Palm Sunday Tour of Homes 2002

Calcasieu Preservation Society

Calcasieu Parish, La.
Welcome to the 2002 Palm Sunday Tour of Homes. This year’s Palm Sunday Tour will focus on the rich treasury of Landmark Registry homes, structures and landscape features that makes Lake Charles and Southwest Louisiana unique and interesting. This year, we feature three free walking/driving tours. You may choose to take one, two or all three. We hope that you will be entertained and enlightened, and that you view our heritage of historic structures as a valuable resource.

The Palm Sunday Tour of Homes is an annual project of the Calcasieu Preservation Society to advance the preservation movement, to educate the public and to encourage a reassessment of the value of heritage in economic development and in the quality of life.

The 2002 Tour is made up of three tours: two walking tours (A & B) and one driving tour (C). This guide is for all three tours.

There is no admission cost for the tour guide, however memberships and donations are accepted. The CPS is recognized as a 501 (C) 3 organization and donations are deductible to the extent provided by law.
WHAT IS THE LANDMARK REGISTRY AND WHAT MAKES A LANDMARK?

The Landmarks Registry is a highly prestigious listing of structures and landmark features recognized as important or special architecturally, socially, or politically, or structures that are unusual examples of a style or type of structure, or an excellent example of a common type. The Landmark Registry mirrors the exclusive National Register but focuses on Southwest Louisiana, specifically Calcasieu Parish structures and landscape features. The Calcasieu Landmarks Registry is recognized by the State of Louisiana as the "best designed and best operated local registry" in the state. Nominations of potential landmarks are formally solicited every year and a select committee of CPS members, parish and state officers, professional historians and architects review and recommend candidates for inclusion. The final selection is only made after a site visit to the potential landmark.

You can identify the structures that have "landmark status" by the distinctive wooden plaque identifying the structure by its original name, date of construction, and the CPS logo. The documentation which nominated the structure is maintained in the McNeese-Frazier Library Archives.

Today's tours will focus on landmarks in and around the City of Lake Charles. There are "landmarked" structures throughout the parish, in Sulphur, DeQuincy, Vinton, and in rural Calcasieu Parish; however, because we have only an afternoon with you, we will focus on those structures and features located in the National Register Charpentier Historic District, the Margaret Place City Historic District, and downtown.

A word about style. One of the most distinctive features about houses and structures in this part of the world is the rich gumbo of mixed styles used. The Charpentiers (French word for builders) were not at all shy about using Eastlake features on a Greek Revival house, or exchanging Greek Revival columns for Queen Anne turned posts, or putting Gothic Revival windows on an Italianate tower house. Because they used a variety of pattern books and because of the relative remoteness of the area from the major style centers, the builders pragmatically constructed homes that first pleased their customers and only second followed academically correct designs for buildings.

About the tours. The Driving Tour duplicates elements of both walking tours. These tours use the historic name whenever possible. Indented portions are detours and sidelights. Please be careful when walking and when driving. We encourage you to take photographs or make sketches, however please respect the privacy of the residents of these landmarks. Thank You.

TOUR A: (WALKING)
KIRBY AND PUJO

Throughout the tour, look for the distinctive white plaque that identifies the structure as a Calcasieu Landmark.

Exit Central School by the front doors (Kirby Street exit). Notice that the entire block is surrounded by 100-year old oak trees that were planted on the first day of the 20th century, according to legend. Kirby Street was named for the first bona-fide lawyer in Southwest Louisiana, Samuel A. Kirby. The land Central School sits on was deeded...
for educational use way back in 1840 when this part of Louisiana was carved away to establish Imperial Calcasieu Parish.

There have been three schools on this land prior to the building we see now. This huge structure served as the "central" middle school for Ward 1, Ward 2, Ward 3 (Central School also served as the primary school for Ward 3) and primary schools were torn down, but Ward 4 school remains as the education center for St Patrick Hospital on South Ryan Street. Central School also served as the "High School" for the City until the 1928 Lake Charles High School Building was constructed on the old grounds of "Lake Charles College" (now the campus of LC-Boston High School.)

This building, along with the old Ward Schools, were designed in a great swoon of construction by the firm of Ward 4 of old Lake Charles. The Ward 1 and Ward 2 Pri Favrot and Livadas, an architectural firm you will read more about in Tour C.

