen when it dies.
- 4) Provide an interpretive boardwalk across the reconstructed rampart to provide pedestrian access to the Center Road alignment. This boardwalk could extend across a portion of the central battlefield to meet the Center Road trace when cars are removed from the tour road.



Figure 61. View of Chalmette Monument, Visitor Center, and parking area, looking northwest across the Rodriguez Canal.



Figure 62. View of Chalmette Monument, showing effects of removing Visitor Center, footbridge, and pedestrian path from the core commemorative area. [digital simulation by author]

- 5) Remove the visitor center and comfort station from their current locations near the Chalmette Monument (figs. 61 & 62). The existing structures should be relocated or, if future funding allows, replacement structures could be built at the northern end of the Rodriguez tract. If the “cypress swamp” zone is allowed to sweep across this area, the new facilities could be sited within the resulting wooded zone and be screened from the battlefield and monument areas to the south (see fig. 56). The parking lot south of the monument should be reconfigured to reflect the early NPS layout shown in period maps (c. 1938), with access to the Rodriguez archeological site and the Beaugard House provided via the axial pathway leading from the monument to the riverfront service road (see *Monument Tract* recommendations, p. 77).
- 6) Rehabilitate/selectively enhance the area around the existing visitor center, parking lot, and comfort station to provide a temporary visual buffer for the Chalmette Monument until the visitor center and comfort station can be relocated:
- Remove park-era shrub plantings (camellias, azaleas, etc.) from around parking lot edges.
 - Remove the obtrusive bulletin board panel at the southeastern corner of the parking lot (see fig. 70). This informational function could be relocated to the visitor center.
 - Relocate garbage receptacles from along the parking lot edges to the visitor service buildings and out of significant viewsheds towards the battlefield and Rodriguez site (figs. 63 & 64); or replace the existing receptacles with ones of a less obtrusive design.
 - Plant an additional live oak (*Quercus virginiana*) at north end of visitor center to buffer visitor facilities from monument until future relocation of facilities is possible. When the facilities are relocated, any trees planted around the buildings should also be removed. (Healthy live oaks could be relocated to the cemetery or park entrance area.)



Figure 63. View from visitor parking area south towards live oak grove and Rodriguez archeological site. Note picnic area under trees.



Figure 64. View showing effects of removing picnic area and garbage receptacles from key interpretive area, and establishing an axial path and interpretive footprints for the Rodriguez site. [digital simulation by author]



Figure 65. Pedestrian path and battery wayside along the southern remnant of the Rodriguez Canal. Note riverfront service road in foreground.



Figure 66. Proposed vegetative “extension” of Rodriguez Canal, showing removal of outdated wayside and pedestrian path. [digital simulation by author]

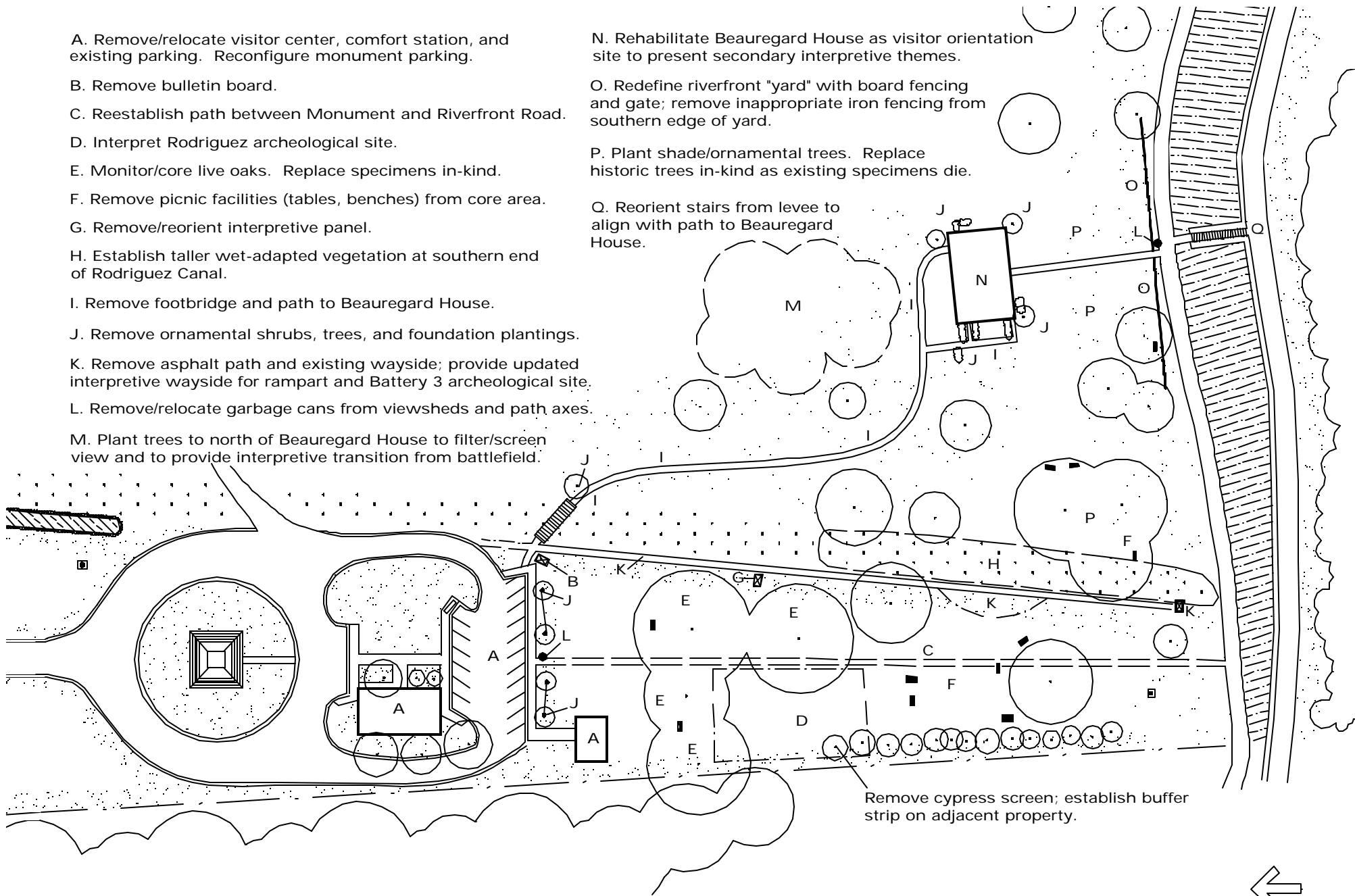
7) Rehabilitate core historic landscape area south of Chalmette Monument (see figs. 63, 64, & 67):

