2025

STATE of PRESERVATION

LOUISIANA TRUST for HISTORIC PRESERVATION

2025 Louisiana Preservation Awards

2025 Louisiana's Most Endangered Places

The GREAT FLOOD

Mississippi River Centennial

Welcoming Remarks

Dear Members, Partners, & Friends,

AS WE reflect on another remarkable year at the Louisiana Trust for Historic Preservation, I am filled with gratitude for the progress we've made together in protecting, promoting, & preserving the rich & irreplaceable stories, places, & history of our state.

At the heart of our work is a belief that historic preservation is not just about buildings - it's about identity. Louisiana is a place like no other, defined by its deep-rooted traditions, diverse cultures, & layered stories. From Creole cottages to African American churches, mid-century civic buildings to Brutalist government structures & everything in between, our historic places help tell the story of who we are - & who we aspire to be. Preserving them safeguards our sense of place, pride, & belonging.

This year, our technical assistance work has continued to expand across the state thanks to the diligent & inspired work of our Executive Director, Brian Davis, meeting communities where they are & providing hands-on guidance for saving Louisiana's architectural & cultural treasures. Whether helping a homeowner apply for restoration incentives, advising on local preservation ordinances, or offering emergency support for endangered properties, we're proud to serve as a trusted resource for those working to preserve the places that shape their daily lives.

We've also introduced new events & outreach initiatives aimed at engaging broader audiences in creative, accessible ways. These events are creating fresh opportunities for conversation, connection, & community building & reflect our commitment to making preservation a dynamic & inclusive movement.

At the same time, our signature events continue to thrive. The twice-yearly Ramble remains one of our most celebrated gatherings, offering participants the chance to explore unique historic sites - many not open to the public - while connecting with local historians, artisans, & property stewards. The success of the Ramble reaffirms what we already know: people care deeply about place & they are eager to learn, share, & advocate for the stories held in brick, timber, & soul.

Perhaps most encouraging of all, we've seen significant growth in our membership over the past year thanks to our new Director of Development & Membership, Danielle Stein. This surge in support shows that more & more Louisianans recognize the value of preservation not just as a tool for economic development or tourism, but as a means of honoring heritage, fostering resilience, & building a more grounded future. Every member strengthens our collective voice & deepens our impact.

As we look ahead, our mission remains clear: to empower communities, protect historic places, & ensure that the authentic character of Louisiana endures. Preservation isn't just about saving the past - it's about shaping the future with intention, care, & respect. We have welcomed Kristan McCullum to the LTHP team as we embark on an incredibly significant commemoration project to explore the legacy left by the 1927 Flood, as we approach the 100th anniversary. You'll learn more about that in the coming weeks & months.

Thank you for being a part of this vital work. We are honored to do it with you. Please invite your friends with an interest in history & historic sites to become a member of LTHP & stay connected.

With gratitude & determination,
Kelsea Mc
LTHP President

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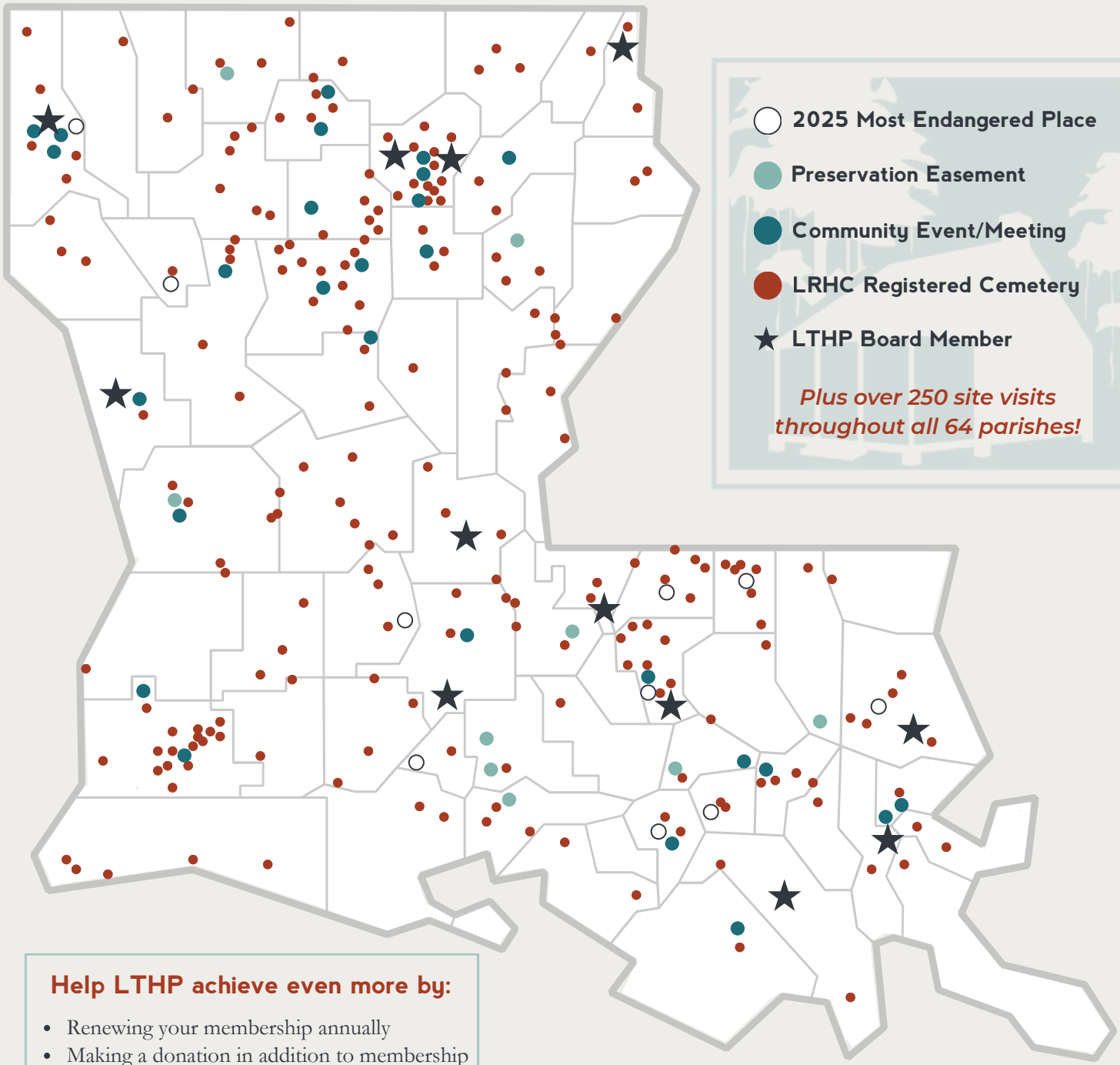
State of Preservation

LOUISIANA TRUST staff assist property owners, community leaders, & preservation-focused organizations statewide in saving Louisiana's unique architectural & cultural heritage through technical assistance, education, outreach, advocacy, & strategic alliances. An important part of the work of LTHP is understanding the factors affecting a historic site, knowing what resources may be available & advising owners about structuring a path forward to meet their preservation goals. If you know of a historic site, property owner, or community which could benefit from the services the Trust provides, please connect with us. The map represents just some of the places our work has reached over the past year ending July 31, 2025.



Help LTHP achieve even more by:

- Renewing your membership annually
- Making a donation in addition to membership
- Including LTHP in your estate plans

Contact Danielle Stein, Director of Development & Membership, at DStein@lthp.org or (225) 930-0936

On the cover: A depression in the earth, the scar of a levee break - or crevasse - along the Atchafalaya River in Melville which occurred at 6:00 AM on May 17, 1927 in St. Landry Parish.