Begin to walk to the east toward the intersection of Kirby and Reid Streets. Reid Street is named for the legendary Reid family, whose legacy to Calcasieu was a string of sheriffs. The John David Reid Home, a Landmark Structure, isn't located on Reid Street however, but rather at the corner of Ford and Pine. However the Rock House at the corner of Reid and Kirby is one of the most photogenic houses in the city. It's an excellent example of the tall, vertical Victorian-style vernacular houses with a stick built porch. Notice how it contrasts with the modern South Louisiana Creole-style cottage row across Reid Street. The Rock house is more an example of the house style preferred in mid-west America. This house is 102 years old.

Continue on Kirby Street. At the corner of Bank and Kirby, an unusual number of columns supports the Greek-revival Hollins House. Most Greek revival structures have even numbers of columns: think "the Shadows" in New Iberia, or practically any River Road Plantation home, or the W.T. Burton Home on Shell Beach Drive, even numbers of columns support the roof: four, six, eight. This house has three columns supporting the pediment roof. In your walking tour today, note the "odd" numbers of columns for many of the original structures. An odd number of columns is one of the distinctive elements of the so-called "Lake Charles Style" identified by architectural historians.

Continue eastward to the next block. Three distinctive homes, one after the other, allow us to look at some comparison and contrast between two mainstream historic house styles: American vernacular interpretations of Queen Anne (the pink Coleman House and the buff colored Leake House) and Italianate villa (the green Stubbs House). Note how they are different, how the porches work. Examine them from top to bottom and note how even the windows are different. Note the shingling on the Queen Anne houses and the unusual palladian style dormer on the Italianate villa style house.

Almost directly across the street is an example of the mixture of housing styles used by early builders in the area. Part of the house looks like Queen Anne, part looks like Greek revival. The builders of the Lake House took elements from two very strong styles to create a unique house that even today turns heads.

Round the corner northward onto Louisiana, then westward on Pujo. Another historic house style is evident in the massive brick Craftsman-style Miller House in this block. Notice the solid looking porch, the plain wood details, the use of hand crafted hardware and,
frankly, the use of brick which is unusual in a town whose early fortunes were made in lumber.

The Greek Revival style itself was reinterpreted several times during its long history, and the Gayle House on the southeast corner is in the so-called Beaux Arts style. "If Greek columns are nice, then double the number to make them twice as nice" must have been the motto of the builders of the Beaux Arts Style structures. This style was introduced at the Chicago Columbian Worlds Fair, just before the turn of the 20th century. This particular house has a sunporch addition to the west, but it only adds to the charm. The original structure would have been perfectly symmetrical.

Two Landmarks face each other across Pujo Street at this spot. Both feature unusual rooflines which are among their best features. The gambrell roof of the Mitchell House on the south is a distinctive feature of a particular style known as Dutch Colonial, and is ordinarily seen in the Hudson River Valley. The sloping roof of the Christman House to the north protects the porches and is broadly typical of the French Creole-Carribean style seen in very early Louisiana plantations.

Back across the street, a modest brick cottage, all original, shows that not all landmarks are large and not all large houses are landmarks. This cottage (Kaufman House) has working wood shutters and a broad overhanging front porch.

Without the cooperation of the owners, structures are not listed on the registry. As you may know from this tour, the Preservation Society did not and does not name current owners of these structures to protect their privacy. CPS relies on the active agreement of owners to research, nominate and list structures, and we are constantly vigilant to nominate suitable structures.

The Stone House is noteworthy for its asymmetrical massing and its Lake Charles Style mix of stylistic detail.

**Sidebar Landmarks Registry Information**

Structures are not eligible if the substantial portion of the structure is not original or if the structure has been altered to the point that the "original look" is not discernable.

Structures are not eligible if they are not in good repair.

Structures are not eligible if phony materials are used to substitute for real materials such as vinyl or aluminum siding for real wood clapboards, plastic glass for stained or leaded glass, or dryvit for stucco.

And structures are not eligible if the current owner chooses not to go through the research and nomination process.

Landmark status does not restrict what person can choose to do with the house, nor does it restrict repainting, routine maintenance, or even minor exterior alterations, as long as the owner follows the zoning and use ordinance and covenants that are in place for that area.

Tour A concludes here at Central School. Thank you for visiting with us today. Tour B and Tour C start in the Parking lot in the rear of Central School.
A word about style. One of the most distinctive features about houses and structures in this part of the world is the rich gumbo of mixed styles used. The Charpentiers (french word for builders) were not at all shy about using Eastlake features on a Greek Revival house, or exchanging Greek Revival columns for Queen Anne turned posts, or putting Gothic Revival windows on an Italianate tower house. Because they used a variety of pattern books and because of the relative remotness of the area from the major style centers, the builders pragmatically constructed homes that first pleased their customers and only second followed "academically correct" designs for buildings.

