The LSD Rural Life Museum

By Michael M. Carter

Recently, members and friends of the Preservation Resource Center were fortunate to visit one of this area's best kept secrets, The LSD Rural Life Museum.

This magnificent research facility is located in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, on the Burden Research Plantation, a 450-acre agricultural research experiment station owned by Louisiana State University. The Museum is just minutes' off Interstate-10 at the Essex Lane exit.

Complex Of Buildings

The Rural Life Museum is actually a complex of buildings all authentically reconstructed to portray all the major activities of life on a typical nineteenth-century working plantation. The complex consists of the barn—a museum in itself—the working plantation buildings—commissary, overseer's house, kitchen, slave cabins, sick house, schoolhouse, blacksmith shop, sugarhouse, and grits mill.

In addition, the complex consists of several of this region's finest examples of Folk Architecture, authentically exemplified by a country church, a pioneer's cabin and corncrib, a potato house, a shotgun house, an Acadian house, and by a dogtrot house, whose divergent construction traits illustrate the various cultures of Louisiana settlers.

Potpourri of Articles

Housed within these buildings is a collection of a potpourri of articles—tools, household utensils, furniture, vehicles, bathroom fixtures, washing implements, textiles, Indian artifacts, and farming implements. The diversity of this collection reflects the various facets of largely forgotten lifestyles and cultures of Louisiana's rural inhabitants from the earliest Indian civilizations to the multicultured inhabitants of the pre-Industrial South.

The LSU Rural Life Museum preserves an important part of the state's and the nation's rural heritage. Its ultimate charm lies in its simplicity, for it preserves a way of life that is not seen on the remaining plantations of today. For those individuals who have visited the rural life museum before, it is worth another visit. For those who have not yet had the opportunity to visit the museum, it is certainly worth the trip. The museum is open to the public from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, except during University Holidays.

Michael Carter is a graduate of New Orleans Academy, Tulane University with a degree in Art History and Psychology, and was a student at Tulane's School of Architecture until last spring, when he left to manage PRC's exhibit, Living in New Orleans, at Louisiana Expo. Michael is now working for the Arts Council at Seldom Seen, the outstanding portrait exhibit at their gallery on Iboupitoulas Street. In January he will go to London to study interior design at Sotheby's and will return in September to continue studies in Architecture.

AN APOLOGY

In the last issue of Preservation in Print, we published a story intitled Excerpts by Robert J. Cangelosi, Jr., A.I.A. Well, Robby did not write this story. Excerpts was in fact compiled by Patricia Fowler from the Master's thesis of Joseph Newell, who is now the Historian for the Vieux Carre Commission. After reading the story one can sense not only the amount of effort that went into the thesis project, but also, the effort required by Patricia Fowler to cull the thesis and still maintain a cohesive script. To put it another way, we would not have minded our names appearing under the title of this article.

Robby should have been given credit for writing the Tenth Annual Holiday Home Tour article, but he was not. This story was published without any byline whatsoever. In addition, we failed to publish the photograph of the Hobson residence which is located at -6 Everet Place.

To all parties, we apologize.

James S. and Michele M. Cripps

Dogtrot Houses

The State Division of Historic Preservation in Baton Rouge is currently conducting a search for authentic dogtrot houses. This house type is somewhat rare in Louisiana, so if you know of one or happen to see one, please contact Ann Jones or Bobby DeBlieux. The phone number in Baton Rouge is (504) 922-0358.