

Long Term Management of the Bonnet Carré Spillway Historic Cemeteries

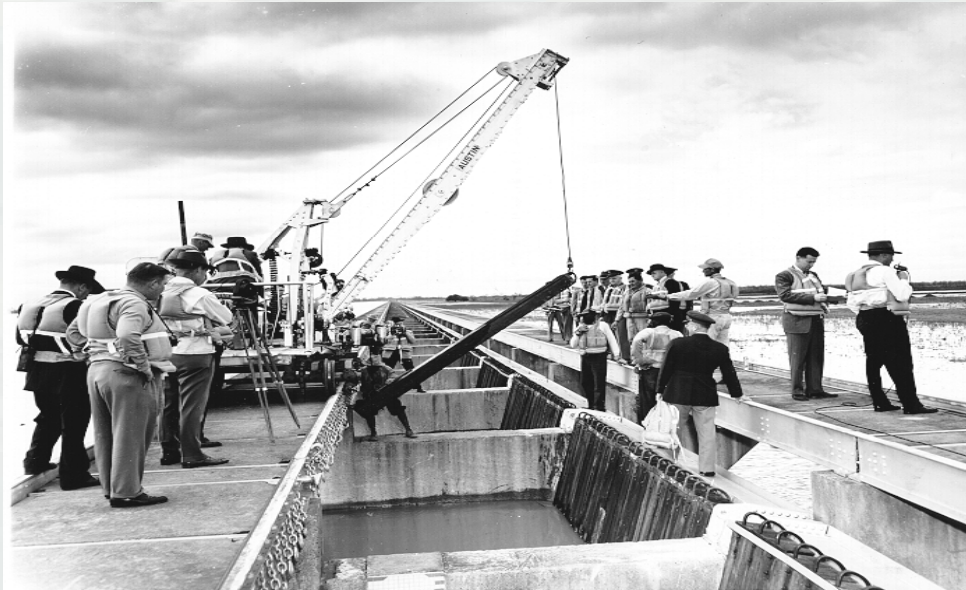
St. Charles Borromeo Catholic Church
Feb. 8, 2012



