

Texas Historical Commission

Disaster Relief



Mississippi Gulf Coast Post Katrina

October 3–9, 2005

Team Members:

Stan Graves
Lyman Labry
Amy Lambert
Susan Tietz

At the request of Mississippi Governor Haley Barbour, the Texas Historical Commission sent a team of four staff from its Architecture Division to assist the Mississippi Department of Archives and History in assessing historic structures damaged by Hurricane Katrina..

Monday, October 3, 2005

AUSTIN to JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI



They're off!

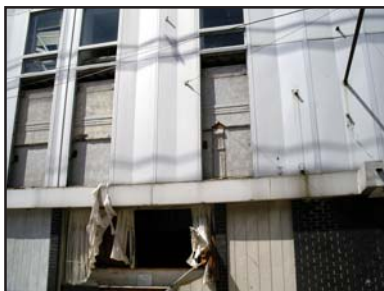
Enthusiastic about the task ahead and anxious about what we would find, four staff members of the Texas Historical Commission (THC) Architecture Division, Stan Graves, Lyman Labry, Susan Tietz and Amy Lambert, headed toward the Mississippi Gulf Coast packed tightly in the THC monster truck with gallons of water, boxes of disaster relief information and more fix-a-flat than you can shake a rusty nail at. Our mission was to aid the Historic Preservation Division of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History (MDAH) with the monumental task of surveying and assessing thousands of historic properties that

were damaged during Hurricane Katrina. In the process, we assisted property owners and local governments in taking the next steps toward preserving communities and the sense of place provided by historic landmarks.

The first signs of Hurricane Rita's path came just east of Houston. As we progressed down Interstate 10, tree damage, debris and wind damage to signs and buildings became gradually more evident. We decided to make a detour into Beaumont to examine the extent of damage the city received and to get a bite to eat. The city was rather quiet and many businesses were still closed; lunch at the busy Waffle House was a choice of a hamburger without any fixings or eggs with hash browns served on paper plates. The historic courthouse was our first stop. It sustained only minor damage although only the annex was open for business. Most of the damage was to trees, although there were a handful of



Jefferson County Courthouse



Torn slipcover

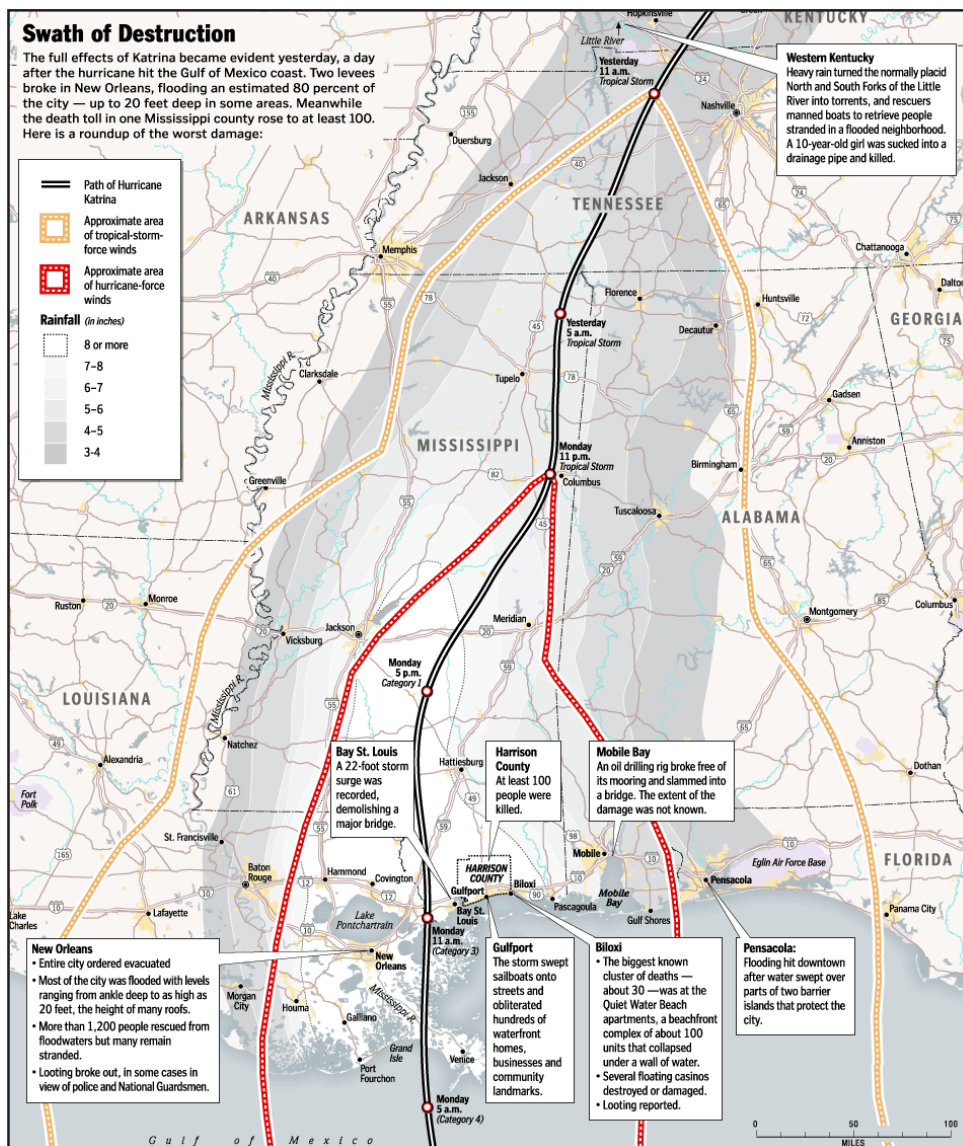
homes in an older central neighborhood that had damage to porches or roofs from flying debris or falling trees. A fine example of art deco architecture, the two-story Kyle Building down the street from the courthouse had sustained only a few broken windows. On a brighter note, despite some broken windows downtown, the mangled contemporary slipcovers on some older storefronts had been peeled away to reveal some wonderful architectural detailing.