A Lasting Legacy

FOUR YEARS of advocacy to protect the village of Wallace, a descendants community in St. John the Baptist Parish, resulted in the halting of a permit application for a grain terminal which would have been the same height as the Superdome. Located just 900 feet from the nearest residence, the industrial intrusion would have forever altered the agrarian context of the West Bank of St. John Parish & the potential Great River Road Historic District. We will remain vigilant in standing up for this & other threatened sites across the state.

We assisted the National Trust for Historic Preservation in planning of the PastForward 2024 conference in New Orleans, which saw 150% attendance over recent national preservation conferences. That was soon followed by advocacy at the state legislature's special session to save the Louisiana Historic Tax Credit Program. Earlier this summer, we met with the town council of DeQuincy, on behalf of the Grand Avenue School Alumni Association, in their efforts to acquire & reuse the school gymnasium. This building is individually listed on the National Register, for its association with Black education prior to desegregation & was damaged in Hurricanes Laura & Delta in 2020.

Through the support of a Lower Mississippi Delta Initiative Grant from the Jefferson National Parks Association & the support of an anonymous donor, we recently conducted an artist call for a marker to commemorate the 1927 Mississippi River Flood. The project will examine how this one natural disaster had lasting effects on our country's history & how measures were put in place to attempt to prevent loss on that scale from potentially happening again. Components of the commemoration will include working with communities to locate markers throughout the Lower Mississippi Delta Region as well as publicizing community events to examine how this event altered their history & growth.

In October 2024, we launched the Louisiana Register of Historic Cemeteries (LRHC), a database to increase awareness of the presence of burial grounds. The project was made possible by a Historic Preservation Fund Grant from the National Park Service, through the Louisiana Division of Historic Preservation. We began by combining lists of known historic burial sites from the LA Division of Archaeology & the Louisiana Cemetery Board, & mapped these locations with GIS. The online map makes it easy to see your location, which cemeteries are in your vicinity, & whether they have been registered or if more information & photos are needed.

In visiting hundreds of cemeteries over the past year, I've noticed how involved people appeared to have been in the betterment of their communities. Headstones are often marked with the symbols or names of their civic & social organizations. From Masonic & Eastern Star, to obscure sororities & fraternities, people were more involved in social causes generations ago. This theory is supported by the large number of neglected lodge halls across the state which are rarely, if ever, used. These were among the most architecturally significant landmarks in a community.

The Lenwood Rosenwald School was moved ten miles from its original site to Carrie Martin School in Plain Dealing. After it was no longer needed for classes, the North Bossier Civic Club relocated it to a site west of town. In April 2025, the unoccupied building was lost to fire.

The current national average of formal volunteerism is around 28%, which means 72% of the country has no commitment of time to help improve their community. In the 1960s & 70s, it was relatively common to hear of someone standing in front of a bulldozer to halt the demolition of an important historic landmark or speaking at a public meeting on behalf of saving a historic building. The bicentennial made people aware of their local history & take action to save it.

Personally, I feel that social media makes it too easy to "like" a post & move on, giving a false sense of meaningful involvement without personal investment. Preservation is not for the faint of heart & demands advocates who are strategic, committed, & dedicated to the end. It involves research & an understanding of the rules & resources available, before making plans for a sustainable future for the site. It requires people to support preservation organizations. I encourage everyone to find your preservation project & become fully committed to saving it, from digitizing photos to saving a building. I guarantee that you will gain a lasting sense of pride once the project is completed & you will forever know that you had a part in saving it for the enjoyment, knowledge, & use of future generations. Historic preservation should not be intimidating or complicated, but it does take time & effort.

After five years of research, interviews & site visits, we have mapped 91% of the locations of Louisiana's Rosenwald Schools. Out of nearly 400 schools which were constructed between 1916 & 1932, only 20 original Rosenwald School buildings (5%) have been confirmed as still standing. With the assistance of a National Park Service grant, we successfully nominated a multiple-properties listing for "Louisiana's Rosenwald School Buildings" to the National Register earlier this year, with individual listings for two additional buildings.

In November 2024, we joined alumni to dedicate a Rosenwald School Marker at the Mt. Nebo Rosenwald site in Monroe (below). This marker was provided through the generosity of the Jewish American Society for Historic Preservation.

The Rosenwald School at Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church in Claiborne Parish is one of the most intact remaining in the state. Lack of funds to maintain the structure now threatens its future.

In April, the Lenwood Rosenwald School, west of Plain Dealing in Bossier Parish, was completely destroyed by fire. This loss emphasizes the desperate need to save the remaining few Rosenwald Schools & their stories.

Remnants of Hurricanes Laura & Delta in 2020 caused panels of the metal roof at Mt. Olive Rosenwald to peel back. The congregation of Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church does not have the funds to make repairs to the school building & deterioration is quickly escalating. Without contributions to make emergency repairs, one of the most intact Rosenwald Schools in Louisiana could be lost. If someone you know would be interested in making a tax-deductible donation to save the remaining Louisiana Rosenwald School Buildings, please contact us. The entire donation amount will be used on building repairs.

It is our goal to be accessible & approachable to everyone, as we cover all 64 parishes of the state. Our board, staff, & network of partners makes efficient work of our mission to advocate, promote, & preserve historic places representing our diverse culture. All of this work is done without one dollar of tax funds & I would like to say "Thank You" to our members & donors who make our work possible.

Finally, I would like to remind everyone to look around you to identify a historic site or story which needs to be saved & shared. Get involved, before they are lost forever.

Please let us know how we can help. That's what we're here for.

Brian **bdavis@LTHP.org**

Brian M. Davis,
LTHP Executive Director

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active between August 1, 2024 - July 31, 2025

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Ask about monthly payment options for our upper level memberships

People Make the Place

ASK FIVE people what preservation means to them & you'll get five different, albeit similar, answers. Some have a direct family connection to a place, while others value the architecture of a historic structure, & still others recognize the familiarity of a place that's simply "always been there".

Each of us views preservation differently, like looking through a kaleidoscope, the slightest shift & the view changes. No matter how we define preservation, each of our perspectives likely has something in common: people. Whether its the people who built a place, the people who lived or worked in a place, or the people who loved, learned, or hurt in a place, the commonality in our collective views is that the people make the place.

When you add the human element to preservation, you start to develop a connection with a place & understand that it's so much more than "saving an old building", it's about preserving the culture, stories, & memories (both good & bad) that a place holds & passing those lessons down to future generations. We realize the *place* wouldn't matter quite as much without the *people* that built it & were built by it.

Preservation is everyone's responsibility. No one person, organization, or entity can do it all. It takes a collective, collaborative, & intentional community effort to save our irreplaceable places, no matter where your place may be.

Our members & donors are the cornerstone of our organization, the foundational element which our work is built upon. Without your support - whether financial, advocacy, or a beacon calling attention to preservation needs across the state - the work of the Trust would be in vain without you, the people that make these irreplaceable places matter. No amount of effort or contribution is too small, every drop in the bucket is an incremental & sustainable step in the right direction, so keep attending Rambles, keep fighting for the historic places in your community that you value, keep telling your friends & family about our mission & encourage them to join our efforts, & keep in touch - let us know how we can better serve the needs of the preservation community.

The Louisiana Trust is on a trajectory of growth & development because of people, like you, who believe that saving our built & cultural heritage is the surest way to ensure we retain our unique identity into the future. Thank you for being a partner in preservation.