- Mark and interpret the architectural footprints of the Rodriguez archeological complex. Acceptable materials to mark the building footprints would be stone pavers or concrete capstones, and to denote the interior of the structures, grass, sand, or fine pea gravel. The park should also interpret the site’s relationship to the L-shaped grove of live oaks, either orally or through interpretive signs. Latrobe’s 1819 sketches could be effectively incorporated into a wayside exhibit to interpret the Rodriguez site.
- Monitor and core live oak trees within the grove to determine their health and to verify their age. Though the presently shady character of this area does not conform to the battle-era depictions of an open landscape around the Rodriguez house, the trees are significant features for their age and grandeur alone; that they might date from the battle era only adds to their significance. The trees should be preserved as historic place markers of a landscape otherwise vanished, and an in-kind replacement plan should be devised to maintain the L-shaped configuration as the existing trees phase out.
- Remove picnic area from live oak grove and relocate benches, tables, and trash receptacles to an area of lesser interpretive significance, perhaps to the area just SW of the park entrance, where the visitor center might eventually be relocated. A more discretely defined picnic area might alternately be established near the Malus-Beauregard House, perhaps in the semi-shady area west of the house where the Villavosa house stood.
- Remove the large interpretive panel located along the canal path; or reposition this painted battle scene to reflect the conditions depicted in the painting.

8) Release the southern end of the Rodriguez Canal from active mowing to encourage establishment of taller wet-adapted vegetation and to visually extend the line of the canal (figs. 65 & 66). The canal could be

- A. Remove/relocate visitor center, comfort station, and existing parking. Reconfigure monument parking.
- B. Remove bulletin board.
- C. Reestablish path between Monument and Riverfront Road.
- D. Interpret Rodriguez archeological site.
- E. Monitor/core live oaks. Replace specimens in-kind.
- F. Remove picnic facilities (tables, benches) from core area.
- G. Remove/reorient interpretive panel.
- H. Establish taller wet-adapted vegetation at southern end of Rodriguez Canal.
- I. Remove footbridge and path to Beaugard House.
- J. Remove ornamental shrubs, trees, and foundation plantings.
- K. Remove asphalt path and existing wayside; provide updated interpretive wayside for rampart and Battery 3 archeological site.
- L. Remove/relocate garbage cans from viewsheds and path axes.
- M. Plant trees to north of Beaugard House to filter/screen view and to provide interpretive transition from battlefield.

- N. Rehabilitate Beaugard House as visitor orientation site to present secondary interpretive themes.
- O. Redefine riverfront "yard" with board fencing and gate; remove inappropriate iron fencing from southern edge of yard.
- P. Plant shade/ornamental trees. Replace historic trees in-kind as existing specimens die.
- Q. Reorient stairs from levee to align with path to Beaugard House.



Sources:
 Base plan digitized from large-format aerial photograph of Chalmette Site (c. 1994);
 Detailed with field data collected during site visits, September 1997 and January 1998.
 Scale and treatment locations are approximate; additional detailed drawings required for site
 construction purposes. Refer to Part Two text for complete treatment recommendations.

Figure 67.

Core Area Treatment Recommendations

further reinforced with plantings to simulate its historic connection to the river and the “cypress swamp.” Cattail (*Typha latifolia*) or other wetland species would suggest the line of the canal where it fades away at the southern end. Alternately, the canal could be reprofiled to more accurately reflect its historic depth and measure, but this would require additional archeology.