More debris and tree damage followed us along the interstate until west of Lafayette, Louisiana. Traffic picked up considerably in Baton Rouge, a city that since Katrina has seen its population swell to three times its normal population of a quarter of a million people. We arrived in Jackson after nightfall to meet up with Ken P'Pool and Richard Cawthon of the MDAH and David Preziosi of the Mississippi Heritage Trust, who kindly hosted us for the evening at their homes.

Tuesday, October 4, 2005

JACKSON to PURVIS to BAY ST. LOUIS

First thing in the morning, THC staff met at the office of the MDAH where Chief Architectural Historian Richard Cawthon briefed us by describing the path of Katrina, and how it has affected each of the coastal communities and their historic resources. Cheryl Widell, Historic Preservation Specialist for FEMA, joined the meeting and provided aerial photographs that outlined National Register (NR) Districts along the coast. She gave us our first glimpse at the extent of these districts all along the Mississippi coast and the magnitude of the damage Katrina had imposed on them. From the images and Richard's description, the L&N Railroad running along the length of the coast roughly a half-mile inland sat atop a berm that offered protection to the areas north of it from storm surge devastation by acting as a small levy. The eye of the storm was 32 miles wide and its center passed 10 miles west of Bay St. Louis near the Louisiana border with hurricane force winds extending 125 miles from its center and measuring up to 175 mph. The storm surge reached its highest point of 35' in Waveland just west of Bay Saint Louis, while it varied along the rest of the entire coast between 15' and 32'. The most overwhelming devastation was caused by this surge and occurred east of the eye and south of the



Source of Image, Washington Post

coastal rail line, from Waveland in the west, up into the eastern and western edges of St. Louis Bay and on eastward into Biloxi's Back Bay; but serious destruction occurred in communities as far east as Pascagoula near the Alabama border and wind damage occurred as far north as Columbus, just 100 miles south of the Tennessee border.

With few exceptions, most of the historic resources south of the railroad in Hancock and Harrison Counties were irreparably damaged or completely destroyed by storm surge. Entire NR Districts were completely eradicated along the coast, including hundreds of properties that survived Hurricane Camille in 1969 with little more than a scratch. Hurricane Camille was the benchmark storm for residents of the Mississippi coastline. So few thought that any storm could ever match its ferocity, and as a consequence Camille killed more people during Katrina than in 1969 because of the false sense of security felt by those who had homes that survived Camille.

We learned that out of 12 incorporated communities on the coast, city services had successfully been reinstated in Biloxi, Gulfport, Ocean Springs and Pascagoula; all except Gulfport are Certified Local Governments (CLGs). Waveland and Long Beach, both rebuilt from the ground up after Hurricane Camille, were again completely razed by Katrina due to their low elevations and proximity to the eye of the storm. In most of the coastal communities, the highest income housing was found closest to the shore but this was not the case in Gulfport, where poorer populations resided downtown along the railroad tracks and thus sustained terrible loss. Many of the casino barges along the shore in Biloxi received serious damage but caused much more serious damage to other structures on shore when the storm surge carried them inland.

Wind caused less serious damage to well-maintained buildings, but sturdy construction mattered little when it came to facing storm surge. In general, historic buildings fared better than many contemporary ones, and brick or masonry piers endured the storm better than wood ones. Biloxi's early concrete and concrete block buildings did fine; however, its structures made of hollow clay tile, used frequently in the 1920s, shattered when the storm hit due to the material's low tensile strength.