Danielle D. Stein,
Director of Development & Membership

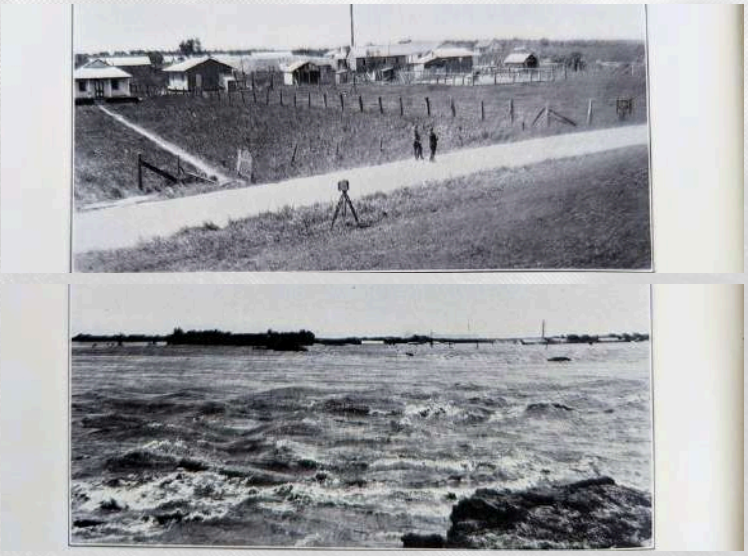
After the Waters Receded: Remembering the Great Flood of 1927 & its Legacy

THE GREAT Flood of 1927 impacted not only America's physical landscape but also its social, political, cultural, & economic fabric. The flood was the culmination of heavy rainfall that persisted from August 1926 into the spring of 1927. It caused damage across several states, inundating over twenty thousand square miles throughout the Mississippi River Valley. Hundreds of thousands of people were displaced from their homes while hundreds perished - the exact number is unknown. The following year, Congress passed what became known as the Flood Control Act of 1928, authorizing the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to create the Mississippi Rivers & Tributaries Project. These efforts addressed the shortcomings of the "levees only"[1] policy that was not enough to stop the strength of the Mississippi River in 1927.[2]

The 1927 flood is situated within a long history of devastating environmental disasters. I use the term *environmental* rather than *natural* to describe the disaster, in agreement with historian Richard M. Mizelle, Jr., who argues that *environmental disaster* "is a broader term that encapsulates the totality of a flood event including both the human & nonhuman world".[3] Similarly, the late scholar Clyde Woods, who studied & wrote extensively about the Mississippi Delta & New Orleans, noted that Hurricane Katrina was considered "both the worst natural & man-made disaster in U.S. history".[4] This approach recognizes not only the natural elements of disaster but also how systems & structures (& the people within them) interact with or respond to it. It also takes into account the historical, social, & political contexts of a place that existed before the disaster. Historically, we have seen, read, &/or witnessed how these environmental disasters & the governmental response at the local, regional, & federal levels unfolded, revealing longer histories about "the politics of place"[5] through the lenses of race, class, & socioeconomics.

For example, during the 1927 flood, St. Bernard & Plaquemines parishes were flooded in order to "save" or prevent the destruction of New Orleans, considered one of the most economically important cities in the South. On April 15, city officials in New Orleans created The Citizens Flood Relief Committee (CFRC), which was mostly made up of the city's business elite. The CFRC proposed a plan to the Mississippi River Commission (MRC), Louisiana governor Oramel Simpson, President Coolidge, Herbert Hoover (Secretary of Commerce), Dwight Davis (Secretary of War), & the Corps of Engineers. This plan involved dynamiting the Poydras levee at Caernarvon, creating an artificial crevasse[6] that would allow floodwaters to flow into St. Bernard & Plaquemines. Residents of these parishes were told that their displacement would be temporary & were given only a few days to evacuate. The National Guard evacuated thousands of residents. Those who had no place to go were taken to the International Trade Exchange Building in New Orleans where they were provided accommodations on a racially segregated basis.[7] However, some residents stayed behind & some armed themselves & patrolled the levee.

National newspapers covering the flood recognized & reported on what this devastation meant for these communities. One paper noted that many of the parishes' residents were of Spanish & French ancestry & have lived "where their fathers before them dwelt for 200 years".[8] Another article remarked that the primary industries of farming, fishing, & trapping would continue to suffer years after the flooding.[9] Residents were not compensated adequately (if at all) as promised. Shortly after flooding the downriver parishes, the Glasscock levee on the Mississippi River's west bank broke, relieving pressure from New Orleans's levees.[10] The city's levees held & its business interests were protected. The creation of the Caernarvon Crevasse was determined to be unnecessary, yet within the span of a few days, lives were forever changed & the landscape forever altered.



Behind the levee at Caernarvon, near New Orleans, just before the levee was blown up with dynamite (top). The same spot, twenty-four hours later (bottom).

Crevasses continue to bear witness to the 1927 flood. They represent more than just geographic markers on the Mississippi Delta's regional landscape. They are also historical markers that tell a fuller history of the Great Flood. They are physical remnants of its legacy. However, much of the flood's history is not visible on the present-day landscape, long after the floodwaters receded. Historic preservation as a practice typically involves the preservation of physical sites & objects; however, the sites, spaces, & stories no longer visible on the landscape are also part of this history. The Great Flood Project aims to make these stories & sites more accessible & visible.

The Great Flood Project: Background & Updates

The Great Flood Project is a centennial program examining the history of the 1927 flood & its impact on the Delta region. The project engages local communities & partners to share their stories through historical markers, programs, events, & other educational resources. As part of the project, we are building a website that will serve as a digital archive for this history, including primary sources for communities to share their own historical photos & documents to assist in developing a robust repository. We will also distribute a monthly Great Flood e-newsletter - you can join the mailing list at LTHP.org.

We hope that this project will be developed from, by, & *through* community. We want to know how your community was impacted by the flood & to hear stories from home. We cannot do this work without you - please continue reading to see the various ways that you & your community can become involved in the Great Flood centennial.

Historical Markers

We are actively researching sites that will become part of a trail dedicated to the commemoration of the 1927 Great Flood. Communities who are interested in participating will help choose a location for the marker & will raise/provide funds for its fabrication & installation. As a community member or organization, you may also sponsor or donate to a site's historical marker.

Artist Joel Breaux designed the Great Flood Project's historical marker, to be replicated & installed on sites throughout the Mississippi Delta Region bearing historical significance to the 1927 flood. His innovative design uses rainwater to create galvanic reactions, producing a visual reminder of the depth of floodwaters. The marker contains three elements: a gauge marking the floodwater's depth; a compass at the base for regional historical facts & directional information related to impacted sites in the area; & "markers" that will be adjacent to the structure, resonating the depth of area floodwaters.

Programs/Events

If you are a community member or organization who plans to host or facilitate an educational program or event related to the 1927 flood, please let us know! We will be mapping the various sites & events on our website. These can include larger programs such as festivals & panel discussions as well as book clubs, art exhibits, etc.

Please reach out to kmccullum@lthp.org to learn more about how to participate &/or be involved in the Great Flood Project. We look forward to hearing from you!

Kristan L. McCullum, Ph.D.
Project Manager,
The Great Flood Project

[1] A levee is an embankment or barrier alongside a river or body of water to prevent flooding. It can be natural or artificial.
[2] Jim Bradshaw, "Great Flood of 1927," *64 Parishes*, last updated February 19, 2024, https://64parishes.org/entry/great-flood-of-1927. For more information on the "levees only" policy, see Richard M. Mizelle, Jr., *Backwater Blues: The Mississippi Flood of 1927 in the African American Imagination* (University of Minnesota Press, 2014).
[3] Mizelle, Jr., *Backwater Blues*, 23.
[4] Clyde Woods, "Introduction: Katrina's World: Blues, Bourbon, & the Return to the Source," in *In the Wake of Hurricane Katrina: New Paradigms & Social Visions* (The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010), 1.
[5] See Katherine McKittrick & Clyde Woods, *Black Geographies & the Politics of Place* (Between the Lines Press, 2007).
[6] A crevasse is a cut, break, or gap in the levee or riverbank. It can be natural or artificial.
[7] See John M. Barry, *Rising Tide: The Great Mississippi Flood of 1927 & How it Changed America* (Touchstone of Simon & Schuster, 1997).
[8] "Thousands Desert Region Doomed to Save New Orleans," *The Philadelphia Inquirer* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania), April 28, 1927, p. 6.
[9] "Fight to Protect Crescent City," *The Journal Times* (Racine, Wisconsin), April 27, 1927, p. 13.
[10] Barry, *Rising Tide.*

Linseed Paint: An All-Natural Solution for Historic Preservation

BY Michiel Brouns | *PHOTOS BY* Brouns & Co LLC

WHEN IT comes to preserving Louisiana's architectural heritage, the materials we use matter just as much as the craftsmanship. Among the growing array of conservation-friendly products available to historic property stewards, linseed oil paint stands out - not as a modern invention, but as a time-tested, all-natural finish that offers superior protection & longevity, especially in the face of Louisiana's humid subtropical climate.