- 9) Remove the footbridge and path that lead from the visitor center to the Beaugard House (see figs. 61, 62, 70, & 71). For access to the river and the Beaugard House, reroute pedestrian traffic along the newly reestablished path connecting Monument Circle to the riverfront service road (see *Monument Tract* recommendations, p. 77).
- 10) Remove the pedestrian path and existing wayside atop the southern end of the rampart’s line; provide an updated wayside to interpret the rampart and the site of Battery 3.
- 11) Encourage additional archeological work on the rampart, canal, and Rodriguez sites.
- 12) Negotiate with St. Bernard Port, Harbor and Terminal District to acquire a portion of the adjacent western tract as a permanent buffer with the Chalmette Slip. As recently as 1994, the park was threatened by the proposed development of an intermodal facility on the adjacent western property, which would have potentially impacted the existing wooded buffer zone. The park should strive to enhance relationships with the parish authority who owns this property, and if possible, negotiate to acquire through donation an additional buffer zone along this boundary. If acquired, this buffer tract would be an ideal site for relocating the visitor services buildings.

Chalmette Tract

- 1) Downgrade the visitor tour road to pedestrian use only and remove wayside turnouts. The visitor tour road is an unfortunate park service-era modification that does not reflect historic circulation patterns or aid the park’s interpretation of the Battle of New Orleans. In fact, the road severs the reconstructed American rampart at one point and the Rodriguez Canal at two points, diminishing the spatial integrity of those features. Furthermore, its circular configuration hinders the visitor’s understanding of the battle-era land patterns, notably Center Road, which paralleled the river, and the historic ditch lines, which were oriented perpendicularly to the river. If future planning efforts allow, the road should be removed entirely, the bed carefully regraded to match the profile of the surrounding meadow and seeded with native grass mix. The gaps in the rampart and canal formerly breached by the tour road should then be repaired.
- 2) Negotiate with St. Bernard Parish Police Jury to acquire and eliminate the St. Bernard sewage treatment plant and to incorporate the land into park holdings. Until such a time, the current buffer of trees and woody vegetation surrounding the plant should be retained as a visual screen.
- 3) Establish a differential mowing and management regime to suggest the agricultural function of the battle-era Chalmette property and to highlight the traces of Center Road and the historic ditch lines. (These features are described in detail in Birkedal’s report and their approximate locations established on accompanying maps.) Due to the fragmented nature of the landscape at Chalmette and the economic impracticability of cultivating sugarcane commercially on such a small site, the open character of the battle-era landscape should be maintained through a management regime of periodic mowing or cutting. A portion of the tract could be planted in sugarcane, which should persist at least three years. Alternately, the general texture and pattern of sugarcane planting might be simulated on a portion of the tract using a wet-tolerant, native clump-forming grass, planted in rows and mown to a height sufficient to favor its establishment over that of exotic turf grasses.



Figure 68. Existing view from central battlefield towards cemetery lodge and maintenance complex.



Figure 69. View showing buffering effects of releasing additional zone to woodland succession between the cemetery lodge complex and the battlefield. [digital simulation by author]

- Devise a mowing regime to delineate the battle-era ditch lines and Center Road (traces of these features are visible in recent aerial photos of the park). In fact, a mown swathe could be used to define the trace of Center Road, reestablishing a historic circulation path for visitors to move across the battlefield; and small bushes and wetland vegetation could be allowed to grow in and along the historic ditch lines to distinguish them from the more frequently mown meadow areas. Mowing patterns could also be selectively used to mark historic property divisions or features for secondary interpretive purposes, e.g., mowing of Fazendeville road strip (perhaps for African-American History Month). In general, mowing this tract in longitudinal strips that are oriented perpendicular to the river and that sweep across the tour road would de-emphasize the dominant looping pattern of the tour road.
 - Reduce frequency of mowing to semi-annually to allow reestablishment of native grass cover and as a visual screen for the visitor tour road. If necessary for safety and visibility, the park may maintain a more closely mown swathe, not to exceed 5 feet in width, along either side of the tour road.
 - Plant sugarcane on a portion of the tract; or simulate sugarcane planting using a rowed planting of clump-forming grass, such as sugarcane plume grass (*Erianthus giganteus*) or wild native cane (*Arundenaria* spp.).
- 4) Remove the pedestrian path leading from the tour road to the National Cemetery. Reseed with native grass mix.
 - 5) Release an additional area from mowing to allow the “cypress swamp” zone to sweep across the service drive connecting the tour road to the cemetery maintenance area in order to screen the rear of the maintenance shed and garage from the battlefield (figs. 68 & 69). The successional process could be ecologically “jump-started” with selective native tree planting to simulate early successional conditions. Ideally, the park should secure an alternate service route along the

abandoned railroad track just outside the park's northern boundary, or adapt the existing riverfront service road for this purpose, then remove the existing service drive, regrade the road bed to meet the profile of the surrounding meadow, and seed with native grass mix.

- 6) Maintain the existing wooded thicket as a site buffer and an interpretive foil for the battle-era "cypress swamp." The park should explore the feasibility of reestablishing cypress trees in this zone, though excess shading and soil conditions might ecologically preclude this possibility. Exotic species, such as Chinese tallow tree (*Sapium sebifera*), should be eliminated from this zone if possible. Impounded drainage in the area to the north of the swamp zone, along the park's northern boundary fence, could likely be improved by cleaning out or enlarging the culverts that run underneath the adjacent railroad embankment.