According to the MDAH, the cities of Biloxi and Gulfport rebounded most quickly and were the first to reestablish their local governments, in addition to Ocean Springs and Pascagoula to the east, which were spared the storm's worst blows. In the first weeks following the storm, the MDAH was able to most easily assist these communities because of their better organization. By the time THC staff arrived, Bay St. Louis' government had reestablished its offices, and Pass Christian's mayor and city council had reportedly returned to the area. Despite its limited number of staff, the MDAH had already assessed more than 1,000 historic properties in Bay St. Louis, Gulfport, Pass Christian and Biloxi. In addition, Section 106 clearances were underway for the trailer park set-ups by FEMA which are located mostly north of I-10.

Existing Mississippi state legislation gives local governments the authority to expend public funds on a private property in danger of eminent collapse due to "demolition by neglect" of the property owner and transfer the cost to the owner. During our briefing at the MDAH, Mississippi Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) Ken P'Pool entered the room and produced a letter signed that morning by the Mississippi Attorney General (AG) ruling to extend the definition of "demolition by neglect" to cover hurricane damage in the current emergency situation. The expanded definition empowers local governments to address the immediate shoring requirements or other damage control for endangered historic homes with absentee owners, and allow the public funds to be reimbursed by FEMA in this case.

Richard explained that the MDAH approached damage assessment and recovery in three phases:

1. NOAA aerial photos and satellite images were reviewed within a week of the storm; information from the photos was then plotted onto maps.
2. On-site reconnaissance of all NR, NR Districts, ML (Mississippi Landmark) was done using a five-point damage scale: none, minor, serious, catastrophic and completely demolished.
3. Guidance with city governments and local preservationists. This was our task, including meeting and working with local officials, explaining what we were doing and helping them in any way we could.

THC staff arrived during this third stage and was asked to attend a City Council meeting that afternoon in Bay Saint Louis. We then accompanied Richard and Cherilyn throughout the rest of the week to meet with local building officials, historical society representatives and individual property owners along the coast.

Bay St. Louis City Council Meeting

After dropping off our gear outside of Purvis at what would become our headquarters for the week, our group, including Ken P'Pool, Richard Cawthon, David Preziosi and Cherilyn Widell, headed down to Bay St. Louis to attend the 5 p.m. city council meeting. Since city hall received extensive damage, the city temporarily occupies the historic railroad depot, a 1928 building located several blocks inland. The mayor and board of Aldermen were present, but the city building official Bill Carrigee was not. The MDAH had received information that the Bay Saint Louis City Council had plans to “bulldoze” the area



Main Street Methodist Church

south of the railroad tracks and that the issue would be discussed in the meeting. The issue did not arise but the presence of the MDAH, FEMA and THC representatives communicated a clear message to the City Council and concerned citizens in attendance. The council did explain that the Corps of Engineers would begin clearing private properties, including damaged homes, of those homeowners who choose to complete the required Right of Entry forms. One citizen expressed dismay at the Corps' insensitivity in felling 300-year-old oak trees in the process of clearing public spaces. The council assured her that they had requested the Corps be more careful when clearing debris, and recommended that all citizens place signs on items they wanted the Corps to avoid—such as water meters, trees or salvaged items like this steeple (at left).

After the meeting, an attorney from Gulfport offered to escort us through downtown Bay Saint Louis and show us some of the damage along South Beach Boulevard. He spoke of an entertainment district that comprised four or five restaurants that had been obliterated, and specifically of a historic structure that had been red tagged or in his words “condemned” by the city that day. The Merchant Bank Building constructed in 1905 in the Mission Style, a design unique in Mississippi, was one of the few significant historic commercial structures still standing. Because of the building's heavy masonry construction, it survived a 1907 fire that destroyed more than 40 buildings in town, Hurricane Camille in 1969 and now Hurricane Katrina. Despite the building suffering significant damage to its west wall, its sagging second floor and the city's red tag assessment, the building appeared salvageable. The attorney was surprised by our more optimistic assessment of the building and promised to follow up with the owner who he said

was a close friend. We found out later that he in fact was not acquainted with the owner of the Merchant Bank Building but instead represents a developer interested in buying up valuable coastal properties, made even more valuable by Katrina now that they are no longer protected as parts of NR Districts or as NR Properties themselves. The Merchant Bank Building story is indicative of the clash between the acquiescence of local governments fueled by a desperate need for quick economic renewal and the preservation of what remains of Mississippi's wonderful and unique coastal towns. This clash is based on a perceived incompatibility of development and preservation, rather than a cooperative effort brought on by the inevitability of new development. This situation illustrates the enormous task that lies ahead for preservationists and those who want to protect their communities' pre-Katrina charm and scale.



Merchant Bank Building

In addition to the Merchant Bank Building, the nearby Our Lady of the Gulf Catholic Church, dating from 1849, also survived. Although its exterior received less significant damage, apparently the interior was gutted by the storm surge.



Our Lady of the Gulf Church

Wednesday, October 5, 2005

OCEAN SPRINGS

From Purvis, Richard, Stan and Amy headed down to the coast. We stopped first at the Beulah Church and Cemetery north of Gulfport that sustained broken windows and some roof damage, but is otherwise intact. There were some trees down in the cemetery, but no apparent damage to headstones.