Unlike conventional paints, which create a film that sits on the surface of the wood, linseed oil paint works differently. Made entirely from natural ingredients - boiled linseed oil, natural pigments, & a small amount of natural mineral dryers - it penetrates deeply into the wood substrate. This absorption creates a breathable, water-resistant barrier that is remarkably effective at repelling moisture while allowing trapped humidity inside the wood to escape. This characteristic is called wicking.

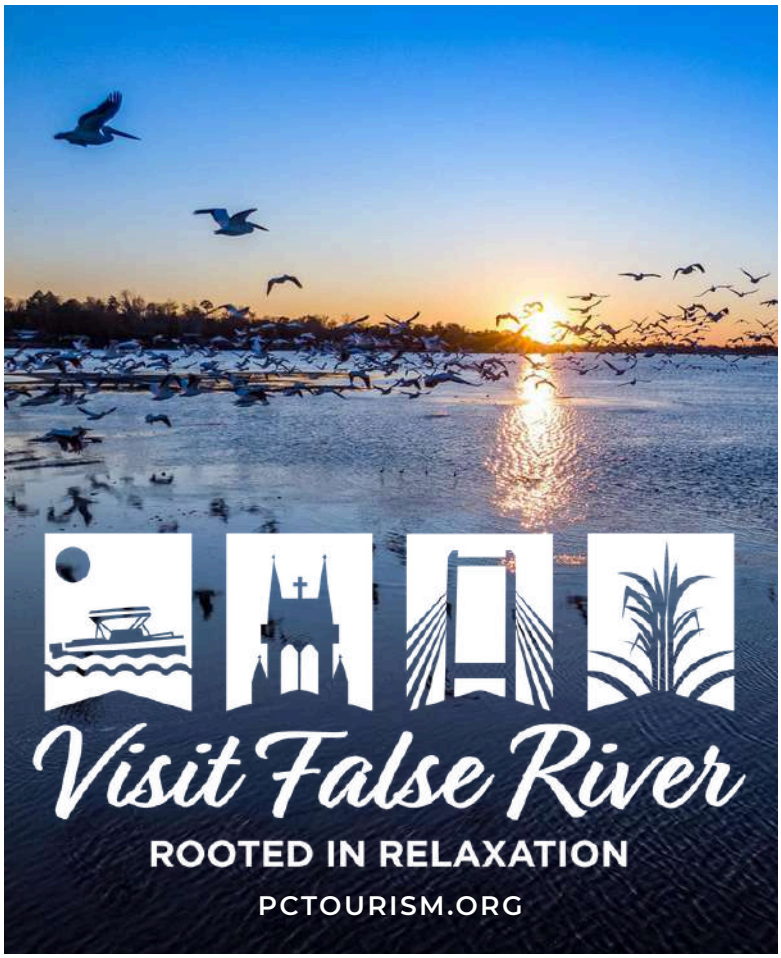
This unique quality makes linseed paint similar in function to Gore-Tex: it keeps external water out but lets internal vapors pass through. The result? A painted surface that doesn't blister, crack, or trap moisture beneath the surface. By contrast, modern synthetic paints form a plastic-like coating that can trap water within the wood. Over time, this leads to bubbling, peeling, & ultimately, rot - especially where joints & end grains are exposed. In a region like Louisiana, where temperature swings & humidity levels are high, breathability is not just desirable, it's essential.

This is particularly relevant for preservationists working with original joinery, sash windows, weatherboards, or decorative elements on historic buildings. Applying linseed paint means you're nourishing the timber while protecting it. It doesn't crack or flake but instead fades gracefully over time, making maintenance straightforward & economical: just clean & reapply a single coat, with no sanding or stripping required.

Linseed paint also brings beauty in abundance. The pigment-rich formula results in a velvety, matte finish that subtly shifts with the light - ideal for historic façades. The color palette, while grounded in historic tones, also includes bolder traditional colors that reflect the architectural styles of the American South. From earthy ochres & colonial reds to coastal blues & soft sage greens, these shades complement both French Creole cottages & early 20th-century Craftsman bungalows.

Previously only available in Europe, Brouns & Co linseed paint is now distributed directly in the United States, with stock held in a warehouse in New Hampshire. Orders ship nationwide via the dedicated US website: LinseedOilPaint.com. This local availability means that architects, contractors, & homeowners across Louisiana can now access this premium product with ease - no need for costly imports or long lead times - & LTHP members can now receive an exclusive discount on all paint & primer website orders.

Whether you're repainting a historic shotgun house in New Orleans or restoring a historic outbuilding in Natchitoches, linseed paint offers a future-proof finish rooted in the past. It's not just a paint - it's a preservation philosophy in a can.



Established in 1990, Preservation Alliance of Lafayette's mission is to increase citizen awareness, appreciation, & participation in the preservation of historic treasures & the cultural characteristics of Lafayette, Louisiana.

PreservingLafayette.org

MKS

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2025 Louisiana Preservation Awards

EACH YEAR, the Louisiana Trust for Historic Preservation honors leaders throughout the state who are championing the cause of historic preservation. Their efforts are impactful in helping to save historic places as well as build pride & engagement in their communities.

Amy Stegall, Ruston

Sue Turner Preservationist of the Year Award

Recognizes the efforts of an individual that made a significant contribution to historic preservation in Louisiana.

In her time as the Ruston Main Street Director, Cultural District liaison, & the City's Community Coordinator, Amy was instrumental in the growth of Downtown Ruston while advocating for the preservation of its historic assets & connecting property owners of historic buildings to financial incentives to spur the restoration & development of mixed-use & commercial spaces. Through collaborative efforts, she successfully championed for increased funding for Louisiana Main Street & the statewide historic downtowns they represent. Amy's passion & dedication for her community has helped Downtown Ruston earn state & national recognition for its revitalization efforts & commitment to historic preservation.

Donna & Rick Richard, Lake Charles

Winnie Byrd Preservationist Extraordinaire Award

Recognizes an individual or individuals who have made a lasting impact to the historic resources of Louisiana through a body of work.

Donna & Rick Richard have demonstrated their commitment to historic preservation by taking structures that embody the spirit & character of Lake Charles, repurposing & promoting each as treasures to the southwest Louisiana region. Their continuous leadership on a local & state level encourages future preservation & expansion of Lake Charles' historic inventory. They continue to make significant investments of time, talent, & money into saving landmarks like the Calcasieu National Bank Building & numerous others. Additional historic assets are being identified for preservation with the adoption of the new Ryan Street Historic District, which likely would not have happened if not for the investment of the Richards.

Huey P. Long Fieldhouse
Stewardship Award

Recognizes exemplary historic preservation, restoration, rehabilitation, & reconstruction projects that adhere to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards.

Constructed in 1932, the fieldhouse served as a campus gathering place for socializing, events, & recreational sports. The design team of Baton Rouge-based RHH Architects & Tipton Associates investigated the original construction & worked with restoration contractors to properly remediate & restore architectural & decorative elements to lend the aura of the 1930's & 40's upon entering the building.

Lincoln Avenue Communities
Stewardship Award

Recognizes exemplary historic preservation, restoration, rehabilitation, & reconstruction projects that adhere to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards.