- 7) Create a path through the existing thicket to the trace of the battle-era Double Ditch (discussed and illustrated in Birkedal's report) and the approximate site where General Pakenham fell (illustrated in Swanson's report). This would allow visitors to experience a different part of the landscape at Chalmette and would enhance the interpretation of the battle. Indeed, in order to draw visitors into closer contact with the swamp zone, the park could allow the existing thicket to sweep down across the loop road at its northernmost extent. This management action would also eliminate the mown edge treatment that currently prevails along the loop road.

- 8) Remove the earthen mound and flagpole that are used to interpret the British position at the tour road's easternmost wayside. A sequence of regimental flagging might alternately (and more effectively) be used to mark British troop movements on the battlefield, particularly if the loop road is downgraded to pedestrian use. Such flagging would make the path of British troop movements legible from behind the American line.



Figure 70. View from southeast corner of visitor parking area towards Malus-Beauregard House. Note wayside bulletin board, bridge, and ornamental plantings.



Figure 71. View showing effects of additional tree screening to the rear of the Beauregard House and removal of the pedestrian path, bridge, ornamental shrubs, and wayside bulletin board in the interpretive core. [digital simulation by author]

Character Areas

Chalmette Monument Tract

The Chalmette Monument tract should be distinguished from the central battlefield tracts by way of a more frequent and “manicured” mowing regime to emphasize its more continuous commemorative function and history. The park should preserve and emphasize the wedge-shaped configuration of the monument tract and the axiality of the approach to the monument. Consequently, any contemporary vegetation that obscures the legibility of the wedge shape should be removed.

- Reestablish an axial path between Monument Circle and Riverfront Road. This would provide pedestrian access to the Rodriguez archeological site, restore a spatial context for Spott’s Monument, and provide access to the river and the Beaugard House via the riverfront service road. Such a path would visually and spatially reflect the axis of the entrance drive, and would reestablish the line of the path that existed during the War Department and early NPS eras. The path should be constructed of a soft, flexible material, such as shell, sand, or pea gravel, that would not damage archeological materials and that could be easily removed or reconfigured. The path should be approximately 4 to 5 feet wide, and edged or unedged, as the park desires.
- Remove the planted cypress screens along the northwestern and southwestern park boundary.

Malus-Beaugard House and Grounds

- 1) Remove bridge, path, and ornamental plantings leading from visitor center parking area to Beaugard House (figs. 70 & 71). Pedestrian traffic should be rerouted to the house’s riverfront entrance along the riverfront service road. Access to the service road would be provided by way of the axial path leading from Monument Circle to the Rodriguez site and riverfront.



Figure 72. Malus-Beaugard House and grounds as seen from the levee; riverfront facade.



Figure 73. Proposed rehabilitation of riverfront approach to Malus-Beaugard House based on historic photodocumentation. [digital simulation by author]

- 2) Selectively plant trees on the north side of the Beaugard House to filter/screen the view of the house from the park entrance drive and to provide transition between the grounds of the house and the battlefield proper. Historic photographs and plans indicate that magnolias, pecans, and live oaks existed in the area to the north of the house and would be appropriate species for screening (see fig. 9). Visitors would have a panoramic view of the battlefield from a location in the field north of the house.
- 3) Create appropriately scaled landscape setting for Malus-Beaugard House to set it apart as a secondary interpretive site and to suggest the house's original riverfront orientation (figs. 72 & 73). Though an accurate restoration would be difficult, providing a landscape setting suggestive of that seen in historic photographs would distinguish the house and grounds from the larger battlefield and would provide an interpretive context for the house:
 - Remove NPS-era shrub and ornamental plantings from around the base of the house.
 - Define the riverfront "yard" with board or picket fencing and a gate suggestive of that shown in early photographs; remove (or relocate) the current historically inappropriate iron fencing from along the southern edge of the yard.
 - Plant shade and ornamental trees as depicted in photos and historical documentation (magnolias, pecans, live oaks, etc.). Replace historic existing trees with in-kind species as the mature specimens die.
 - Encourage additional archeology to establish the locations of the dependency structures, fencelines, trees, and enclosed yard depicted in period photographs and plans of the house.
 - Create wayside exhibit to interpret the secondary interpretive theme of the Malus-Beaugard House and antebellum land uses. This wayside should include historic photographs of the house and its

riverfront landscape, and could be located at the riverfront entrance so that visitors might compare the historic landscape setting with the present configuration.

- 4) Explore the possibility of adaptively reusing Beaugard House as a secondary educational/interpretive site, oriented towards those visitors who arrive by riverboat:
 - Use Beaugard House to interpret secondary theme of antebellum life and country retreats along the river, but also as an orientation point from which to interpret the battlefield. The house could contain a secondary information desk with a selection of educational materials and changing exhibits for riverboat visitors who do not have time to visit the designated visitor center.