Driving on to Ocean Springs, we stopped by city hall to meet with the Director of Community Planning and Development, S. Donovan Scuggs. His priorities are to make homes habitable and to make determinations on homes that have sustained damage, as he does seem to understand that unsafe for occupancy does not necessarily equate to unsalvageable. As for making homes habitable, there is an internal process to issue Certificates of Appropriateness without the full historical commission meeting for a quick turnaround in 2-3 days. For newer homes, the regular process is still applicable. An example issue they've recently seen is determining whether a faux slate shingle, made from rubber, would be appropriate for some historic homes and if so, maybe it can be used only in inconspicuous locations.

According to Mr. Scuggs, FEMA has apparently identified where historic districts are located for the Corps of Engineers. Legally the Corps cannot demolish a home without the homeowner's approval, but if the Corps subcontracts demolition work and those crews do not have good information, the Corps can't escape liability if they tear down a residence without explicit approval and agreement from the owner. Ocean Springs, a Certified Local Government, must be included as a partner in Corps' activities. There was some confusion in Bay St. Louis the previous evening that a Right of Entry for the Corps to remove debris does not mean to remove other items such as homes from a site, and that was shared with Mr. Scuggs. He told us to 'hope that a hurricane doesn't hit you, because you will be alone'. He was clearly still overwhelmed at the task his city has ahead.

We asked how we could best help them that afternoon, and Mr. Scuggs showed us an envelope full of quick surveys done from the public right of way by MDAH and he asked us to confirm the results on a couple of them, particularly homes that received a more favorable rating regarding the possibility of salvage than he anticipated. So we headed out first to 209 Washington Avenue to a pink 1910-era home that was in pretty good shape, despite missing some piers at the rear. Only the newer rear porch addition had collapsed. The historic metal roof looked untouched as did the wood siding and front porch. We made some sketches and took photos for further documentation.

We then headed over to Terrace Hill, a home on a bluff at the end of Martin Street that runs into Beach Boulevard. The homes adjacent to this one were very heavily damaged, but they were also lower in elevation; the apartments across the street were destroyed (Mr. Scuggs later told us the owner already had a demolition permit for those apartments in order to build condominiums and now he's had his demo and clean-up paid for by either the storm or FEMA). Terrace Hill also had sustained some damage to its piers, but other than that it was in very good condition. Some intermediate shoring, as with the Washington Avenue house, would make the property safe for entry and for clean-up and restoration.



Damaged brick piers at Terrace Hill



Community Center
Walter Anderson Museum

After reporting on these homes to Mr. Scruggs, we headed over to the Shearwater NR District. Crossing into that area, the Walter Anderson pottery complex is on the water side of the road and suffered severe damage in the storm. This collection of small corrugated metal buildings was nearly washed away from the soil erosion caused by the storm surge. Buildings had either lost their floors from the piers sliding away, or were sliding away in entirety, or the metal roofs or walls had curled from the wind. Pottery was strewn everywhere. Fortunately the Walter Anderson museum (located downtown) and its collection of the artist's work, which were protected in the museum's vault, survived the storm with minimal damage.

Attached to the downtown museum, the Community Center walls and Anderson's 1951 murals, which cover them, may be in danger from rising damp.

Further down the road on Beach Boulevard we stopped at the Sullivan-Wright Charnley House and bungalow that were severely damaged. The columns seem to have been blown right from under the front elevations, leaving the heavy roofs to dangle like a tree laden with ripe fruit. Without walls, the interior exposed decorative curly pine walls and wood floors still shiny from polishing. The Frank Lloyd Wright Conservancy had reportedly paid a visit to the site, but there is no word on the action that might be taken here. The homeowner was not available for a visit.



Charnley House



Charnley Bungalow

BAY ST. LOUIS

After attending the city council meeting the night before and noting the Merchant Bank Building's red tag on the evening of the 4th, FEMA contractor Cherilyn Widell felt that one of the teams should focus its efforts to support the preservation community in Bay Saint Louis. Lyman and Susan accompanied her there. Cherilyn managed to schedule an afternoon appointment with Bill Carrigee, the Bay Saint Louis building official in charge of assessing structures for repair viability. She also arranged a meeting with Charles Gray, the director of the Hancock County Historical Society (HCHS). The team drove straight



Hancock Historical Society

to his office, which is housed in the former Kate Lobrano House, a shotgun style house built in 1896. It received significant roof and water damage which Mr. Gray had already managed to have repaired along with the society's computer hard drive, so that they could begin assisting the community immediately. Despite the piles of debris outside the front door, the HCHS was up and running. Fortunately the small staff saved their thorough photographic and written records by keeping them in a walk in vault. During the meeting Ellis Anderson, a local preservationist, called and scheduled a meeting between FEMA and local historic homeowners the next morning at 11 a.m. back at the HCHS.