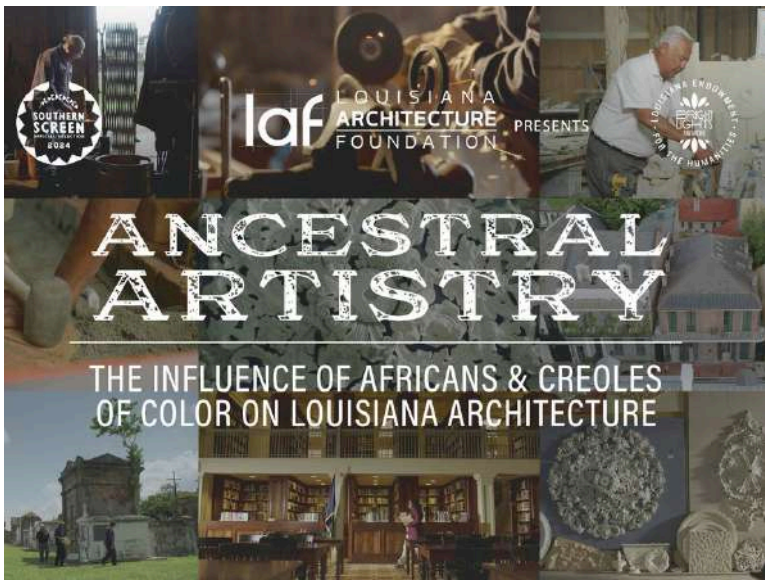
Lincoln Avenue Communities completed a substantial renovation of Tivoli Place, a 163-unit affordable housing community serving elderly residents in the heart of New Orleans, aimed at increasing quality of life, enhancing the diversity & quality of New Orleans's housing inventory, & fortifying future affordability in the city. Strategically layering multiple sources of financing, including tax credits & HUD financing, allowed LAC to develop a master lease structure for the project to obtain both federal & state historic tax credits as well as federal low-income housing tax credits.

LAC team including partners from JP Morgan Chase, Stonehenge Capital, New Orleans City Council , Capital One, Finance New Orleans, Boston Financial, Heritage Consulting Group, & the City of New Orleans pictured in front of the restored Conrad Albrizio mural in the Tivoli Place lobby.

Ancestral Artistry, Louisiana Architecture Foundation
Louisiana Heritage Media Award

Recognizes outstanding works published or produced within the last two years on Louisiana historic preservation themes, topics, issues, projects, or local history & architecture.

"Ancestral Artistry" is the latest documentary film from the Louisiana Architecture Foundation & explores the critical role Africans & Creoles of Color played in defining Louisiana's architecture over the past four hundred years. It follows members of the New Orleans Master Crafts Guild as they use their crafts in masonry, blacksmith, & plaster to restore a society tomb. The film highlights the personal attachment to traditional trades which many families have & the importance of passing along this knowledge to future generations. Visit LouisianaArchitecture.org to learn more.



Pointe Coupee Historical Society
Organizational Excellence Award

Recognizes an organization that successfully leveraged assets to provide greater cultural value to its region within the state such as a heritage tourism project or restoration/preservation effort such as adaptive reuse.

The Pointe Coupee Historical Society has demonstrated an outstanding commitment to historic preservation through its ongoing initiatives centered around the preservation & adaptive reuse of the historic Poydras High School, securing critical funding for preservation efforts & transforming the space into a vibrant hub of community engagement while honoring the building's storied past. Their work not only safeguards the past but also ensures that the history of Pointe Coupee Parish remains a living, celebrated part of the present & future.

Erica Fox, Lafayette
Diverse Heritage Award

Recognizing achievements in the promotion & preservation of Louisiana's multicultural or underserved heritage.

Erica is the founder of Maison Creole de Freetown, Lafayette's first & only African American history museum & cultural center & home to Attakapas Collective, a BIPOC collaborative co-op of traditional & folk artisans of color. She contributed to Lafayette's newest African American heritage trail, creating an interactive history map for the Freetown neighborhood, a nationally registered historic district & descendant community. Erica is a pillar within the Lafayette community for preservation of the diverse voices within Louisiana.

Darryl Reeves, New Orleans
Living Trades Award

Recognizes individuals that have continued to use a traditional technique or method in construction, considered both artistic in nature & rare in today's construction practices, to achieve authenticity in the preservation, restoration, or reconstruction of historic resources in Louisiana.

Darryl Reeves is owner of Andrews Welding & Blacksmith Shop in the Seventh Ward of New Orleans. One of the most important tools he uses is the experience & knowledge of two previous generations of his family in the blacksmith & metalworking trades. In 2012, he co-founded the New Orleans Master Crafts Guild with John Hankins & Jeff Poree, Master Plasterer & winner of the 2024 Living Trades Award.

Winnsboro Main Street
Main Street Award

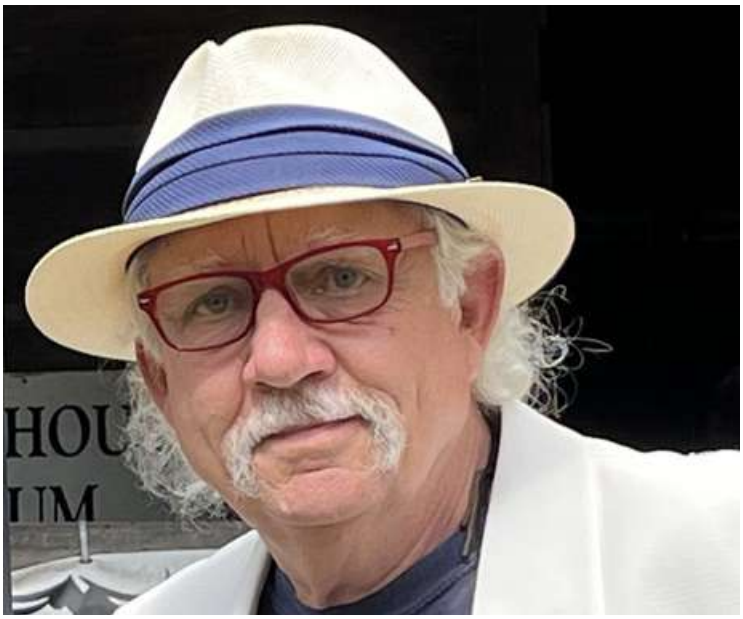
Recognizes a Main Street community that exemplifies the strategic use of creativity, historic preservation, &/or culture to build a climate for cultural expression, improve quality of life, enhance existing assets, & strengthen economic opportunity while representing the quality of the area.

A 2025 Main Street America® Nationally Accredited program, Winnsboro Main Street has created an environment for collaborative growth, engaging the community through various cultural events, & has championed the vital role of the Main Street program in historic preservation & economic development. One of six statewide participants in the Thriving Communities program, they will receive technical assistance over the next 2+ years to drive local infrastructure development.

Rick Godley, Lincoln Parish Museum & Historical Society
Leadership Award

Recognizes an individual that is making or has made a significant contribution to the advocacy &/or promotion of historic preservation or the development of his or her cultural discipline in a community, region, or state.

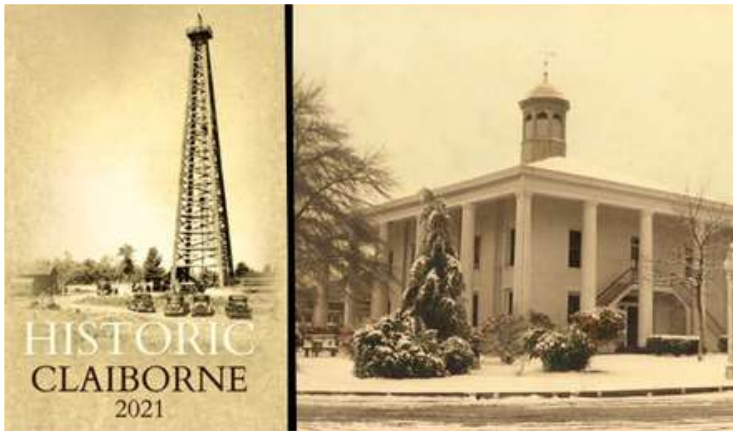
As Director of the Lincoln Parish Museum & Historical Society, Rick has been instrumental in the continued growth of the organization, creating the Lincoln Legacy Award to honor influential community members, establishing the Blueseum Fest to showcase local blues musicians, & generating a twenty-five percent increase in donor support.