Mississippi Riverfront

Specific Treatment Recommendations

- 1) Establish riverfront orientation site (open-air pavilion or belvedere) to interpret the river's critical role in the battle history, the site's evolution from agricultural to industrial land-use, and its relationship/proximity to New Orleans. Such a feature might include an observation deck, catwalk, or handicap-accessible ramp which would lead visitors from the levee crest down onto the battlefield plain.² Battlefield tours could begin from a wayside on the riverfront, using Laclotte's painting as an orientational and comparative guide to the battle-era landscape.
- 2) Establish levee-top trail for pedestrian use. Negotiate with Army Corps of Engineers to allow pedestrian use of the service lane on the levee crest. If successful, a riverfront entrance to the cemetery might be established to allow riverboat visitors access from the levee trail. The battlefield and its relationship to the river can most effectively be interpreted from atop the levee, especially once the sewage treatment plant is removed.

- 3) Interpret the historic riverfront orientation of the property and park by providing wayside and directional orientation along the levee road and at the base of the stairs that lead from the levee to the Beaugard House:
 - Reorient the stairs from the levee to align with the path to the Beaugard House.
 - Install signs or waysides to encourage visitors who arrive by car to visit the riverfront and levee.
- 4) Improve the approach sequence from the riverboat docking platform by providing appropriate park signs, lighting, and informational waysides comparable to those provided at the main park and cemetery entrances. These functions might eventually be incorporated into the proposed riverfront interpretive site.
- 5) Open up a sightline towards New Orleans in the volunteer willow screen along the batture in order to interpret the importance of the city and the river to the battle history and to the site's later evolutionary development.
- 6) Negotiate with St. Bernard Parish and the Corps of Engineers for restricted hours on the service use of the levee road or, ideally, for the designation of an alternate service route around the park.

Chalmette National Cemetery

Proposed Preservation Strategy

Study of archival documentation, historic photographs, and existing conditions suggests that rehabilitation of historic planting patterns within the cemetery is not only possible, but highly desirable, particularly given the dramatic and intrusive changes in site context to the east of the park. Enhancing the cemetery's tree plantings would help to buffer views of the Kaiser Aluminum plant both from within the cemetery and from the battlefield (figs. 74-77). The cemetery should stand apart from the



Figure 74. View from central battlefield towards Chalmette National Cemetery. Note gap-toothed tree plantings in cemetery and Kaiser Aluminum plant beyond.



Figure 75. View towards Chalmette National Cemetery showing long-range buffering effects of rehabilitating historic allees. [digital simulation by author]

battlefield landscape, both in feeling and in design. A vegetation management plan that draws on historic planting precedents, while not necessarily replicating tree-for-tree, or species-for-species, the look of some earlier era, could further distinguish the cemetery as a meditative space of integral design. In addition, it is recommended that the cemetery be evaluated for National Register eligibility independent of Chalmette Battlefield and that it carry its own name and distinctive identity in park literature and documentation.

Specific Treatment Recommendations

1) Improve/rehabilitate the entrance sequence along National Cemetery Road:

- Establish formal planting of live oak trees from St. Bernard Hwy. to cemetery entrance, consistent with planting treatment at main park entrance. Remove existing holly hedge and volunteer willow tree from right-of-way.
- Install new entrance signs and lighting at St. Bernard Highway, and install lighting at cemetery gate.
- Preserve and maintain historic iron entrance gate.
- Plant additional trees as buffering along northern cemetery fence. Red cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*) or southern magnolia (*Magnolia virginiana*), traditional cemetery plantings that are mentioned in early descriptions of the cemetery, could be planted along the northern property line as an evergreen buffer for objectionable views towards St. Bernard Highway.
- Create interpretive wayside near the entrance gates to highlight the cemetery's distinct developmental history and to summarize the landscape's earlier history as part of Chalmette Battlefield.

2) Rehabilitate the cemetery's allees and plantings:

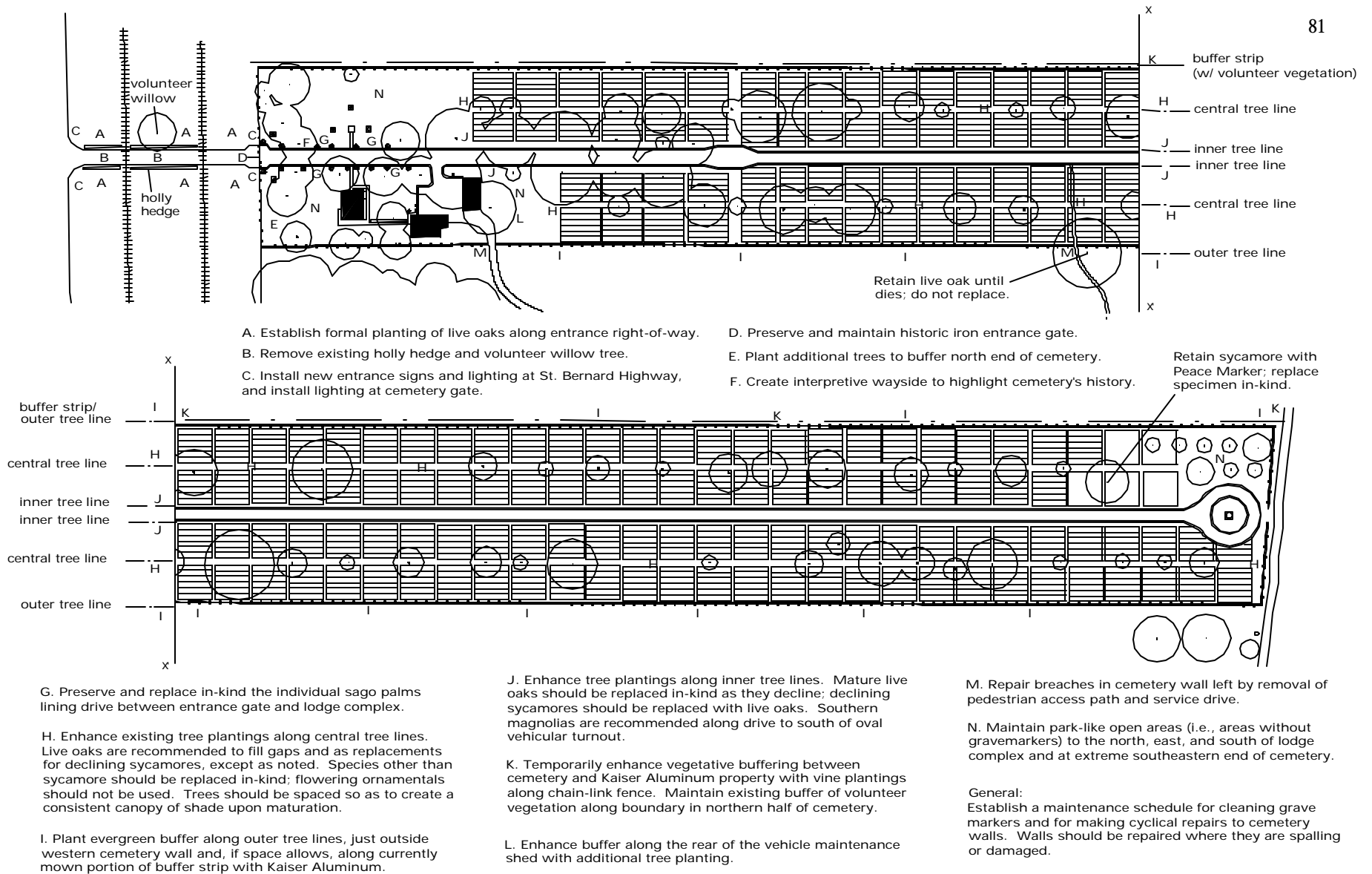
- Reestablish/enhance existing tree plantings to approximate the six allees identified from early photographs and plans. The cemetery



Figure 76. Existing view from Chalmette National Cemetery west towards Chalmette Battlefield. Note Beauregard House and Chalmette Monument in distance.



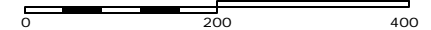
Figure 77. View from cemetery towards battlefield showing buffering effects of proposed tree plantings along western cemetery wall. [digital simulation by author]



Sources:

Base plan digitized from large-format aerial photograph of Chalmette Site (c. 1994); detailed with field data collected during site visits, September 1997 and January 1998. Internment [sic] Plan, Chalmette National Cemetery, 1963, NPS 467/2026; also, 467/2016, 467/3001, 467/3011, and 467/3026.

Scale and treatment locations are approximate; additional detailed drawings required for site construction purposes. Refer to Part Two text for complete treatment recommendations.



Chalmette National Cemetery Treatment Recommendations

Figure 78.

should contain a mix of evergreen and deciduous trees, both for color and textural variation, and for shading and buffering. This should include evergreen plantings (magnolia or red cedar) just outside the east and west walls for buffering, oak plantings (live and water oak) along the central allees for height and shading, and a mix of live oak and magnolias along the inner axes for shading and textural effect (see fig. 78 for location of tree planting lines). Historically and regionally appropriate species include live oak (*Quercus virginiana*), water oak (*Quercus nigra*), southern magnolia (*Magnolia grandiflora*), and red cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*). Trees planted along the cemetery walls should be spaced so that their roots will not damage the wall foundations; root shields should be used to direct root growth away from walls. Trees should be spaced so as to create a consistent canopy of shade within the cemetery upon maturation. Flowering ornamental trees and shrubs should be restricted to the area around the cemetery lodge.

- Retain healthy existing trees and replace dying specimens in-kind, unless otherwise noted on cemetery treatment plan (fig. 78).
- Replace/replant dying sycamores (*Platanus occidentalis*) with live oaks (*Quercus virginiana*), except as noted (fig. 78). An arborist should be consulted to determine which trees are diseased or structurally unsound and need removing.
- Preserve the remnant live oak allee near the lodge complex in order to maintain a shaded, contemplative entrance point to the cemetery. The sycamores along the northern third of the drive near the gate should be replaced with live oaks as they decline.
- Preserve and replace in-kind as necessary the individual sago palms (*Cycas revoluta*) that line the cemetery drive from the entrance gate to the lodge complex. They are depicted in a 1937 photograph of the cemetery lodge and were likely part of the original lodge landscape (see fig. 19). Note that this same photograph shows a large plant which appears to be a species of elephant-ears (*Alocasia* spp.) used as an accent planting in front of the cemetery lodge. A



Figure 79. View from Chalmette National Cemetery east towards Kaiser Aluminum site, showing lack of vegetative buffer along property boundary.



