Officials of Kent Plantation House Inc. are shown executing act of donation to state by representatives of officials of the State Parks and Recreation Commission. From left to right seated: chairman of the commission, W. A. Wilson; Rep. Eustis, William P. Pull, direct descendant of Pierre Baillio, original owner of the home, who acted as notary public for the transfer; Mrs. Ward T. Jones, president of Kent Plantation House Inc. Standing: Mrs. Edwin B. Beckman, member of state commission; R. Hunter Pierson, chairman of board of trustees of Kent Plantation House Inc., and Irvin Ward-Steinman, member of board of trustees.

(Continued from Page 1) charge of Kent House planning. Landscape architects on the staff of the State Parks and Recreation Commission will design the gardens that will surround the house.

A Kent House advisory committee will be appointed to help supervise the plans for the house, its furnishings and gardens.

Kent House becomes the third historic home in the state's parks system, Wilson said. The others are Oakley at Dr. Francis Du- plessis, where John James Audubon, the naturalist and painter, accomplished some of his greatest work, and the home of Edward Douglass White, late chief justice of the United States, near Natchitoches. Alexandria had not been ded- icated as a town when Kent House was built in 1796. Alexander Pullen, for whom it was named, had just established a store on the riverfront, at "Baillio's". Brick kilns were piled on the edge of Bayou Rapidus and lumber was cut on the place to build the plantation house.

The first story is built entirely of brick, with small deep windows from which the Baillio family could see off the Indian who regarded Central Louisi- ana streams and forests as their own. The side walls are made of deer hair and mud—dressed on the lee side that received the bayou; mud that was dug, mixed, and carried from Bayou Rapidus. On the second floor across the cypress floors, massive beams, and panels that gave the house much distinction. The house is actually a blending of three separate buildings, for two garconnieres or wings, which were added after the central portion of the house was built, were later joined to the middle portion. A wide gallery connects the three sections.

During the occupation of Alex- andria by federal troops in the Civil War, Kent House was spared from burning, when, at most every building in the city was destroyed.

The plantation house received its name from Robert C. Hyn- son, a native of Kent County, Maryland, who bought the planta- tion from the Baillio estate about 1842. When he died in 1873, he left the house to his youngest daughter, Edith, who married James A. Ringgold. After Ring- gold's death, his wife continued to live there for many years, finally selling the property about 1965 to the Kent Company. It was later sold to Mrs. Alice James Dougur, whose husband, Louis J. Belaire, longtime Rapidus parish surveyor, was descended from Auguste Baillio, brother of Pierre Baillio, who built the home. In 1949, the American Legion acquired the property.

Further Help Asked

Mrs. Ward T. Jones, president of Kent Plantation House Inc., in executing the act of donation of the home and its property, asked the state for the continued interest, coopera- tion, and help of the citizens of this area in order that this valuable landmark might become the No. 1 tourist attraction in Central Louisiana. She also solicits additional funds from interested citizens, which are needed by the non-profit corporation to complete its work towards the preservation of the landmark.

Recent donors to the Kent Plantation House Fund include: Mr. and Mrs. Crawford H. Downs, Mr. and Mrs. Hugh Couplin, Dr. and Mrs. Paul M. Davis Jr., Mr. and Mrs. Irving Ward-Steinman, Mr. and Mrs. Preston Hickman, Mr. and Mrs. Paul R. Adams, Mr. and Mrs. A. C. Gravel, Mr. and Mrs. John Tevett, Mr. and Mrs. Brenda Weema, Mr. and Mrs. C. H. Rowden, Mr. and Mrs. P. J. Gaspere, Mr. and Mrs. Irving Goldstein, Mr. and Mrs. Mark Howard, Mr. and Mrs. Clifford De Leo, Miss Joseph Drew, Alexandria Garden Club, Alexandria & Bolton Inc., Ellington Construction Co., Harry's Body Shop, Louisiana Wholesale Distributors, Mr. and Mrs. Parrin Fuller, Oaktale, Mr. P. Vandenbeur Jr., Bayou Mr. and Mrs. R. R. Knippling, Mr. Anto, Mr. and Mrs. No- ble Ward, Baton Rouge, Mrs. L. d w i c k Compton, New Orleans, Mrs. T. William Natchitoches, Mrs. Benjamin M. Elen, Fairfield, Oren, Miss Juilette Plantation House, New York City, Mrs. Colton Short, Balti- more, Mrs. William E. Kim, New Orleans, and an anonymous donation.

