ALEXANDRIA, LA. Loyd Hall, a large stately brick mansion, rich in history and legend, stands amidst its many acres of soybeans and cotton just off U.S. Highway 71 near Cheneyville, Louisiana. It will be one of the seven sites open to the public on the Heritage Tour on April 24th and 25th sponsored by the Historical Association of Central Louisiana. The building will be open to the public from 10 A.M. to 6 P.M. each day and the tickets which are $7.00 will be available at each site and from P.O. Box 843, Alexandria, La. 71301.

Loyd Hall is a magnificent structure more like the houses found in the New Orleans Garden District than those on rural Louisiana plantations. On the first and second floors there are eight main 20' x 20' rooms, each opening out onto the 16' central hallways which run the entire length of the house, and on the third floor there are two more large rooms which were once a school room and a teacher's living quarters, with a hallway and sitting room in between.

Little documented history is available concerning Loyd Hall, yet certain facts are known about its early owners and their acquisitions of property. Today the plantation consists of 641 acres of land; 375 acres of which were acquired from the estate of Levi Wells, 202 acres from Alexander Compton and 64 acres from William Brown, all of these acres being land grants of 1790 and 1803.

The first Loyds on record in the parish, three brothers named Elisha, William and James Loyd, arrived in the area in the middle of the 1820's. So there is a distinct possibility that the original portion of the house, the main brick structure, was built between 1810-1820 by members of the Wells family and that the Loyd family updated it with the addition of porches and ornate plaster work in 1830-1840.

Loyd Hall has known many owners and been witness to many events in its century and a half of existence. During the Civil War, the house escaped damages although the Union troops stayed at the plantation and its owner James D. Loyd was hanged there by them in 1864. Then following Mrs. Loyd's death in 1870, the property was divided into 50 acre lots and sold to satisfy the unpaid debts of the Loyd estate. However, the entire plantation was bought by Mr. Richard B. Campbell of New Orleans in 1872 and two years later it was sold again to Miss Mary E. Sullivan, who had a school for young ladies at Loyd Hall until 1892. After that, the plantation changed hands many times until the Fitzgerald family purchased it in 1948 and began its ongoing process of restoration.

At that time the house was in a horrible state of repair with most of the rooms being used for the storage of hay and grain, but the structure was sound and the Fitzgeralids decided to restore and refurnish the house to its early 19th Century elegance. They have made no structural changes with the exception of the addition of plumbing and the enclosing of the
There are many mysteries about Loyd Hall, including the two bullet holes in the wall of the front hall and arrowheads in the dining room door. A number of unmarked graves are on the grounds and one is in the cellar which might be that of Inez Loyd, James' sister, who committed suicide when she was rejected by her lover, or it could belong to a soldier whom Mrs. William Loyd is said to have shot on the third floor. Also legend has it that a ghost named Harry by the Fitzgerald children, appears on the third floor balcony at midnight and plays a violin mourning the death of Inez or the soldier.

Another interesting feature of Loyd Hall is its way station and old kitchen found in the yard behind the house near the original plantation bell, where stagecoach passengers stopped for a meal and a rest on their travels through Central Louisiana. Today this building serves as a plantation office for Dr. Fitzgerald and as a depository for Mrs. Ann Fitzgerald's collection of century-old kitchen implements.

Loyd Hall, with its beautiful plantation house, marvelous legends and adjacent antique shop is certainly one of the most interesting and delightful stops on the Heritage Tour 1976.

Tickets will be available in advance for $5.00 each. The days of the tour, tickets will be $7.00 each. Also buses will run from Plantation Manor Restaurant at 9:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. both days of the tour to the sites for .50¢ per person.