Figure 80. View showing effects of planting/releasing temporary vegetative buffer zone along property line with Kaiser Aluminum. [digital simulation by author]

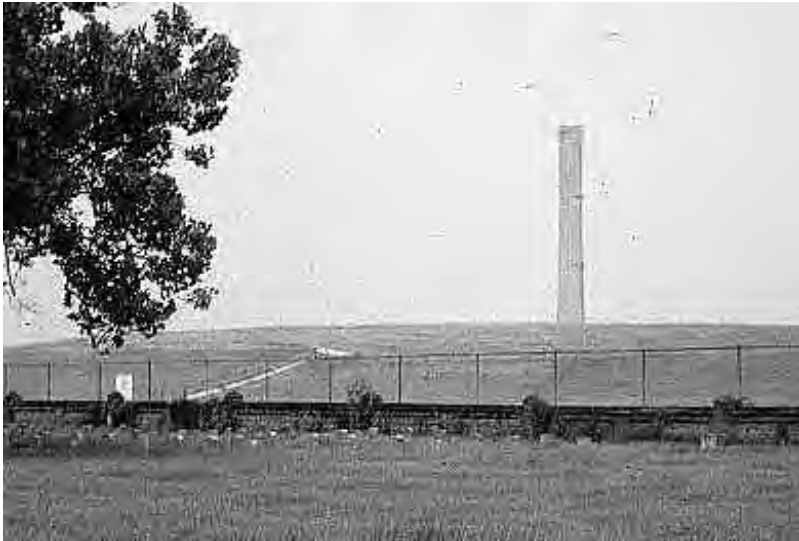


Figure 81. Existing view of Kaiser Aluminum smokestack and waste site from Chalmette National Cemetery's southern end.



Figure 82. View from cemetery towards Kaiser plant showing buffering effect of proposed tree plantings from within the cemetery. [digital simulation by author]

similar *Alocasia* (or *Colocasia*) species could be reestablished along the front facade of the lodge.

- 3) Repair breaches in cemetery wall left by removal of pedestrian access path and service drive. Repairs should be made with compatible brick laid in the same pattern as the original wall, taking caution to bridge over existing live oak roots. An alternate pedestrian entrance could be established at the riverfront end of the cemetery if a riverfront trail or approach is developed from the riverboat docking facility.
- 4) Enhance vegetative buffering between cemetery and Kaiser Aluminum property, temporarily by planting vines such as Virginia Creeper (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*) along the chain-link fence that divides the two properties (figs. 79 & 80), and more permanently with tree plantings in the buffer strip between the Kaiser site and the cemetery (figs. 81 & 82).
- 5) Enhance buffering along the rear of the vehicle maintenance shed with additional tree plantings (southern magnolia or live oak). This would help to screen views of this structure from within the cemetery.
- 6) Establish a maintenance schedule for cleaning grave markers and for making cyclical repairs to cemetery walls. Walls should be repaired where they are spalling or damaged.
- 7) Maintain park-like open areas (i.e., areas without gravemarkers) to the north and east of the lodge complex and at the extreme southeastern end of the cemetery. These commemorative spaces have remained free of burials historically and should be safeguarded against any future pressures for additional burial space. The park should emphasize to the public that the cemetery is officially closed for burials.
- 8) Interpret the traces of the British advance battery and Center Road alignment to establish a connection between the cemetery and battlefield landscapes. (These features are described in detail by Birkedal.)

(Options requiring additional research and documentation):

- 9) Install gate and landscaped setting at riverfront end of cemetery to provide access to possible pedestrian trail along the levee and to suggest the cemetery's historic entrance sequence.
- 10) Rehabilitate landscape setting for cemetery lodge; this could coincide with a restoration of the lodge based on a future *Historic Structures Report*.
- 11) Encourage further research on the developmental origins of the cemetery, i.e., why was it called Monument Cemetery?; when and why was the name changed to Chalmette National Cemetery?; was it envisioned as commemorative of the battle? or was it built of functional necessity and convenience for war-time burials?
- 12) Encourage archeological research to establish the site of the former Freedmen's Cemetery located outside the western cemetery wall.

Priorities Based on Long-range Planning Concerns

Several future events play (or should play) prominently into the park's long-range planning vision, notably the Bicentennial Celebration of the Louisiana Purchase (2003) and the Bicentennial Celebration of the Battle of New Orleans (January 8, 2015). The treatment recommendations and management strategies proposed for the battlefield and cemetery frequently involve long-term or incremental application and should therefore be evaluated with these events in mind. Certain treatment recommendations, such as tree planting or the relocation/replacement of park infrastructure, require particular attention to the timing, cost, and scale of implementation in order to achieve the desired results within the given time frame.