Mr. Gray presented a colorful history of Bay Saint Louis to the team, and provided an inventory of significant historic residences and commercial buildings in Bay Saint Louis that he hoped might be saved. He showed us photograph after photograph of 19th-century homes in the area that had been completely destroyed by Katrina, including his own first home in Bay Saint Louis, a lovely Greek Revival home constructed on the beach in 1840. After realizing that the maintenance had become too much for him, he sold that home a few years before and had just finished rehabilitating a brick warehouse as his new home when Katrina hit. That home, along with its priceless contents—art, antiques, chandeliers and family china, was also completely destroyed. His art collection included 165 fine lacquer boxes, several David's, a Van Brussel flower study on wood, a self-portrait by Rembrandt and Da Vinci's 'Boy with a Violin'. Miraculously, he managed to salvage the Rembrandt, 12 of the lacquer boxes, a tiny sterling replica of his yacht which itself was destroyed in the storm, a piece of his 18th-century Baccarat chandelier and a few pieces of his mother's one of a kind set of Spode china—each piece with a different scene from her childhood, quite a special set considering his mother was a Copeland of the Copeland Spode China Works in Stoke on Trent, England. Mr. Gray only left his home after urgings from friends and family. He didn't take anything with him, as the home itself was constructed in 1911 at an elevation of 25', set well off the beach and of 30" thick masonry walls. He couldn't imagine a storm existed powerful enough to take it down.

After our meeting at the historical society, Mr. Gray took us to his favorite food distribution tent for lunch where we met Martin Chambers, a historic homeowner who offered one of his trailers as shelter for the next Texas team visiting the area or any other visiting teams in need of a place to stay. After the quick lunch of red beans and rice, Mr. Gray led the team on an exploration of the devastation throughout Bay Saint Louis' various historic neighborhoods. Of particular note was a Queen Anne beach home 'Ada Villa' designed by Charles Sanger and constructed in 1889. After seeing the pre-Katrina photograph, we all crossed our fingers that it could be saved but when we walked around to the beach elevation of the house, even the most optimistic of us cringed. Patrick Sparks, a contracted structural engineer for FEMA assessed the structure a few days later and said that he did not think it could be saved. Mr. Gray

also drove us past the flattened site of the former Elmwood Plantation constructed in 1818 of brick with a two story front gallery, originally part of the Cowand Cotton Plantation. We witnessed block after



'Ada Villa' before Katrina



'Ada Villa' after Katrina

block of what had once been Beach Boulevard, Sycamore Street, Washington Street and Main Street NR Districts and what was now nothing more than rubble and debris interspersed with miraculously still standing trees, the occasional brick stair or drive leading to nowhere, crumpled cars and toppled live oak giants. Very likely these districts will be de-listed, and so areas once protected by their NR designations are now vulnerable to uncontrolled development. Despite autumn just around the corner, all the trees symbolically wore fresh green leaflets in their attempt to revitalize themselves.



Sycamore Street NR District



Washington Street NR District looking toward beach

Just prior to our meeting with the local building official, we visited the Merchant Bank Building and jotted down the owner's phone number which was scrawled across the building's side in spray paint. The meeting with Mr. Carrigee proved to be both frustrating and fruitful. Mr. Carrigee echoed his local government's sentiment, or lack there of, and expressed indifference toward preserving historic property in a time of crisis, stating that providing their citizens shelter, running water and electricity take precedent over the preservation of historic buildings. We acknowledged the City's daunting task of rebuilding but attempted to persuade him to acknowledge the importance of preserving what's familiar as well as what's historic in providing people with a sense of place—a sense of recognizing Bay St. Louis as the place he and others have known and loved. We all felt slightly hopeful when we noticed him consider this but when Cherilyn requested that Mr. Carrigee allow FEMA contracted structural engineers accompany his building assessment teams, and he flatly denied her request. Cherilyn adeptly made a second request, that the City consider adding the text "This is Not a Demolition Notice" to the City's red tags so that building owners would understand that a red tag denotes that the building is unsafe in its current condition but that the building may still be salvageable and that a professional should be consulted. Mr. Carrigee conceded to this request, which we all felt was a great victory. At the end of

the meeting, Mr. Carrigee confessed that he understood that Bay St Louis would not be the Bay St. Louis that he and other fellow citizens knew and loved if the city was built new from the ground up, and did not retain any of its historic structures. He also agreed to hand out Federal Tax Credit information to property owners if the MDAH provided him copies.