US Army Corps of Engineers
BUILDING STRONG®



Bonnet Carré Spillway

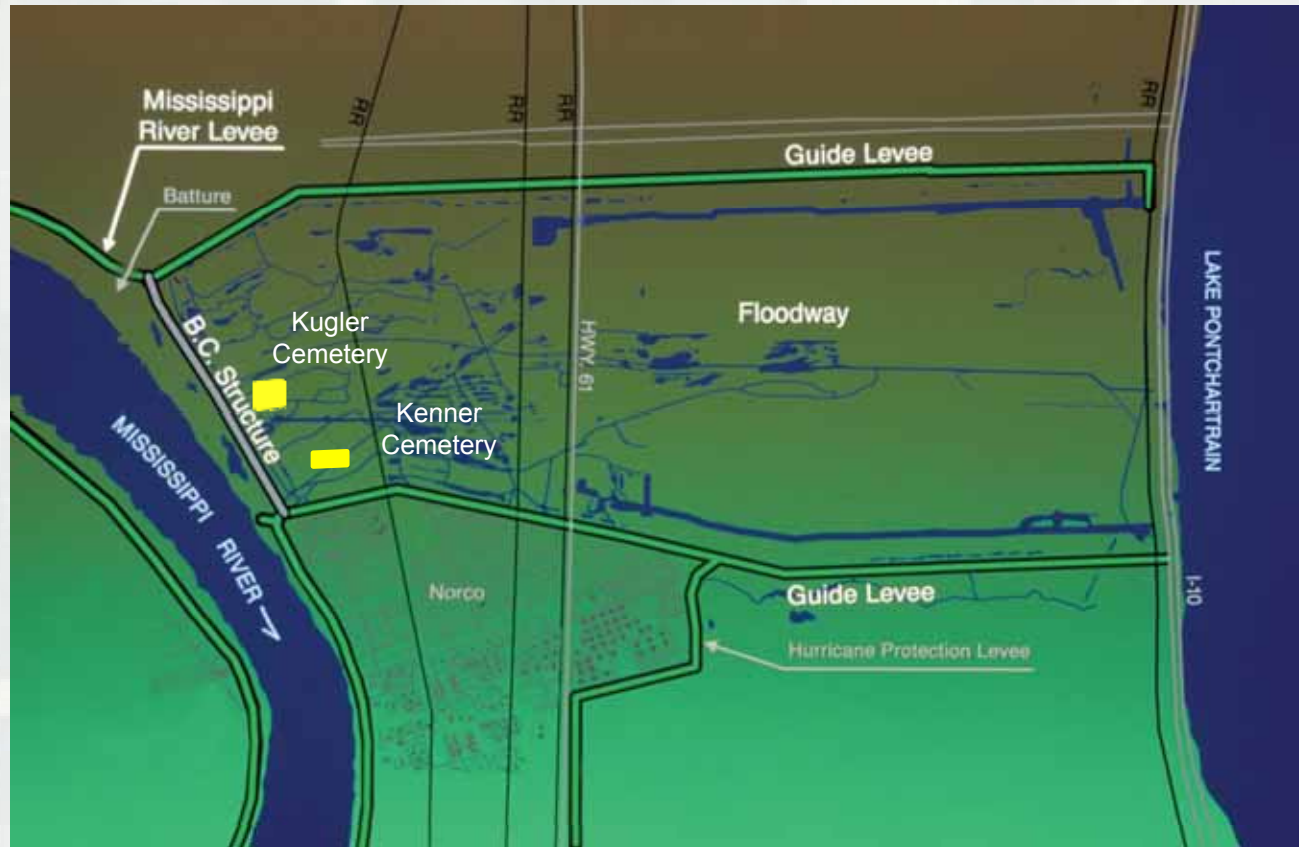


Authorized after the Great Flood of 1927, the Bonnet Carré Spillway structure is a historical engineering landmark, eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

- **Project purpose is flood risk management along Mississippi River**
- **Component of the Mississippi River & Tributaries Project, authorized in 1928**
- **Constructed between 1929 and 1936**
- **Reduces risk to downstream communities by diverting flood waters from the Mississippi River to Lake Pontchartrain**