Following are examples of recommendations that should receive higher planning priority based on the length of time needed for their implementation, the overall contribution their implementation would make to the appearance of the park, or on their urgency/sensitivity for further planning efforts:

a) Rehabilitation of Chalmette Battlefield:

- Establish formal planting of live oaks along entrance right-of-way from St. Bernard Highway
- Negotiate with St. Bernard Port, Harbor and Terminal District to acquire a portion of the adjacent western tract as permanent buffer with Chalmette Slip
- Negotiate with St. Bernard Parish Police Jury to acquire and remove the sewage treatment plant
- Seek funding for relocation of visitor center and comfort station
- Mark and interpret the Rodriguez Plantation archeological site

b) Rehabilitation of Chalmette National Cemetery:

- Establish formal planting of live oaks along entrance right-of-way from St. Bernard Highway
- Replace missing or diseased allee trees, and enhance overall tree planting as per specific treatment recommendations
- Repair wayside break in cemetery wall
- Establish selected vegetative buffering along boundary fence with Kaiser Aluminum

Due to the time needed for tree maturation, recommendations involving tree plantings should obviously receive high priority for planning purposes. Recommendations involving changes to park infrastructure should ideally be figured into a new *General Management Plan*, as these changes impact other recommendations. Many of the treatment recommendations can be implemented incrementally or on a piecemeal basis as time and funding allows.

General Recommendations

- 1) Seek funding to properly archive all historic maps, photographs, and documentation in a common, environmentally-controlled location. This would greatly aid in future research efforts and in the preservation of these materials.
- 2) Seek funding to implement a GIS/GPS survey for the battlefield and cemetery. Such a survey would serve as an accurate base map for any future construction work or drawings.
- 3) Pursue legislation to have park redesignated as “Chalmette Battlefield” and “Chalmette National Cemetery,” rather than as the “Chalmette Unit (or Site)” of Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve (JELA). Ideally, the battlefield and cemetery should have separate names and identities, and a source of funding separate from that appropriated for JELA. The park should actively seek to distinguish the battlefield from the cemetery in future research, interpretation, and literature.
- 4) Encourage further ethnographic research on the Fazendeville settlement.
- 5) Negotiate with tourboat concessionaire for extended visitor time and for funding to develop interpretive resources for distribution on board ship. Funding might also be sought for the rehabilitation of the Beaugard House as a secondary interpretive and educational site oriented towards the visitors who arrive by riverboat.
- 6) Develop new *General Management Plan* (GMP) and *Interpretive Prospectus* to reflect cultural landscape concerns and recommendations advanced by the *Cultural Landscape Report*.

Notes

1. See 1969 *Master Plan*, p. 27-28, for summary of interpretive themes; also see 1983 *Interpretive Prospectus*, p. 19-23.

2. An undated NPS planning and construction document entitled “Overlook on Mississippi River” (NPS 467/2011) shows a conceptual design for a belvedere/observation platform overlooking the river south of the Beaugard House. Though never realized, the design would have provided a simple but elegant venue for bringing visitors into contact with the river.

PART THREE: PREPARING A RECORD OF TREATMENT

Purpose

As both a follow-up to the CLR's recommendations and as a reference for future historic research, the park should maintain an accurate record of treatment to document the intent, extent, time, and cost of all implemented treatments. This record should describe the as-built physical work, including any modifications between the proposed and actual treatments. Systematic documentation is important whether treatment is implemented over an extended period of time or in short discrete phases. The record should document specific treatment actions, not routine preservation maintenance, unless maintenance is altered specifically as a result of the treatment recommendations.

Contents and Format

The record of treatment should include copies of field reports, condition assessments, and any contract summaries. Documentation may follow a variety of formats, including as-built construction drawings, plans, details, narrative descriptions, "before" and "after" photographs, and even videos. The Section 106 compliance documentation developed to review and approve recommended treatment actions may, in some cases, be sufficient as the record of treatment.

When treatment recommendations are not implemented immediately following the preparation of the CLR, the record of treatment should also describe any changes that have occurred to the existing condition of the landscape prior to treatment. The record of treatment may be produced as an appendix or addendum to the CLR and designated as "Part Three: Record of Treatment."

Reference Materials

The "Landscape Lines" section of *A Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports* (1999) explains and provides technical guidance on various landscape survey, research, and treatment techniques that may be employed in preparing a

record of treatment. All parks should have received a copy of the guide during the spring of 1999; JELA's copy is housed in the park library at the JELA Headquarters in New Orleans. Additional copies of the guide are available for purchase from the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402-9325, Stock No. 0245-005-01187-1.

Another useful reference is the Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation's *Guide to Developing a Preservation Maintenance Plan for a Historic Landscape* (1998), especially the summary, inspection, and inventory forms provided in Appendix F (p. 62), which could easily be adapted for use in compiling a record of treatment. This publication is included as an appendix to the *Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports* sent to each park. (For additional information regarding this publication, visit the Olmsted Center's web site at <http://www.nps.gov/frla/oclp.htm>.)

Guidelines and standardized forms for preparing a record of treatment will eventually be accessible for park use on the SERO-CRS intranet site, located at <http://crs.sero.nps.gov>.

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Aerial Photographs

Large format (30" x 30") black and white aerial, date unknown but probably c.1994. Scale approximately 1" to 165'. In the collection of JELA. Photograph was digitized in CADD for use as CLR base map.