Claiborne Parish Library
Education Award

Recognizes an individual or organization that, through educational efforts, helped broaden appreciation for the importance of historic preservation in Louisiana.

Since 2020, the Claiborne Parish Library has hosted local researchers to document the parish's history, publishing 10 books, including an annual series, "Historic Claiborne", capturing stories from local authors. The Library established a free, online database of historic documents & photographs, making 20,000+ images of local history available to the public after decades of being stored away & inaccessible. Historical markers of notable people & places have been erected across Claiborne Parish through the Library's extensive research & fundraising efforts.



Furniture That You Can Live In

JEAN BECNEL believes in preservation: of historic buildings & the trade he has skillfully honed to accomplish such. Owner of Architectural Preservation, LLC, a South Louisiana-based historic preservation & restoration construction company, Becnel & his team specialize in heavy timber construction & other methods commonly found in Louisiana buildings of the 18th & 19th centuries & were the 2021 recipient of the Trust's Living Trades Award. He recently sat down with LTHP Executive Director, Brian Davis, to discuss his humble beginnings & offer advice to the next generation of traditional tradespeople.

Can you share how you got your start?

Basically, I was a furniture guy & learned the craft from a fourth-generation furniture maker. He grew up in the traditional culture where the person who built your home a lot of times, also built your furniture. He wasn't just a furniture guy - he was a home builder & could build cisterns & outbuildings, too. I asked if I could apprentice with him because I had moved next door. He said, "Sure, but you're going to learn the way I learned", & he taught me with traditional hand tools. The experience completely shaped my life & set me on a path of a lifelong career.

So, what age were you when you started learning the craft?

I was in my late teen years - like, 16 or 17. It wasn't long after he introduced me to the tools that he felt he could trust me not to hurt myself with. I started going to him & saying, "This is what I want to build." He would help me through it & we never really prepared drawings. It was really building from the materials that were available, since I could use anything that was in the shop. So, the table leg might be dictated by how long the stock I can get, & the width & the height of the piece was the width of the board, times two.

A few years later, I worked at Evergreen Plantation in St. John the Baptist Parish. Ms. Jane Boddie hired me to focus on lawn care & general maintenance. Whenever there was a restoration project going on, I asked lots of questions. That's where I learned about the importance of lime mortar, limewash, & other traditional finishes.

I eventually moved to St. Louis to work for a developer, which was more along the lines with my college degree in business & administration finance. I was always involved in woodworking in a trade in some fashion, never saw myself as a tradesman. It was always a part-time thing that I could make a few dollars to make rent for the month & it was also a creative outlet for me.

I got completely away from it for a couple of years & didn't do any woodworking at all. I really missed it. I rented a little building, started up a shop, got all the equipment [&] tools. I quickly found out that I didn't miss making the furniture as a business so much as I missed the *process* of making the furniture.

I built some really cool stuff for the shop but with power tools, because that's the direction everything goes for efficiency. I realized that many of those pieces were gimmicky compared to what I had done in the past. Those pieces made with power tools didn't have the same soul as ones I'd make with hand tools. I realized that I missed the actual hands-on trade, like hand cutting a dovetail.

How did you make the shift from furniture to historic buildings?

I was looking for something else & was invited to a conference at the LSU Rural Life Museum [which] wasn't what I expected but it really impressed me. I got to meet the late director, David Floyd, the first time I was there. I told him, "You have a lot of hand tools. I'm not going to call myself an expert but I know a lot about these & some of your stuff's mislabeled. I'd really like to help you with your collections to get things labeled correctly". We scheduled a day for me to sort through boxes & show him what I knew. I did that a couple times & come to find out, that was his way of seeing if I knew what I was talking about. After that, he started asking me to do some work around the museum. That volunteer opportunity at the Rural Life Museum turned into a pivotal moment in my career, when I realized that historic houses were big pieces of furniture that you can live in.

Your experience was being fostered by a traditional tradesman & learning through that internship. What would you say to somebody who is in their teens or early 20s looking for a possible career in traditional trades?

It is both the easiest time to do it & the hardest time to do it. And I say that because there are so few people to teach it now. But this is the information age & it is so easy to go online. You can literally sit & watch YouTube videos of someone doing something [but] it's not the same as having somebody to critique you as you do it. It's just so easy to find information but it takes drive & dedication on your part. You can't just say "I want to do it" & not actually put in the work. I have five sons that play baseball. They can want to play Major League Baseball all day long but there's no doing it unless you put in the work & build that skill set to the level required to make it.

When I hire someone to work for me, I'm looking for a person who is going to one day be my competition. I want the assistant who is so good & takes so much pride in their work that they can branch off on their own & be my competition. I say that because ultimately, we need more tradespeople.

If you're a young person & you want a career in traditional trades, take the shop classes at school if they're offered. If they're not, look for woodworking clubs in your area. There's one in Baton Rouge that a few students have asked me about. Bug the heck out of your parents, let them know that you have a real interest. I will support my kids in any kind of interest that they have if they show me that they're actually passionate about doing it. If you're really putting the effort in & you really want to do it, that's something that's noticeable.

The best advice for somebody looking to get started - just put yourself out there & make connections. I love having interns & passing on the traditional skills that were shared with me. I had an intern from LSU who saw some timber work we were doing over there for Harvest Days. She called me up & said, "I want to intern with you". Between semesters she learned how to reglaze windows & how to troubleshoot some of the timber framing.

We appreciate you taking the time to share some insights into the world of traditional trades. Do you have any closing thoughts on the industry?

One big challenge historic preservation faces is that many owners don't understand that there are historic preservation contractors like [myself]. They get several estimates for the job but they're not comparing apples to apples. Many owners don't educate themselves on why hiring a tradesperson should be more expensive but they also haven't been given an honest & knowledgeable estimate of what it should really cost. In the long run, hiring the cheaper/faster general contractor who doesn't know the correct materials & methods of working with a historic building can cause bigger & more costly repairs down the road. I wish more owners of historic buildings would seek out a qualified preservation contractor. Even if they don't end up using them, they are going to teach you something about your building.

Also, if a contractor says they've done something historic - check them out & ask for references. Just because they've worked on a historic building doesn't mean they knew what they were doing or used the correct materials to make the job last.

A personal goal of mine is to invite more architects & students to our job sites, to foster better understanding of how trades work better together. It's important for us to understand what each other's job is & how best to communicate back & forth. The more we can understand each other, the needs of the client & the materials we work with, the better the end product will be for everyone involved & ultimately, for the building.

2025 Louisiana's Most Endangered Places

SINCE 1999, the Louisiana Trust has recognized & advocated to save threatened historic sites across the state through its catalog of Most Endangered Places, calling attention to places that embody our cultural heritage & are in jeopardy of being lost. Over 200 sites have been recognized in the Louisiana MEP listings, with over 50 sites having been saved & dozens currently being restored & renovated. Sites placed on the list remain until the threat of loss is resolved. Nominations are taken from the public throughout the year & may be made by visiting LTHP.org.