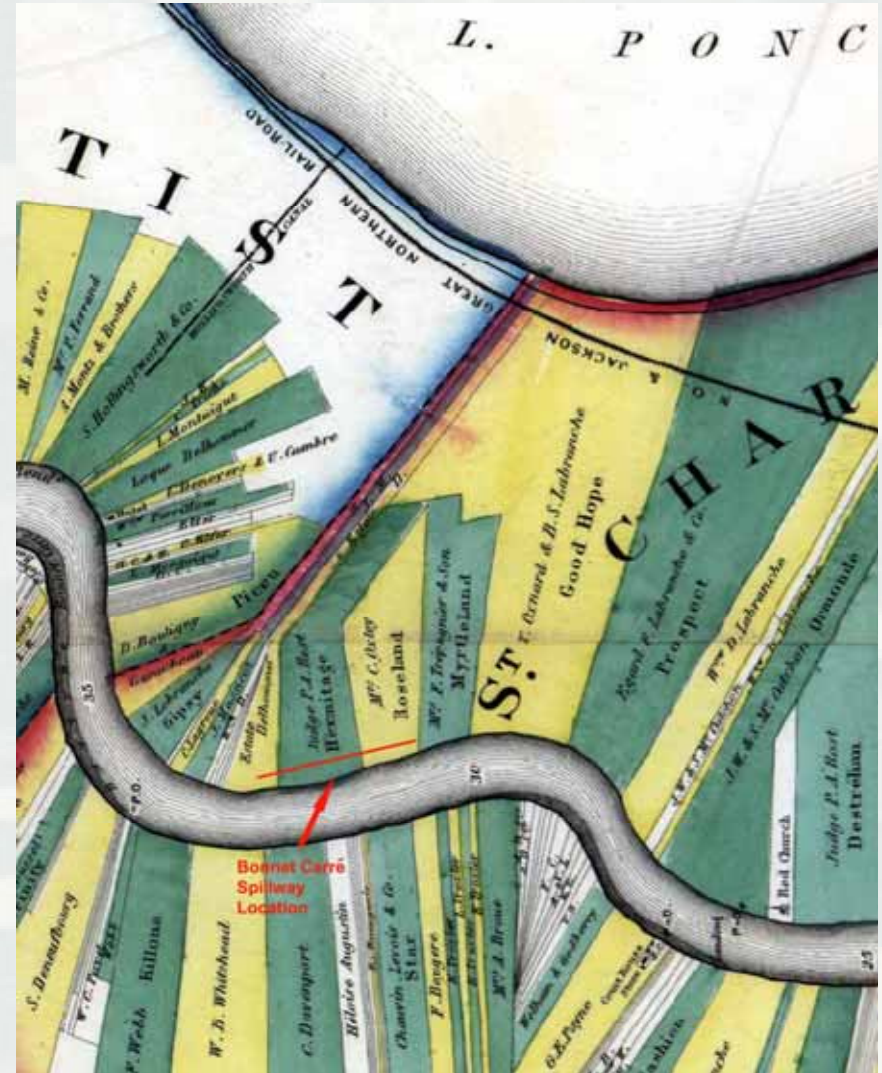


Bonnet Carré Spillway



Kenner and Kugler Cemeteries

- Once owned by Kenner and Kugler families
- Everyone buried in cemeteries was of African descent
- Cemeteries established as burial places for slaves
- Cemeteries continually in use until 1928

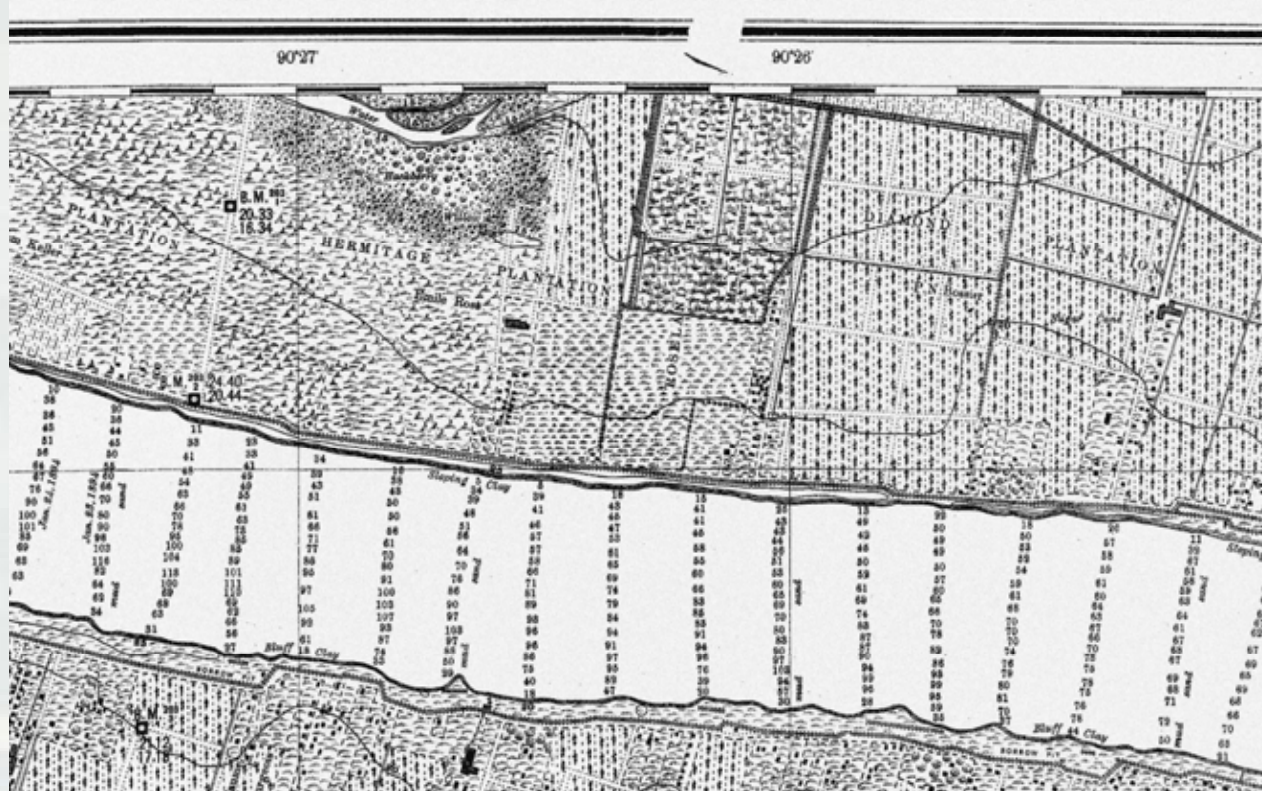


Kenner and Kugler Cemeteries

- About 300 persons buried in the cemeteries
- Civil War Union Army veterans buried in cemeteries
- Burials below ground in wooden coffins
- Wooden, stone and iron markers