Throughout the tour, look for the distinctive white plaque that identifies the structure as a Calcasieu Landmark. Not every structure earns one, and although we will see many interesting buildings on the tour, we will only talk about the Landmark structures.

Begin at the corner of Pujo and Kirkman Streets behind Central School. Pujo Street is named for the first US congressman from this area, the early 19th century pioneer Arsene Pujo. For much of the 19th and very earliest 20th centuries, Pujo Street was viewed as a highly desirable street, convenient to downtown, yet one block away from busy Broad Street which was the City's major east-west street. Until the Interstate Highway was constructed, Broad Street was part of the Old Spanish Trail—Highway 90, a historically important route that connected New Orleans with San Antonio.

This Tour will not only include "landmarks for living" but will also include those for working in and worshiping in.

The Woodring House on the corner of Pujo and Kirkman and the Quinn-Oaks House next to it on the west are two remaining structures from the hey day of Pujo Street. Luxurious beyond measure with exotic woods for the interiors and, for their time, the houses were designed to reflect the pre-Civil War architecture with broad verandas and white pillars. Notice the number of columns for the front of the house on Pujo Street—five columns, truly a house designed in and for Lake Charles.

These two grand structures unfortunately highlight the plight of 728 Pujo Street, which has lost its highly unusual porches. The extremely narrow house is very typical of the homes middle-class families enjoyed in the late 19th century. This is a Midwestern I house, a style that evolved from the practical concerns of shelter on the prairie, and seen, once "gussied up" with porches. Without the porches, the narrow rooms of the balloon-framed house seem pinched and forlorn.

Another good example of the Victorian tendency to decorate the exteriors of their homes, the Quilty House features a generous use of shingling and a very complicated roofline. Notice the decorative fretwork of the porch railings. This is another good example of a "Lake Charles" mix, with Queen Anne and Eastlake elements and just a pinch of shingle style.

Another Midwestern I House the Shindler House, now a law office, although this time the I house is turned to present its wide side to the street. This very sturdy structure was constructed by a shipbuilder who
never allowed interior alterations. He was afraid of weakening the house; he wanted it to weather the types of storms he had experienced at sea.

**Turn north at Hodges Street and walk one block north.** As you walk towards the old Federal Building (now another law office) note the refinement and grace of the now restored landmark. Truly one of the finest buildings in Southwest Louisiana, the recent renovation returns the building to a dignified status. Like many Italianate palaces, the building is elevated, with generous steps, encouraging one to suppose that the activities inside were also elevated. The building is constructed of only the finest materials, limestone, bronze, oak, and tile. Only by a close examination can you pick up on the real attention to detail. It is much the superior building to the style-less brick box that is the Edwin Hunter Federal Courthouse just east on Broad.

The Masonic Temple, north of the Federal Building, is much the same in its attention to detail but more in a French Beaux Arts Style, with rounded corners, doubled pilasters, and a massive, yet graceful, symmetry that inspires strength, trust, and respect.

The original onion domes of Temple Sinai were blown off and so far, until now, never replaced. The building is still a quiet example of dignity and a retreat from the hectic everyday. The stained glass is also noteworthy.

**Continue north on Hodges to turn east on Division.** At the corner of Hodges and Moss, look north, you can just see the four porches of the Babetta Platz House. One of the oldest homes in the District, this vernacular Greek revival layout features Queen Anne gingerbread and trim.

If your eyes are particularly good, or if you brought binoculars, you can also see the great raised encircling porches of the Flanders House tucked behind the iron fence.

**Continue east on Division Street.** At the intersection of Ford Street, the great white Goos (King) House, currently a bed and breakfast inn, dominates the street with its massive white columns and two-story gallery. These paneled columns are known architecturally as the Lake Charles Column. The paneling is a very distinctive local interpretation of the Greek and Roman-style columns used in most Revival architecture. The Goos Family, one of the pioneer German families in the area were great builders of homes as they had been of ships, and the Goos mill was one of the most prolific of all the area sawmills.

Cypress from the swamps and riverbanks and longleaf heart pine from the piney woods were used to construct practically all of the structures in the Charpentier Historic District. Much of this lumber was harvested, at least prior to the Civil War and to just after it, by the German and Dutch-German families who settled here in the 1840's and 1850's. Just up the street, probably out of sight is the Historic St. John Lutheran Church which served many of these pioneer families. Also up the street, though out of sight, are the ancestral home of John David Reid, judge and sheriff of the Reid dynasty, and also another ancestral Goos house.