Clinton High School*

East Feliciana Parish | 1903

Clinton's two-story wooden schoolhouse was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2005 because of its importance as a milestone in the history of education in East Feliciana Parish. Before this building was constructed, parents hired private tutors, sent their children off to boarding schools, or banded together to provide a one-room schoolhouse in their vicinity. The opening of the Clinton school meant that classes were divided by education level & additional teachers could be hired to provide a well-rounded education for white students during this time of segregation. Classes were taught in this building until a larger school opened nearby in 1938.

Now owned by the East Feliciana Parish Police Jury, demolition of the building has been discussed. Since the school is contributing to the National Register, it is eligible for state historic tax credits, which could save 35 percent of the expense. Louisiana Commercial Historic Tax Credits are transferable, so non-profit organizations, churches, school boards, & municipalities like the police jury can sell the credits after the rehabilitation has been completed & certified.

Waddell A-Truss Railroad Bridge*

Caddo Parish | 1896, 1926

According to its 2005 listing to the National Register of Historic Places, Shreveport's A-Truss Railroad Bridge was first constructed in the 1890s over the Arkansas River in Oklahoma. The bridge & deck trusses were reassembled over Twelve Mile Bayou in downtown Shreveport in 1926 for use by the Kansas City Southern Railroad. The bridge design provided an economical solution for medium-range spans & was used until 1991, when that section of railroad was discontinued. Shreveport's Waddell A-Truss Bridge is one of only two which remain in the country, with the other one located south of St. Louis, Missouri. In February 1992, the bridge was donated to the City of Shreveport instead of being sold for scrap. Engineering & feasibility studies were recently completed for rehabilitation of the structure & the City of Shreveport is developing renderings & signage for the site. Repairs are needed to convert this industrial landmark from rail lines to decking which may be safely used by pedestrians & cyclists.

**Property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places*

Sully-Gilbert Residence

St. Tammany Parish | 1834

Col. Thomas Sully constructed the original portion of the house with four rooms separated by a wide hallway facing the Bogue Falaya River. In 1889, the property became the summer residence for New Orleans Mayor, Walter C. Flower, & his family. It later sold to New Orleans cotton broker, Leon Gilbert, who raised the cottage & incorporated usable space on the ground level. In recent years, it has served as a restaurant & bed & breakfast venue. In February 2024, the property was seized & went into foreclosure. There is uncertainty on how soon the property title can be resolved & the future of this historic site is unknown.

Graugnard Farms Plantation*

St. James Parish | c. 1819

Graugnard Farms Plantation, also known historically as Bon Secours Plantation, is a rare example of large-scale Creole architecture in St. James Parish, with a French pavilion hipped roof featuring flared eaves. When the farmland was sold for industrial development, the owner negotiated to have the house moved out of the way so it could eventually be relocated & saved. Due to shifts in the river course & levee setbacks, the house has been moved three times over the past two centuries. The property was purchased by the Graugnard Family in 1886 & served as their home for the next 130 years. A new location for the Graugnard House has been located & talks are underway with structural movers who can complete the job.

Paul Breaux Middle School

Lafayette Parish | 1896

The institution of Paul Breaux School dates back to 1896, following the Plessy vs. Ferguson Supreme Court Decision which called for "separate but equal" facilities for whites & blacks. Starting as an elementary school, the program began expanding in 1926 to offer a high school education for students by adding a higher grade level each year. In 1953, a walkout was held by 688 black students to protest the poor quality of the facilities & education they were receiving. After continued pressure on the school board, improvements & additions to Paul Breaux High School were made. Today, the community has concerns that removal of programs at Paul Breaux could shift the tide toward consolidation & closure of the campus.

Old St. Helena Parish Jail*

St. Helena Parish | 1855

This unassuming red brick jail served St. Helena Parish until the current courthouse was completed in 1937 as part of the Works Progress Administration (WPA) during the Great Depression. Efforts to save the building go back at least to the early 1970s, when street fairs were held to raise funds for its rehabilitation. The St. Helena Historical Association operated a museum & meeting place in the building for a number of years. It was added to the National Register of Historic Places for its architectural merit in 1980 as a rare example of 19th century jail. The location of former cells is evident on the cement floor. Today, the building is used for storage & is in need of repairs so it may return to an active role in the community of Greensburg.

Assumption Lodge No. 307

Assumption Parish | 1911

The cornerstone of the Assumption Lodge No. 307 was laid on July 1, 1911, according to the ancient ceremonies of the fraternity. The building featured three offices on the ground level, an assembly hall on the second floor, & a Masonic lodge room on the top level. Emile Sundbery, a Swedish immigrant & lumber company executive, served as the first Worshipful Master of the lodge. He would later serve as state senator & Master of the Louisiana Grand Lodge. In 1954, the lodge moved to Thibodaux in Lafourche Parish. The name was changed to Walter I. Lanier Lodge No. 307 in 1979, to honor a lodge secretary who served for over thirty years. Recent storms have damaged the roof & removed the pressed metal cornice.

Coushatta Bank Building*

Red River Parish | 1899

J.C. Pugh established the Bank of Coushatta in 1891 to serve the needs of this port town on the Red River. Bids were opened in March 1899 for this two-story brick building, according to plans drawn by "a prominent Shreveport architect". The law offices of Nettles & Carter were located above the bank soon after the building was completed. An April 1900 article mentions that The Oak Leaf Club was allowed to use the office for regular meetings. This ladies social club was active in the establishment of public libraries, parks, public beautification projects, & the women's suffrage movement. The building was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1983 based on its architectural character.

Bank of Coushatta in 1983 (photo by Robin Kuckyr, LA SHPO) & in 2016.

Tiger Town Commercial Buildings

East Baton Rouge Parish | 1920s - 1950s

The current campus of Louisiana State University was formally dedicated on April 30, 1926. In recent years, new development has filled the area outside the North Gates of campus, along Chimes Street & Highland Road. Known as "Tiger Town", the area has played an integral role in the social life & collective histories of LSU students & faculty for generations. In 2024, the Art Deco styled Kean's Apartment Building was added to the National Register of Historic Places for its architectural character as well as its association with writers who won a total of nine Pulitzer Prizes. The area is under considerable risk of being demolished & replaced by new development. If Tiger Town's historic commercial buildings are lost, the sense of place & memories of life on campus will forever be erased.

Evangeline Bank & Trust Co.*

Evangeline Parish | 1914

Evangeline Parish was created on January 1, 1911 out of the lands of western St. Landry Parish. By December of that year, The Bank of Ville Platte dissolved & established a new charter as Evangeline Bank & Trust Company. In April 1913, the bank's board of directors authorized construction of a two-story bank building. A limit was set of $18,000 for purchase of the site & construction of the bank, with an additional cap of $4,000 for furniture & fixtures. George G. Scallan, architect & contractor from Alexandria, completed construction in May 1914. It served as a bank until 1976 when it was purchased by the city & used as Ville Platte City Hall from 1978 to 2004. The building was later used by the Ville Platte Boys & Girls Club & in recent years has remained vacant.

Louisiana's Most Endangered Places Updates

Main Street Homer received several grants to convert the Pan-Am Filling Station into a farmer's market. The exterior of the building has been completed, with weekly markets offering fresh, local produce. The site will be featured on our Fall 2025 Ramble tour of Homer & Claiborne Parish. Find details & registration at LTHP.org.

LTHP received a National Park Service grant to nominate the Sikes High School (Winn), the Young Men's Benevolent Hall in Shrewsbury (Jefferson), & a commercial district for Dubach (Lincoln) to the National Register of Historic Places. Designation could make the sites eligible for state historic tax credits for rehabilitation.

Thanks to an anonymous donor, LTHP was able to assist with the stabilization of the 1916 Mooringsport Masonic Lodge (NR). The scope included a new roof, repointing of masonry, & painting of the portico & fascia. The next phase will include reconditioning the wood windows & developing plans for interior rehabilitation.

Saving the B'nai Zion Temple

BY Eric Hess, Director & Founder of Sanctuary Arts School

SANCTUARY ARTS School, a nonprofit organization in Shreveport, Louisiana has announced a capital campaign to raise the funds needed to save & restore the historic B'nai Zion Temple, located in Shreveport Common, & turn it into a national arts school.

