Annison Plantation donated to Zachary's Historic Village

By JAMES MINTON
Baker-Zachary bureau

ZACHARY — The city's Historic Village complex of buildings from the late 19th and early 20th centuries gained an outlying member of much older construction as the year ended. Amite County, Miss., native Ethel Brabham Annison donated the Annison Plantation home on La. 964 to the city for its cultural and historical programs.

The home has been in the Annison family since 1892.

"I've lived in it since 1924 when I got married. My husband (the late Willie E. Annison Sr.) was born there," Annison, 97, said as she and Mayor John Womack signed the legal papers to transfer the property.

Brown, said.

"This is a unique part of our history, and you're the only one who could do this," Womack told Annison during their Dec. 30 meeting at the McHugh House Museum.

"I just wanted them to have it. I thought it would be nice for them to have it and say nice things about it," Annison said of her donation.

"Mother made the comment that she wanted the home to continue standing for as long as possible. This seems the way to go," Annison's daughter, Evelyn Brown, said.

Although remodeled extensively by a succession of owners, this house on La. 964 contains original elements to suggest it was first constructed in the early 1800s. Ethel B. Annison recently donated the home to the city of Zachary for its museum program.

Plantation

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Floor plan of the original structure, along with details in the attic, are typical for a home built in the late 18th or early 19th century. He leans toward a construction date of 1813.

Wayne Coco of Coastal Environments Inc. did an assessment of the house as part of its cultural resources investigation for the state Department of Transportation, which is widening La. 964 through Zachary.

The firm's report said the exact date of construction for the original part of the house would be hard to pin down, but physical evidence suggests it could range from 1800 to 1840.

The house has a floor plan similar to that of the Desfosse House in Mansura, built around 1790, the report said.

Other evidence of its possible early 19th century origin includes two remaining hand-cut framing sills beneath the first floor, the locations of the interior chimneys, structural components of the roof rafters, hand-sawn beaded wall boards, doors with mortised joints held together with pegs and elaborate paneled and molded fireplace mantles, the report said.

The report also details the changes made in the original structure during a major remodeling project some time after the Annison family acquired the property in 1892.

Although the Coastal Environments report said the remodeling work may preclude the home from being on the National Register of Historic Places, "the structure should be preserved as an example of how people lived in the past and how historic structures have evolved over time to suit the needs of its owners and functions of today."

The donation includes seven-tenths of an acre of land, including a family cemetery started by one of the owners in the mid-19th century.

Hastings said two other cemeteries are nearby, and the Historic Village is working on gaining access to them.

One apparently is a slave cemetery, while the other has the grave of a Revolutionary War soldier, Hastings said.