**Continue east on Division Street.** Division Street was named, according to local legend, as being the dividing line between the land grants of the Bilbo Family and the Reid Family.
The early part of the 20th century provided for new housing styles that moved away from the pomp and show of many of the Victorian and Edwardian-era styles. One of the newest styles, especially favored in this area was the so called **Airplane Bungalow**. This house style was more compact, easier to care for, and, perhaps more importantly, easier to heat and cool because of the introduction of electricity. The bungalow had long been a common house style in India, where they were simply furnished interconnected rooms surrounded by porches. The bungalow was designed to be light and airy and a Southern variety of this style incorporated an almost glassed-in sleeping room above the porch. This room was likened to a "cockpit" of a new-fangled aeroplane: thus the name. The Ranier House is an example of this type of house.

**At the foot of Division Street, as we turn south on Kirkman,** you can see the rusticated block of the **English Country Gothic** style Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd. The Sanctuary and the Parish Hall of this landmark are notable for the consistency of the design. The interior of the church with its authentic hammer-beam construction is also distinctive.

As you walk down Kirkman, you may be able to see two of several landmarks in a row—one on each corner of South Division and Reid (One block east). The pale gray-green of the Martin House is directly across from the bluebird Victorian of the Beatty House, with its distinctive patterned shingling. Other landmarks along South Division, which might encourage you to take a detour include the Clark House, the Ponton House, the Gray House, and the Overton House.

**Back to Kirkman.** As you proceed to the intersection of Broad and Kirkman, the imposing complex of buildings at the corner are part of the First United Methodist Church. A refined interpretation in brick of English Gothic complete to the stained glass and adjoining parish hall, the complex dominates the corner.

**Look Westward toward the lake.** From this vantage point you can see all the way downtown. This view is considerably different from that view seen by the Michigan Men who relocated to this part of Louisiana after the Civil War to fully develop the lumbering resources they knew existed in this part of the world. These men, many of whom served on the Union side of the conflict, took advantage of the resources they had seen in the South, brought down some Northern capital (and took advantage of lax Reconstruction policies) to create a lumbering industry that far out-stripped that of the Goos's). Twenty-eight mills surrounded the lake. Trees were marked, felled, branded (like cattle) as to the mill they belonged to, and floated down the rivers to the lake where you could literally walk from shore to shore by stepping on the floating logs. There is not one working mill remaining, however the homes of the Michigan Men and their descendants remain as evidence of this first great area industry. Three of the grandest are the Ramsey House on the left, and the green tile roof Miller House on the right, and the **American Italianate-Empire-Gothic** styled (complete to the tower) Nason House just beyond.

The lumber used in most of the structures you have seen on this tour was harvested here in Southwest Louisiana. This industry was still flourishing in the early part of the 20th century. Lumber processed into building materials like siding, shingles and millwork, was also shipped down river to Galveston for transshipment throughout the world, as well as shipped by rail to markets in Texas, and in parts of the north, east, and midwest.
TOUR C:
PUBLIC SQUARE, MARGARET PLACE, DOWNTOWN, MICHIGAN MEN ROW

This is a driving tour. We recommend that you carpool so that one person can drive and another person can navigate and read. Under no circumstances should you drive and read. And remember that in Louisiana, seatbelts are mandatory. Please be careful.

This tour begins at the Central School parking lot. Exit lot onto Reid Street or Pujo Street to go around the block to the intersection of Kirby and Kirkman Street. Notice that the entire block is surrounded by 100-year old oak trees, legend says, that were planted on the first day of the 20th century. Kirby Street was named for the first bona-fide lawyer in Southwest Louisiana, Samuel A. Kirby.

The land Central School sits on was deeded for educational use way back in 1840 when this part of Louisiana was carved away to establish Imperial Calcasieu Parish. There have been three schools on this land prior to the building we see now. This huge structure served as the "central" middle school for Ward 1, Ward 2, Ward 3 (Central School also served as the primary school for Ward 3) and Ward 4 of old Lake Charles. The Ward 1 and Ward 2 primary schools were torn down, but Ward 4 school remains as the education center for St Patrick Hospital on South Ryan Street. Central School also served as the "High School" for the City until the 1928 Lake Charles High School Building was constructed on the old grounds of "Lake Charles College" (now the campus of LC-Boston High School.)

Proceed west on Kirby Street. At mid-block (720 Kirby) one of the area's best examples of an Eastlake style house shows off its stylish tower. Towers, whether for defense, for spying on neighbors, for decoration, or as bell- or clock-towers, are a common feature of many Victorian and Edwardian-era buildings. You will see several great examples of towers in this town and on the various tours today. The Nason House has a great tower, as do the Catholic Cathedral and the 1911 City Hall, all of which you will see today.