Kenner and Kugler Cemeteries



- No documentation of cemeteries
- Federal government bought land in 1928
- Spillway construction did not affect burials



Disinterment

- Remains accidentally exposed at Kenner Cemetery, 1975
- Exposed remains and artifacts collected
- Cultural Resource Investigations, 1985, 2002, and 2008



Corps Responsibilities

- **Requirements under Federal Laws**
 - ▶ **National Historic Preservation Act (Sections 106 and 110)**
 - ▶ **National Environmental Policy Act,**
 - ▶ **Archeological Resources Protection Act**
- **Kenner and Kugler Cemeteries are on the National Register of Historic Places**



Descendant Coordination

- Corps is obliged to consider descendant community
- Descendants interviewed concerning future actions
- Consensus of descendants was preservation in place and reburial of the disturbed remains
- Coordination continues with tonight's meeting



Disinterred Remains

- Kenner Cemetery remains are 52 bones and fragments
- Remains are from at least five individuals
- Remains are in archeological storage
- Inventory of remains prior to reburial

Provenience _____ Numeric I.D. _____ ASM 82404 Form 1

SKELETAL INVENTORY

AXIAL	#	cond	APPENDICULAR	left	right	CRANIAL	left	right
element			element			element		
1st Cervical	___	___	Scapula	___	___	Parietal	___	___
2nd Cervical	___	___	glenoid	___	___	Temporal	___	___
3-6 Cervical	___	___	Clavicle	___	___	Zygomatic	___	___
7th Cervical	___	___	rad. epi.	___	___	Lacrimal	___	___
1-9 Thoracic	___	___	sternum	___	___	I. N. C.	___	___
10th Thoracic	___	___	manubrium	___	___	Nasal	___	___
11th Thoracic	___	___	body	___	___	Maxilla	___	___
12th Thoracic	___	___	xiphoid	___	___	Palatine	___	___
1st Lumbar	___	___		___	___	TMJ	___	___
2nd Lumbar	___	___	Ilium	___	___	Mandible	___	___
3rd Lumbar	___	___	auricular	___	___	Frontal	___	___
4th Lumbar	___	___	Pubis	___	___	Sphenoid	___	___
5th Lumbar	___	___	symphysis	___	___	Ethmoid	___	___
Sacrum	___	___	ischium	___	___	Vomer	___	___
Coccyx	___	___	Acetabulum	___	___	Occipital	___	___
Left Ribs	___	___		___	___	Hyoid	___	___
Right Ribs	___	___	Patella	___	___	Thyroid	___	___
						Cricoid	___	___
						Ossicles	___	___

APPENDICULAR	left side	right side
element		
Humerus	epi-p/ prox/ mid/ dist/ epi-d	epi-p/ prox/ mid/ dist/ epi-d
Radius	/ / / / /	/ / / / /
Ulna	/ / / / /	/ / / / /
Femur	/ / / / /	/ / / / /
Tibia	/ / / / /	/ / / / /
Fibula	/ / / / /	/ / / / /

EXTREMITIES	#	cond	element	#	cond
Scaphoid	___	___	Calcaneus	___	___
Lunate	___	___	Talus	___	___
Trapezium	___	___	Cuboid	___	___
Trapezoid	___	___	Navicular	___	___
Capitate	___	___	Medial Cuneiform	___	___
Hamate	___	___	Intermediate Cuneiform	___	___
Triquetrum	___	___	Lateral Cuneiform	___	___
Platform	___	___			
Metacarpals			Metatarsals		
1st	___	___	1st	___	___
2nd	___	___	2nd	___	___
3rd	___	___	3rd	___	___
4th	___	___	4th	___	___
5th	___	___	5th	___	___
C. Phalanges			T. Phalanges		
proximal	___	___	proximal	___	___
middle	___	___	middle	___	___
distal	___	___	distal	___	___
Sesamoids	___	___	Sesamoids	___	___

Codes:
c = >= 75% present
p = 25% - 75% present
f = < 25% present

NOTES

This form includes information derived from Buikstra and Ubelaker (1994), Standards for Data Collection from Human Skeletal Remains, Arkansas Archeological Survey, and is used with permission of the publisher.