Before leaving, we asked Mr. Carrigee about the red tag assessment of the Merchant Bank Building and according to him, if the building didn't fall in the next few days on its own, the new owner would take care of that as they had purchased the property solely for its site's marketability to developers. Our hearts sank and we felt sure the building would be lost. During our drive back to the lodge, Susan decided to call the number we had copied from the side of the building. The owner of the building, Leslie Hicks, answered the phone and when we explained our role and why we were calling she said "I'm so glad you called." Mrs. Hicks and her husband purchased the building in July along with a historic home on Main Street, and had planned to move to Bay Saint Louis in October. They were in the process of selling their farm in Oklahoma when Katrina hit. She explained that they absolutely wanted to save the building but didn't know what to do from so far away. I gave her the names of two shoring companies in the area, along with contacts at MDAH, and Cherilyn Widell's and Charles Gray's phone numbers. She was so grateful for our help, and said she would contact a structural engineer and someone to shore the building immediately. The day after we first spoke, she had a structural engineer assess the building in addition to an assessment performed by Pat Sparks who has been hired as a contractor by FEMA. Both engineers felt the building could be saved but one recommended the front wall be deconstructed and rebuilt brick by brick. Mrs. Hicks received a call from Bill Carrigee only days after I spoke with her, claiming the City needed permission to tear the building down immediately as it posed a threat to public safety. As far as we know, the building has since been shored and awaits rehabilitation. the phone and needed permission to tear the building down immediately as it posed a threat to public safety. As far as we know, the building has since been shored and awaits rehabilitation.

Thursday, October 6, 2005

PASCAGOULA

Richard, Stan and Amy headed out in the morning to Pascagoula where the first stop was to one of the



Site of the former Ford Family home

temporary city trailers to meet up with Betty Bensey, city planning official, and Liz Ford, a former historical commission chair and now volunteer with the city. Miss Ford lost her beachfront home in the storm, as did her mother who was only two doors down from Senator Trent Lott's home that was also destroyed. It is really something to see — lot after lot of nothing but concrete steps leading nowhere. Miss Ford reported that her FEMA trailer has arrived to live in, but that she's awaiting power and sewer hook-ups, and said how lucky she feels to have been out of town in Birmingham at a wedding during the hurricane. She arrived back in Pascagoula only a few days later

and has been here ever since. She and her mother lost everything they hadn't packed for the wedding, and yet her spirit was indomitable.

Mrs. Bensey told us that downtown received two feet of flooding and only recently has the debris been hauled off. The third load had been taken away just the previous day and she said this makes a big difference in the appearance of the City. There was a lot of water damage here and now that debris piles are being moved, houses can be seen from the roads that look fine but it's likely that those houses with a trailer in front have been nearly gutted by the storm surge. The City of Pascagoula has worked with the MDAH and sent in information on demolition and Mrs. Bensey assured us she knows the difference between a building being unsalvageable and unsafe for occupancy. David Grobie is the city official in charge of inspecting historic structures but he was unable to join the group on an afternoon tour.

There are approximately seventy-five structures on the NR that have sustained damage. Miss Ford has received calls from some of the homeowners for site visits. She said that the Longfellow House came through intact quite well. Miss Ford mentioned Charles Sullivan who wrote a book that is a complete survey of all hurricanes that have hit the Mississippi coastline, called Hurricanes of the Mississippi Gulf Coast, Gulf Publications, 1986.

After lunch in the old Central Fire Station (NR), Miss Ford lead us over to the L&N Depot for an inspection. Every bracket on the rail side of the building had been braced, but on initial inspection this seems excessive. Water got under but not inside the L&N Depot which is very similar to the one in Ocean Springs. The slate roof was lifted by the storm and then slammed down, and Miss Ford and the City have been concerned over the repercussions of this action. The building showed signs of bowing and settling over the years, but the only recent damage that can be seen is at the southernmost bracket. The diagonal member has shifted out of its notch at the building, but otherwise is rather secure. An inspection of the attic trusses would have to wait until the next day; Mrs. Bensey suggested working with a structural engineer named Joey Duggan with Compton Engineering who helped previously at the Depot.



L&N Depot, shored brackets

Amanda Creel from *The Mississippi Press* met the group at the Depot to gather information on a story she was writing for the Saturday paper. She joined us on a driving tour of Pascagoula to review historic properties. Pascagoula doesn't have many historic districts per se, rather its important historic buildings are dotted throughout the city. Miss Ford shared a list of NR and NR-eligible properties with us so that we'd be able to match house to address. Behind downtown at the Bay Bridge, we drove down the 3500 block of Frederic Street (Local Historic District) turning onto Orange Street (Local Historic District) to view some tenement housing and other late 19th-century homes, including the Colle Towing Company House from 1895, a NR Property. Nearby on Pine Street were several homes from the turn of the century including the early Spanish consul at 4215 and the Captain W. Bodden House at 4002, also an NR Property. We drove toward the waterfront down Pascagoula Street with its many turn-of-the-century homes. Along Beach Boulevard the destruction was greatest with most lots no longer having structures on them at all. There are perhaps small piles of brick once used for piers, a few standing trees and some concrete steps but little else.