Park behind the 1911 City Hall at the corner of Kirby and Bilbo Streets. From here you can walk up to and visit the three signature public buildings constructed just after the Great Fire of 1910. As a City of wood, Lake Charles boasted that it was constructed of the finest lumber yet milled. After the Fire, the City and Parish Fathers determined that while the lumber was undoubtedly the finest lumber yet milled, it was, after all that, flammable, and determined that the replacement structures to the ones they had lost would be as fire-proof as could reasonably be constructed.

The Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, the Rectory and adjoining Hall, are almost textbook Italian Romanesque with the broad arches and rich use of design elements. The buildings form a beautiful whole with a uniformity of materials, massing, and scale. The dark maroon brick is unusual for the area, and the color adds to the dignity and feeling of sanctuary. This is a design by the famous New Orleans firm of Favrot and Livadais. If the church is open, you may wish to enter to marvel at the lightness of its blue and white mille-fleur decorations, and its true basilica floor-plan which harkens back to the very first Roman churches.
Italian Renaissance is the basic style of the historic 1911 City Hall. Its tower houses a four-sided clock and is further distinguished by terra cotta decorative elements. The wide overhanging eaves are supported by decorative brackets. As you walk west on Kirby toward the Historic Calcasieu Courthouse, note the raised or elevated terrace of the 1911 City Hall. Symbolically, this suggests that the activities contained within are also raised or elevated, suggesting civic virtue lives here. (The historic Federal Building—now a law office—and the Historic Courthouse all use the same idea but in slightly different ways)

Absolutely the best $186,000 ever spent by the Police Jury of this parish (or perhaps any parish) is the amount which paid for the Historic Calcasieu Courthouse. Like the 1911 City Hall and the Cathedral, Favrot and Livadais dipped into the past, but added a fair amount of "stylistic gumbo" for the design of this impressive structure. Wide marble steps lead you up to the grand portico facing, but not exactly aligned with either the street or with the City Hall it faces. The most unusual feature is of course the great copper dome, which sits at the very center of the classical Greek cross, Palladian revival style. The building is a copy of the Villa Rotunda in Vicenza, Italy, but the added Favrot and Livadais features make it absolutely one of the standout courthouses in this state or in any other. From the street, look at the decorations in the pediment or triangular part of the porch, or portico, roof. It is the Louisiana State Seal, complete with pelicans, but with several added symbols to make it special. Inside, the standout room is historic Courtroom A, which is one of the most impressive, significant and historic interior spaces in the City.

Climb back into the car, and drive south on Ryan Street to the intersection of Park Avenue. Find a parking spot.

Favrot and Livadais not only designed large public buildings, but homes and even parks and recreation buildings. At Lock Park, the Pavilion, which was inspired by the Petit Trianon at Versailles, remains as a charming reminder of summer socials, Sunday band concerts and afternoons in badminton and tea. Once this park, provided to the citizens of the City by the Lock and Paret families, featured reflecting ponds, flowered paths, and regular concerts. Now all that is left is the Pavilion and the Caretaker cottages, but they do remain as a souvenir of a slower, gentler age.

Carefully cross Ryan Street, and walk lake-ward down Park Avenue, to view the Hollywood Moorish style Margaret Manor Apartments. The façade of this upscale-for-its-time apartment house was inspired by the vaguely Spanish and Moorish styles in favor in the teens and twenties, just after the first World War but before the Depression. This was the high point of construction in Margaret Place, a prestigious subdivision of Lake Charles then and still important now.

Climb into your car and drive south on Ryan, then West on South Ryan. At one time the current "Ryan Street" that begins at Seventh and goes to McNeese University, was named "South Street" and went to the Parish Prison Farm where MSU stands now. Pass up the gates of Wilson Avenue to turn right onto Harrison Street, then right again to Grove Street. Park.

In the teens and twenties, a variety of revival styles were popular for housing and in Margaret Place one can experience a generous serving of these styles which include Craftsman, Hollywood Moorish, English Tudor, French Provincial, and on and on. Most of the styles were
grafted onto a basic bungalow layout. At the Stevens house, the purest form of the bungalow, with Craftsman-style touches provides a good basis for looking at other homes in the neighborhood. This house was a national award winning renovation only a few years ago.