The historic Beaux-Arts temple at 802 Common Street was dedicated on October 22, 1915 & was the second home of the B'Nai Zion congregation, a Reform Jewish congregation, which has been active in Shreveport since 1861. The B'Nai Zion Temple served as the congregation's spiritual home for forty years. As the Jewish community decreased over time, the building was sold to the Knights of Columbus organization & the congregation moved to its new mid-century modern synagogue in the suburbs of Shreveport.

Approximately 40 years ago, a family foundation purchased the building with the promise to restore it but, unfortunately, it fell into disrepair & has sat vacant since. Sanctuary Arts School purchased the building in 2021 & the community has rallied to ensure it is saved & restored but the years of neglect have left extensive damage to the roof, plaster, & wood floors. Luckily, the stained glass windows have minor damage & are able to be restored.

In 1994, the Temple was added to the National Register of Historic Places as one of only ten grand Beaux-Arts buildings still standing in Louisiana. With its monumental front steps, four large Corinthian columns, & two-story stained glass windows, the building is considered one of the finest examples of the Beaux-Arts architecture style in the state. It was added to the Louisiana Trust for Historic Preservation's list of Most Endangered Places in 2011. After decades of blight, the nationally award-winning revitalization effort in Shreveport Common has transformed the area to an "uncommon" creative cultural community. "Saving this iconic building at the entrance to downtown is extremely important for our community & is a huge step in advancing the revitalization of the historic area", says Wendy Benscoter, Executive Director of Shreveport Common, a historic nine block area at the eastern edge of the city's oldest neighborhood. "That the owners will preserve the architecture, including the beautiful stained glass windows is paramount. That they will move their successful glass studios & award-winning nonprofit to the Shreveport Common arts & cultural neighborhood is a win for everyone", she added.

American architect, Edward Fairfax Neild Sr., best known for designing the Harry S. Truman Presidential Library in Independence, Missouri, designed the Temple. Neild is credited with the designs of Shreveport's Scottish Rite Cathedral, the Louisiana State Exhibit Building, & the Strand Theatre.

A $402,000 HUD Facilities grant was awarded to Sanctuary Arts School in 2024 to secure the building by repairing & painting the windows, making repairs to the roof to prevent further damage from water intrusion, & drain & seal the basement, which has been flooded for over 40 years. These repairs are almost completed & the school is moving into phase two with its capital campaign. It is estimated that the cost for the restoration will be approximately 7 million dollars.

Sanctuary Arts School has hired New Orleans architect John Williams & Shreveport architects Jeff Spike & Mischa Farrell to design the plans for the new national arts school, which will occupy the building in the future. The plan is to create a world-class arts school similar to Penland School of Craft in North Carolina. World-renowned artists from across the globe will come to Shreveport to teach intensive art courses.

The building will house film, painting, glass, photography, & culinary studios & associated programs with the main sanctuary serving as a multipurpose space, available for public & private events. A 900 square foot art gallery, Jewish research center, a commercial kitchen, & coffee shop will round out the space.

It is estimated the facility will employee over 60 artists, attract 4,000 visitors annually, & have a four million dollar yearly impact on the local economy. The school will provide free arts programming to underserved communities & will support artists in residence, visiting artists, interns, & emerging artists.

To donate or to learn more, visit SanctuaryArtsSchool.org or call (504) 390-4377. A fund has also been set up with the Community Foundation of Northwest Louisiana. They can be reached at (318) 221-0582.

SAVE THE DATES

Fall 2025 Ramble
Oct. 4 | Homer & Claiborne Parish

Spring 2026 Ramble
Feb. 28 | New Roads & Pointe Coupee Parish

2026 Louisiana Preservation Conference
Mar. 26 & 27 | Hammond

Fall 2026 Ramble
Oct. 3 | Many & Sabine Parish

Visit **lthp.org/events** to learn more, become a sponsor, or register for upcoming events.

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St. John's Episcopal Church Cemetery - Thibodaux

LRHC MILESTONES

Since the LRHC's launch in October 2024, the Louisiana Trust, with your help, has:

- Reached at least one historic cemetery registered in **all 64 parishes** in the first 6 months
- Registered over **230 historic cemeteries** statewide in under 10 months

Explore the LRHC or nominate a historic cemetery:
https://historic-cemeteries.lthp.org

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This project has been financed in part with federal funds from the National Park Service, Department of the Interior through the Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation, & Tourism, Office of Cultural Development, Division of Historic Preservation. However, the contents & opinions do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Department of the Interior, Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation, & Tourism, Office of Cultural Development, Division of Historic Preservation, nor does the mention of trade names or commercial products constitute endorsement or recommendation by the Department of the Interior, Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation, & Tourism, Office of Cultural Development, Division of Historic Preservation.

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NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

LOUISIANA OFFICE of CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT
ARTS · ARCHAEOLOGY · HISTORIC PRESERVATION · CODOFIL

HISTORIC TOURS BY DAY.

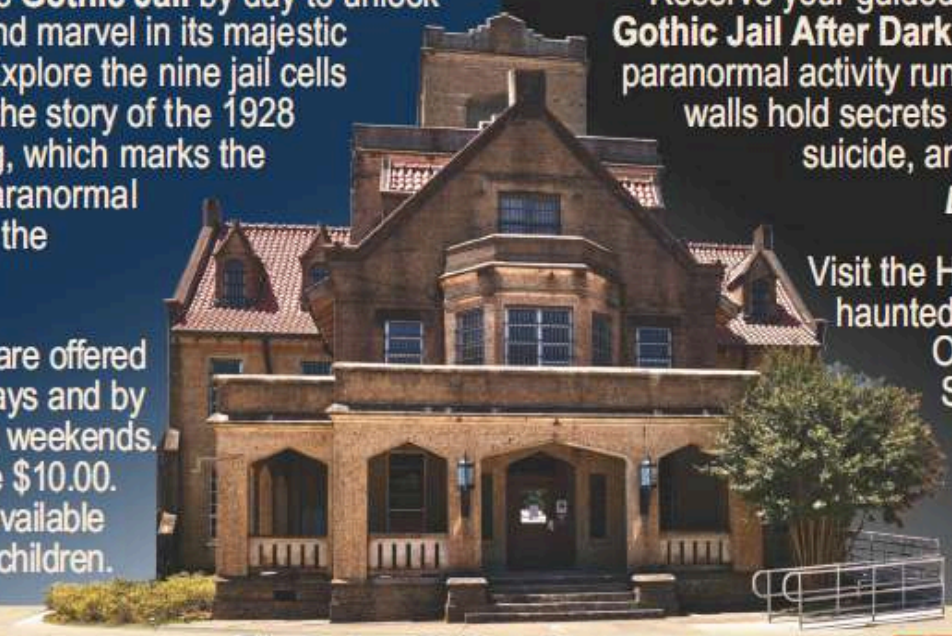
Visit the historic **Gothic Jail** by day to unlock its mysteries and marvel in its majestic architecture. Explore the nine jail cells while learning the story of the 1928 double hanging, which marks the beginning of paranormal experiences in the "Hanging Jail."

Day-time tours are offered daily on weekdays and by appointment on weekends. Adult tickets are $10.00. Discounts are available for military and children.

HAUNTED TOURS BY NIGHT.

Reserve your guided lantern tour of the **Gothic Jail After Dark** if you dare, where paranormal activity runs rampant and the walls hold secrets of a brutal murder, suicide, and double hanging.
Lantern Tours $25

Visit the Haunted Gothic Jail haunted house in October. Open on Friday and Saturday evenings, it is where ghost and mortals come to play.
Admission $20



GOTHIC JAIL

205 W. 1st Street, DeRidder, Louisiana 70634
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