Turning back onto Washington Street that runs parallel to Beach, we stopped at the Leonard Levin House at 1403 Washington Avenue to meet with the daughter of the owner, Ruby Higdon. Mrs. Higdon lost her own home and has promised her mother that she will restore this traditional 1883 Pascagoula cross gable to its original glory. Much of the plaster to about 42" has been removed and the rooms are empty. The exterior is in very good shape, most of the damage occurred from standing water. Plaster removal has revealed the original walls and wallpaper under the newer plaster. The staircase had been reconfigured to turn into the central hallway, blocking the back door that was on axis with the front entry. There are original pocket doors that may reveal a decorative element such as faux graining. Mrs. Higdon's mother-in-law Mrs. Stevens paid the group a quick visit; she lives in Moss Point in the only house in Mississippi that has an interior chapel as it is the former St. Mary's convent.



Leonard Levin House

Afterwards, we walked back to the waterfront to the Captain Colle House from 1917 at 1309 Beach. The parents of the owner were able to take us through the property. It's an unusual Arts and Crafts home built by a German immigrant. Granite rustication is found at the lower walls and the porch surround as well as at the interior fireplace, a strange material for the Gulf Coast of Mississippi. There are original fixtures and cabinets. Again, standing water from the storm surge was responsible for the majority of the damage and plaster has been removed to about 60" above the floor. The storm was also responsible for the broken windows at the more recently glassed in porch and the removal of a fascia that hid decorative brackets. As with the previous homeowner, the group discussed ways in which the building could be restored by pointing to ghostings or other original fabric or configurations.

Back in the car, the group drove through an area of former Navy housing that is near the shipyards. The homes in this area are all small and have variations on the same theme. With no two homes alike, this area is a cohesive district of a very particular type of housing. This is a future NR District according to Miss Ford. Singer Jimmy Buffet's family lived here at 1305 Garfield when he was born. She decided that tomorrow's promise of better weather might mean putting off visiting the Old Spanish Fort until then.

BEAUVOIR

After leaving Pascagoula, we drove west along US 90 toward Biloxi. The city was up and running to a greater degree than other, smaller, communities across the coast. However, the waterfront was devastated with several homes damaged or destroyed beyond repair. Along the stretch of Biloxi beachfront that is south of the central business district, several casinos were heavily damaged. These flimsy-walled cartoonish structures in forms such as a pirate ship and a castle were reminders of the influence of this industry on the state; legislation passed while we were in Mississippi to allow the casinos to come up on dry land up to 800 feet (they must for now be anchored just off the coastline).

We came upon Beauvoir late in the afternoon in anticipation of the state of Jefferson Davis' retirement home. The French word Beauvoir means 'beautiful view' and no doubt Jefferson Davis and all those who have visited or lived there since experienced beautiful views. Security was tight as we drove into the property and met up with Jack Elliot, an archaeologist with the MDAH. National Guard presence was everywhere and followed us on the tour Jack gave us of the property. The hospital building to the east of the main home was completely destroyed and a pile of white painted bricks. There were two identical, one-room galleries flanking the main house that were also completely destroyed; all that remains are the brick steps at four sides of what were wrap-around porches. The main house was mostly intact; however the U-shaped porch on the front elevation and the rear loggia were blown away. There was some roof damage that was contained to the front and already temporarily patched. The design of the home helped it to survive: the main entry level was elevated a good 14-18' off the ground with brick piers spaced such that the wind and rushing water could pass under the home instead of being blocked by it. This survival pattern would repeat itself in any other similarly designed structure. The debris field was extraordinary at Beauvoir, extending at least 30 yards beyond the house, itself about that same distance from the water.



Beauvoir from the Road



Back Loggia



Hospital Ruins



Debris Field behind Beauvoir

BAY ST. LOUIS

Cherilyn, Lyman and Susan returned to Bay St. Louis to facilitate the historic homeowner meeting at the Hancock County Historical Society (HCHS) office. Just over thirty homeowners arrived by 11 a.m. and began perusing the disaster recovery literature provided by the THC and FEMA in addition to the aerial images of the various NR Districts along the County's coastline. Many were concerned that their homes did not seem to fall within the NR Districts, and Cherilyn pointed out that there may be errors and that homeowners should confirm their NR registry with the county historical society. Charles Gray supplied the concerned citizens with a beautifully maintained NR Log which quickly allayed their fears.



Homeowners at Hancock County Historical Society

A clipboard was passed around the room in order to gather a list of contact information for FEMA, THC and the HCHS.

Once attendees had settled in chairs around the room, Mr. Gray introduced FEMA and THC staff and the meeting began. Cherilyn updated the room on the AG's ruling that local governments could use public funds to shore up private historic properties and then be reimbursed by FEMA, as well as her meeting with the local building official Bill Carrigee. She expressed her satisfaction that the building official agreed to include the language "This is Not a Demolition Order" on all Red Tags. This instigated a discussion on the meaning of the Red Tags, and attendees were relieved to hear that a Red Tag on their home did not necessarily mean that it could not be salvaged. We urged property owners questioning the feasibility of salvaging their homes or commercial buildings to have them assessed by a structural engineer rather than accept the local official's assessment. When asked about the penalty for a city demolishing a historic property that could be saved, Cherilyn responded that no expenditure used for demolition of historic property could be reimbursed by FEMA unless the building has undergone 106 review and been deemed unsalvageable.