At the corner of Wilson and Grove, this great raised cottage features a "jerkin-head roof" and is a bit older than most of the homes in the neighborhood. From its great porch you can just about see to the lake, and you can certainly see the children playing at the Catholic School next door.

Down Wilson Avenue, the English Tudor details of the Liskow house, provide a bit of excitement and drama to the street, as does the striking color of the Managan House with its refined detail.

At Pithon and Wilson, the yellow American Foursquare is a good example of this once popular housing style.

A great brick house with a signature live oak on the grounds make the Lock House extra special in this neighborhood of remarkable houses.

Before moving the car, please read the following information so you can decide how to proceed.

Return to your car and drive to the intersection of Wilson Avenue and Shell Beach Drive. The Shell Beach Drive houses are among the most spectacular homes in the South and certainly the drive offers a rich variety of houses and styles to drool over. Most of the houses include "riparian rights" to the lake, and thus you will see many boathouses that are owned and used by the residents. Many of the houses have been landmarked, and there is an already published driving tour that goes into detail about the individual structures. A copy of the Shell Beach Driving Tour is available at the Convention and Visitor's Bureau, as well as additional touring materials for Margaret Place and for the Charpentier Historic District. If you turn left, you can view the exteriors of the Shell Beach mansions.

The oldest of the structures along Shell Beach Drive and among the oldest buildings in Southwest Louisiana is the venerable Barbe House which includes part of an 1820's cabin constructed by a Barbe ancestor.

Homes belonging to heirs and descendants of the Burton family are showcased along this route. The progenitor of the Burton family was the redoubtable W. T. Burton of hardware, banking, shipyard and oil fame.

The grandest of the estates along Shell Beach is probably that of the late Mathilda Gray at the very end of Shell Beach Drive. This was the primary residence of the business woman, art collector, and oil heiress, and was the structure that housed her collections of impressionist paintings, textiles, silver and Faberge eggs. Currently it is used as the office and conference center for the family companies.

Shell Beach Road ends at the City Docks of the Port of Lake Charles. You may turn around carefully to retrace your route to the intersection of Wilson and Shell Beach Road, or you may turn south on Marine Street to Sallier and east on Sallier to Riverside Drive to get back to Shell Beach, or to Lake Street to return to Shell Beach.
If you do not take the Shell Beach Drive detour, you have been waiting at the intersection of Wilson and Shell Beach.

**Proceed east and north on Shell Beach Drive** past Pithon Coulee to where Shell Beach Drive becomes Lakeshore Drive. Across from the Civic Center tennis courts, and next to the Magnolia Building, stands the Watkins-Pierce Oil Company Stables, now the headquarters building for the Junior League. One of the few structures downtown to have escaped the flames of the Great Fire, it is still used to corral "ideas" and feed "good works."

The lake once lapped very close to the edge of what is now Lakeshore Drive (once known as Front Street). As late as the sixties, this was a rough edge of town with rotting piers, boat sheds, old service stations and warehouses. In the seventies, 60 or so acres of the lake were filled in to form the basis for the Civic Center and grounds.

Proceed to the corner of Lakeshore and Kirby, then east on Kirby. You may wish to park between the Courthouse and the Judicial center to read the following.

The proximity of the lake allowed the first sheriff of Imperial Calcasieu (Jacob Ryan) and the first lawyer (Samuel Kirby) to concoct a plan to relocate the original Courthouse of the parish from Marion (a sawmill and ferry town about 8 miles upriver from Lake Charles). Because it was geographically central, the tiny hamlet of Marion was first selected to be the parish seat of the new Imperial Calcasieu Parish carved out of the western halves of St Landry and Attakapas-St Martin parishes in 1840.

However, by 1850, the population settlement at Charley's Lake far outstripped that of Marion. Ryan and Kirby were increasingly inconvenienced to travel the distance to Marion, closer indeed than Opelousas had been, but far enough for them.

The two men (and others most likely) petitioned the legislature to act, but as legislatures are wont to do, the legislature did not act quickly enough for them, and here legend gives us two tales.

One, the two men and a band of their followers go to Marion, place the Courthouse (a 16 x 20 log cabin) onto rollers, roll it down to the river onto a raft, and barge it to this spot. It was unrolled and positioned about where the current Judicial Center ends at Pithon Street. Or two, the two men and a band of their followers go to Marion, place the Courthouse on rollers and pull it by oxen to this site. In either case, the Courthouse was relocated to Lake Charles, Marion slowly skidded to nothing but a name, and that was that. The second, third, fourth and fifth Courthouses stood squarely even with (east) Kirby Street (what is now Kirby Street west of Ryan was once known as North Court Street and there was a South Court Street that lined up with the front door of the west facing pre-1910 City Hall.)

