ALEXANDRIA, LA.......Rosalie was a sugar plantation and for its first 60 or 70 years it operated its own sugar mill, as was customary in the sugarcane-growing South of the 19th Century.

The large mill, built about 1830 on sharply elevated land only a short distance south of the later residence site, still stands. However, its sugar making machinery and equipment were dispersed at the turn of the century, with the advent of mammoth, centrally located industrial mills capable of processing cane from dozens of surrounding plantations. It proved cheaper and more expedient to haul or boat the cane to the big mills and so the individual plantation mills rapidly disappeared.

Rosalie's massive mill is constructed of handmade bricks, with walls 17" thick. The roof is supported on 40-foot wide cypress trusses attached with large wooden pegs. Although the present-day roof is tin, the original undoubtedly was made of split cypress shingles. Interesting architectural features are to be noted in the brickwork but the functions of many of these features are unknown now. Dimensions of the mill are 42 feet wide by 104 feet long with an eave height of 20 feet.

Existing records show sugar production of the mill after 1845. Records also show that the mill was steam driven, which was unusual at that period, but no vestige of the smokestack remains. Much underground brickwork has been found on the north side, suggesting that area to have been the site of the smokestack. It is known that a loft once existed in the mill and it is likely that the grinding of the cane was there and the open kettles were on the ground level. Two of the huge copper kettles, now in use as water troughs for cattle on the place, are the only remaining traces of the sugar making equipment. Sugar from the mill was transported to Alexandria by steamboats on Bayou Robert, then a navigable stream.

Rosalie's sugar mill is thought to be the sole survivor of some 300 plantation sugar mills of its era. In order that it can be saved for posterity as an example of early agricultural-industrial construction in Central Louisiana, it has been placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

On both days of the Heritage Tour, 19th Century crafts, such as candle-making and quilt-making will be demonstrated at Rosalie Sugar Mill.

(HERITAGE TOUR, HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION OF CENTRAL LOUISIANA)
ALEXANDRIA, LA. ..... The Historical Association of Central Louisiana has scheduled its first annual Heritage Tour for Saturday, April 24th and Sunday, April 25th from 10 A.M. to 6 P.M. each day.

Tickets are $7 and will be available at each site on the days of the tour and may be acquired in advance from P.O. Box 843, Alexandria, La. 71301.


Dr. and Mrs. James A. White, III are chairmen of the Heritage Tour 1976 and Mrs. Robert H. Bolton is president of the Historical Association.