USACE Plans for Preservation

The program for long-term preservation of these important cultural resources includes:

- ▶ Site Improvements to provide recognition and public access
- ▶ Interpretive Plan to tell the story
- ▶ Reburial of the disinterred remains



Proposed Site Improvements



- Proposed landscape and access improvements at cemeteries
- Tree plantings
- Concrete boundary markers



Proposed Interpretive Plan

Plantation Life History of settlement prior to the Spillway 

Plantations

A plantation is really a large farm that produces a main crop for sale in the market. In Louisiana, plantations developed during the colonial era of the 1700s. About the time of the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, the plantations in this area began to grow sugarcane. Many sugar planters grew very wealthy in the antebellum era. Most plantations had an owners' "great house," quarters houses for workers, a sugar mill, and livestock barns as well as large fields, pastures, and swampy back lands. The Civil War (1861-1865) transformed plantation life and the Louisiana sugar industry in many ways. Although rice and other crops were grown, sugar cane continued to be the main crop in this area into the early 1900s, when sugar growing moved elsewhere.

The great majority of residents on the Louisiana plantations were African-Americans. On a large plantation, hundreds of people worked the land, while the plantation owner's family was usually in number. The skills and hard work of the laborers were crucial to the survival of a plantation as an economic unit.



Struggles for Freedom

During the colonial and early American periods, Africans and Creoles (born in Louisiana) were enslaved workers on the plantations. In January 1811, the largest revolt of enslaved people in North America broke out on sugar plantations in the Bonnet Carré area. Hundreds of people defied Louisiana's slave laws, took up arms, and marched along the River Road just this site, towards New Orleans. They were halted in a battle with local militia. Leaders of the uprising were captured and many were put to death.



Following the capture of New Orleans by the Union Army and Navy during the Civil War, a number of former slaves from the plantations in the area enlisted in the Federal army. Most served in the U.S. Colored Heavy Artillery. The Civil War ended slavery, but after the war, economic opportunities and political freedoms were limited for African-Americans, and many stayed on the plantations as wage workers.



Cultural Resources

A cultural resource inventory of the Bonnet Carré Spillway was completed in 1991. The result was the listing of two properties on the National Register of Historic Places, America's official list of cultural resources worthy of preservation. One is the Kemmer and Fugler Cemeteries Archeological District, consisting of two African-American cemetery plots which date to the early 1800s. People were buried in the cemeteries until Federal purchase of the property in 1928.



- Outdoor Interpretive panels placed on site (draft final mockups on display tonight)
- History booklet focused on the people who lived here (draft final copies on display tonight)
- Inclusion in the general interpretive program of the project (brochures, web sites, tours, interpretive talks, special events, seasonal events, etc.)



Descendant Views on Reburial

- **Consensus of descendants was strong for reburial of the human remains disinterred in 1975.**
- **However, there was no clear consensus on the nature of a ceremony or memorial for the re-interment of human remains. Most favored a religious service, but some wanted a more festive celebration.**
- **There was also not a clear consensus about whether the artifacts collected in 1975 should be reburied with the human remains. Many wanted them curated at the project or in a museum for educational purposes.**



Proposed Reburial Process & Ceremony

- Proposed reburial of human remains in wooden casket
- Proposed reburial adjacent to Kenner Cemetery with location marker
- Proposed public ceremony with non-denominational commemoration
- Remarks by clergy and/or other speaker
- Participation of choir
- Curation, display and interpretation of non-skeletal remains in the project office visitor area
- Tentatively scheduled in Fall 2012



Opportunities for Public Input

- Comments will be accepted by phone:

1-877-427-0345

- Comments can be submitted through Mar. 9, 2012

- Comments may be e-mailed:

BonnetCarre@usace.army.mil

- Comments may be mailed:

US Army Corps of Engineers

Attn: PAO - Bonnet Carre

PO Box 60267

New Orleans, LA 70160



JOIN OUR SOCIAL NETWORK



[Facebook.com/usacenola](https://www.facebook.com/usacenola)



[Flickr.com/TeamNewOrleans](https://www.flickr.com/photos/teamneworleans/)



[Twitter.com/TeamNewOrleans](https://twitter.com/TeamNewOrleans)



[YouTube.com/TeamNewOrleans](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC...)

Discussion

**Please stay for awhile and share your thoughts with us.
We have several stations set up with Corps personnel
or contract staff:**

- National Historic Preservation Act guidelines
- Proposed Landscape Improvements
- Proposed Interpretive Program
- Proposed Reburial Process/Ceremony



BUILDING STRONG®