If you are parked near to the Veterans Affairs office, you are very close to where the gallows were set up for the hangings that marked every court session from 1852 to 1910. Criminals convicted of capital crimes, murder, kidnappings, etc, were almost always dispatched in the jurisdiction that convicted them. This was done so that the general public could see "that justice would be done." Hanging days always attracted
great crowds, photographers and souvernir hawkers were always in evidence, as were preachers and pitchmen. Because many of the records of the parish were lost in the Great Fire, we really cannot but guess at the number of hangings in this part of Louisiana, however based on the best estimates, two to three per year would not have been excessive.

Even as late as the famous Tony Jo Henry case prosecuted in the 1940's in Courtroom A, the convicted was executed in the jurisdiction where the crime was committed. She was electrocuted behind (some say, inside) the Courthouse in November of 1942.

**At Kirby and Ryan Street, turn left onto Ryan and go north.**
Certainly the tallest of the Registry Landmarks, the Charleston Hotel once served as the principal businessman’s and politicians hotel. It featured a rooftop garden for dancing and dining. The Charleston had a running competition with the now gone Majestic Hotel once located directly across Pujo Street from the 1948 Pioneer Building-City Hall.

Calcasieu Marine National Bank (now US Unwired Tech Center) is also a product of the prolific Favrot and Livadais firm and has the look of bull-dog solidity. One community wag dubbed it "the Temple of Cash" for it was built on the cash and resources of W. T. Burton. The refined, austere, almost Egyptian motif of the pilasters and the spare, but well-defined face medallions on the façade were signals that the power that ruled this temple was conservative and prudent with a penny.

Across from the "Temple of Cash" was the late, lamented Calcasieu State Bank, a grand, imposing and even ostentatious deep-red brick Gothic pile. Both it and the Gordon and Van Phul Building, and the 3'R's Building along Pujo Street predated the 1910 fire and were saved by the Majestic Hotel with its own waterworks and pumping station. Unfortunately, both the Majestic and the Calcasieu State Bank are now gone, victims of misguided "urban renewal."

**As you drive slowly up Ryan Street to the intersection of Ryan and Broad, you will notice the ghosts of two other remarkable structures that would have been landmarks had they survived the arsonist’s torch and the wrecking ball. On your right as you go north on Ryan, notice the slight depressions in the vacant lot. These depressions are the sole remaining evidence of two great entertainment centers. The Miller Building - Arcade Theatre was a fully rigged working theatre and had the likes of Houdini, the St. Louis Symphony, and Will Rogers on its stage. The Paramount Theater was a true movie palace of the Thirties with a luxurious mezzanine lounge and kaleidoscopic full-feature marquee. Both are gone physically, but not from the memories of older citizens.

Memories of a different nature are conjured up by viewing the newly discovered and restored facades of the 700 block of Ryan Street. Aluminum panels installed to cover up the buildings in the Sixties and Seventies were removed at the turn of this century to display a cornucopia of second floor facades and ground floor storefronts. The variety of window shapes and sizes, the designs of the brick and stone lintels and the newly rescued space provide for new loft apartments and businesses in exceptional landmarks of the future. You may wish to carefully park to view the newly uncovered beauties. (Binoculars/opera glasses are helpful to pick up on the variety of designs and pick up on details)
Return to your vehicle and go east on Broad Street. Near the intersection of Broad and Hodges, you may wish to park to fully examine three remarkable buildings.

As you walk towards the old Federal Building, now a law office) note the refinement and grace of the now restored landmark. Truly one of the finest buildings in Southwest Louisiana, the recent renovation returns the building to a dignified status. Like many Italianate palaces, the building is elevated, with generous steps, encouraging one to suppose that the activities inside were also elevated. The building is constructed of only the finest materials, limestone, bronze, oak, and tile. Only by a close examination can you pick up on the real attention to detail. It is much the superior building to the style-less brick box that is the Edwin Hunter Federal Courthouse just east on Broad.

The Masonic Temple, north of the Federal Building, is much the same in its attention to detail but more in a French Beaux Arts Style, with rounded corners, doubled pilasters, and a massive, yet graceful, symmetry that inspires strength, trust, and respect.

The original onion domes of Temple Sinai were blown off and so far, until now, never replaced. The building is still a quiet example of dignity and a retreat from the hectic everyday. The stained glass is also noteworthy.