The state of Louisiana has taken title to Kent Plantation House, Central Louisiana's oldest landmark, W. A. Wilson of Alexandria, chairman of the State Parks and Recreation Commission, said today. The house will be completely restored and has become a state memorial and part of the state's parks system, he said. Kent Plantation House Inc., a locally-formed non-profit corpora- tion for the purpose of preserving the landmark, donated the 148-year-old home and two acres surrounding it to the state.

The property on Bayou Ra- pidus road was bought by the corporation from the J. T. Compton heirs for $10,000. It is part of the original Kent Plantation and also a part of the William C. Gilmer will be in large land.

L a. Takes Over Kent House, Reveals Plans for Memorial.
Kent House To Open

Kent Plantation House has been restored and is a symbol of the traditions of Louisiana, of its hospitality and its gracious way of life.

The landmark, located at 3601 Bayou Rapides Road, will be dedicated Saturday at 11 a.m. as a state commemorative area by the Louisiana State Parks and Recreation Commission.

The historic house will be open to the public on the day of dedication from 1:30 to 5 p.m. and crafts of the late 18th and early 19th centuries will be demonstrated. On May 4 from 1:30 to 5 p.m., open house will be held and the crafts will be shown again.

Beginning May 5, Kent House will be open daily, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and on Sundays from 1 to 5 p.m.

Mrs. Willard Ruse (right) of Alexandria uses a multiple dipping device to start candles. She and Mrs. Thomas Perry of Shreveport, who will card cotton, will be among craftsmen demonstrating their arts at Kent House.

In picture above an unusual craft to be shown at the opening, and one seldom seen today, is the blacksmith shop to be demonstrated by James Moss, curator of Kent House.

The many gifts made to Kent House include the firebox that was the pride of owners, given to the Margaret W. Walker family, and these for the parlor by the Alexandria committee, National Society of Colonial Dames of America in the State of Louisiana. Mrs. Noel Y. Trahan, (left) president of Kent House, and Mrs. Richard L. Crowell, vice president, wearing antebellum dresses, are shown at the historic landmark with Mr. Walker. Mrs. Crowell is past chairman of the Colonial Dames.
COUNTDOWN to history in Alexandria, with final preparations being made for May 19's Kent House Festival. With its theme, Central Louisiana 1795-1830, the occasion will give Cen-La residents an opportunity to pause and — through art, photography, essays and crafts — look back over their shoulders at things that were then.

Even though most of the activities are planned for downtown Alexandria, the focal point of the pageant is Kent House, a plantation manor on Bayou Rapides Road on the western edge of town. Dating back to 1795, it's one of those old houses nimble enough this past century to avoid being engulfed by flames or leveled by neglect. And now it's being restored and readied for a new life as a prime tourist attraction in an area which offers visitors little but man-made lakes and pine trees.

The State Parks Commission now has title to the house and is supervising its restoration using federal — through HUD — and state funds. This $136,000 restoration climaxes a "Let's Save Kent House" drive begun a decade ago.

Public-spirited Alexandria-area people started the drive in '63 after an American Legion post which owned the house formulated plans for its demolition. The Legion had bought the place in 1949 for use as a recreation hall. However, in 1963 the post had a new hall and Kent House was no longer needed.

Word of the demolition plans hit the streets, and before you could say, "Let's sign the papers," civic leaders formed the Kent Plantation House Preservation Society. The post agreed to give the house to the society if it were moved. This condition was accepted and a fund-raising drive started. In hardly any time at all, $10,000 was pledged and the home was moved to a two-acre site two blocks further down Bayou Rapides Road. The grounds were part of the original Kent House Plantation which once covered 1,740 acres.

The non-profit society, now chartered as Kent Plantation House, Inc., was eventually able to secure two additional acres adjacent to the house. In February '64, it deeded the house to the state parks commission and was later able to have it placed on the National Register.

Irving Ward-Steinman of Alexandria, one of the founding members of the preservation group, estimated that some $40,000 in cash, property and furnishings was raised by the group. This helped keep the house standing until restoration was begun and will help furnish it once restoration is completed.

"We never used any city or parish tax money for our work," says Ward-Steinman. Furnishings, including those pictured here, were either do-

Sketch shows Kent House as it will look once restoration supervised by State Parks Commission is completed. Photo shows manor before work was undertaken.