Return to your vehicle and continue east on Broad Street. You are about to drive pass three remarkable structures that provide evidence of the development of this area's lumber resources just after the Civil War. The Michigan Men, many of whom served on the Union side in the conflict, took advantage of the resources they had seen in the South and brought down some Northern capital to develop the lumber industry. The post Civil War lumber business far outstripped that of the pre-war German based lumbering industry.

Twenty-eight mills surrounded the lake. Trees were marked, felled, branded (like cattle) as to the mill they belonged to, and floated down the rivers to the lake where you could literally walk from shore to shore by stepping on the floating logs. There is not one working mill remaining, however the homes of the Michigan Men and their descendants remain as evidence of this first great area industry. Three are the Ramsey House on the right with its grand Lake Charles Style columns used on a Queen Anne style structure. The interior of the house is fascinating with its rich combination of curly cypress paneling and intricate hardwood parquetry. The Nason House features its Italianate tower and a typical Lake Charles mix of Gothic and Romanesque windows and beaux-art columns. Also on the left as you proceed east is the Beaux Arts villa stylings of the green tiled roof Miller House. Note the charming gazebo which is original to the estate. Currently the home is used for professional offices. Continue Eastward.

Broad Street at one time was part of the old Spanish Trail, and as the main east-west street in the city, was viewed as the prime location for the finest homes. The street was palm lined and featured azaleas, oleanders and wisteria in its street plantings (this was long before the live oaks which are the primary vegetation today). Beautiful homes lined this grand street, including the Greek revival Lanza House at Broad and Bank, and the Moorish styled Baillio Home in the midblock between bank and Louisiana. The unusual style choice of the Baillio Home may have been due to the fact that the builder was the primary owner of a chain of movie theatres and more subject to the influence of the Hollywood Moorish style.
Even a former governor of Louisiana, the reform-minded Sam Jones, maintained a family home on Broad Street until the character of Broad became too commercial. He relocated his family to a very modern home (for its time) on Shell Beach Drive based, supposedly on the style principles of "functional Chinese Modern". The size of the window openings and the apparent lack of privacy this afforded the Jones family were the butt of jokes in Lake Charles for years. Even the ordinarily reserved Emma Michie, matron and grand dame installed at the Majestic Hotel, quipped that she hoped "that they draw the blinds before they functioned." The Functional Chinese Modern home has not been landmarked (it is at 303 Shell Beach Drive) but the original house is located at the northwest corner of Broad and Louisiana.

Continue on Broad to the intersection of Enterprise Boulevard and turn south. For twelve gorgeous blocks, particularly in the spring when the pink and white dogwoods, the azaleas and the spireas are all in bloom, Enterprise Boulevard and its Enterprise Oaks rivals any boulevard in the world for its beauty. The original plantings were the design of Mathilda Gray and the indestructible Enterprise Club, a woman's club of great renown (how many streets were named after your club?) One of Lake Charles's many undervalued treasures, Enterprise Boulevard becomes magical in terms of what it offers in terms of street architecture for those scant 12 blocks.

Turn right on any numbered street from Third to Sixth to return to Louisiana avenue then north to Pujo Street.

Turn West on Pujo Street then westward on Pujo. Another historic house style is evident in the massive brick Craftsman-style Miller House in this block. Notice the solid looking porch, the plain wood details, the use of hand crafted hardware and, frankly, the use of brick which is unusual in a town whose early fortunes were made in lumber.

The Greek Revival style itself was reinterpreted several times during its long history, and the Gayle House on the southeast corner is in the so-called Beaux Arts style. "If Greek columns are nice, then double the number to make them twice as nice" must have been the motto of the builders of the Beaux Arts Style structures. This style was introduced at the Chicago Columbian Worlds Fair, just before the turn of the 20th century. This particular house has a sunporch addition to the west, but it only adds to the charm. The original structure would have been perfectly symmetrical.

Two Landmarks face each other across Pujo Street at this spot. Both feature unusual rooflines which are among their best features. The gambrell roof of the Mitchell House on the south is a distinctive feature of a particular style known as Dutch Colonial, and is ordinarily seen in the Hudson River Valley. The sloping roof of the Christman House to the north protects the porches and is broadly typical of the French Creole-Carribbean style seen in very early Louisiana plantations.

Back across the street the Kaufman House, a modest brick cottage, all original, shows that not all landmarks are large and not all large houses are landmarks. This cottage has working wood shutters and a broad overhanging front porch.

This concludes Tour C. Thank you for visiting with us today. We encourage you to try the walking tour.

RETURN TO CENTRAL SCHOOL PARKING LOT. Thank you for taking the 2002 Palm Sunday Tour of Homes.