Cherilyn, Lyman and Susan explained the preservation roles of FEMA and the MDHA in disaster recovery, and then asked for questions. Many of the homeowners wanted to know the answer to the same question: is there any financial assistance for private homeowners who are willing to restore their homes? They were disappointed to hear that nothing is currently available and that Congress was expected to vote NO on legislation proposed by the National Trust which would provide Federal Tax Credits for private homeowners' restoration costs. The very next day, the National Trust managed to come through with roughly \$200,000 to assist private homeowners in Mississippi with shoring costs.

Many homeowners expressed frustration that their insurance companies were either avoiding their financial responsibility altogether on a wind versus water technicality, or would only pay a fraction it would cost for their homes to be truly restored. The meeting transformed into an open forum, and the group's brainstorming yielded some very innovative ways for the homeowners to help one another preserve as much historic fabric in their community as possible. One homeowner, an archeologist with NASA, Marco Giardino, questioned whether the sites of former historic homes could be designated as NR properties themselves in order that salvage materials no longer resting on their original site would be protected from city clearing long enough that they could be salvaged. We all agreed that this was an interesting notion but suggested that it would likely be difficult and time consuming. Since the issue was time sensitive, we proposed the historic homeowners organize a cooperative to protect their salvageable

property. In order to clear private property, the Corps of Engineers require the owner to complete a Right of Entry form and if the cooperative chose not to complete them, their properties would not be cleared. This would allow property owners in NR Districts to search debris and salvage historic building materials, architectural elements and personal effects from other cooperative members' properties – or salvage, store and re-use materials collectively. Though an interesting idea, it presents many problems. The responsibility for clearing the properties would transfer from the City to the property owners, and we reminded the group that the City's primary concern is health, safety and welfare of its citizens, and leaving debris fields for collective rummaging would conflict with that notion.

Before concluding the meeting, we told interested property owners that representatives from the Association of Preservation Technology (APT) would be arriving in Bay Saint Louis the next week and could be contacted through either Charles Gray or Cherilyn Widell. The APT team would consist of architects and structural engineers, and they would be available to assess properties while in Bay St. Louis.

PASS CHRISTIAN

Following the meeting with homeowners in Bay St. Louis, MDAH surveyor Jennifer Baum, requested assistance documenting structures in Pass Christian. We wound our way from the highway through the few cleared streets until we finally found Ms. Baum and her assistant standing at the corner of a block of what had once been downtown Pass Christian. She directed us down the road to begin our assessments.

722 East 2nd Street

Wild Life Manor, National Register property constructed in 1921. Colonial Revival. Dr. David Roberts, owner.

As we approached the house we could see a man in doctor's greens and asked if he was the owner of the house. He introduced himself and affirmed that he was the owner. Dr. Roberts remained guarded until we showed him our identification and spent some time with him. He told us that the house once faced the beach but a previous owner relocated it to the backside of the property after a hurricane. There was considerable tree and limb debris on the site though the city had removed a large extent of the debris that had been piled against the front fence. The owner led us through the house to evaluate the extent of water damage. The roof suffered moderate wind damage and some rear windows facing the beach were blown out, allowing significant amounts of water to infiltrate the beach side of the upper



Wild Life Manor, Roof and Window Damage

floor. The metal roof over a recent rear addition leaked, and portions of gutter were missing from the porte-cochere and at the front of the house. Wind-blown rain through broken windows and infiltration through the asphalt shingled roof caused damage to areas of the first floor ceiling where sheetrock had been installed over plaster, and also to second floor bead board ceilings and to wood floors on both second and first floors. For the most part, rooms still retaining plaster ceilings received minimal water damage, and appeared as though they would require little if any repair which we pointed out to the owner. The bead board warped significantly



Mold and Water damage to Bead Board Ceiling

in small areas but the extent of staining was limited. The owner mentioned that he felt the bead board ceilings would need to be replaced, which we discouraged by suggesting that once the boards dried out, he could replace those that were still badly warped but that a majority of the ceiling remained in near perfect condition. The wood floors on the first floor were cupped and warped in several locations, and Dr. Roberts felt it should also be replaced. We recommended allowing the floors to dry out completely, and after reevaluation if necessary the floors could be lightly sanded to remove cupping and then refinished. Some doors and sliding doors were binding and

difficult to operate. Storm surge did not enter the building but carpets had been removed and windows opened for circulation. Mold was prevalent in closeted areas and bathrooms. The owner is awaiting the insurance adjuster before starting repairs. We offered literature to Dr. Roberts and advised approaches to repairing the wood floors and bead board ceilings. Asked for the name of the historic property, the owner replied it was named Wild Life Manor by the previous owner because he raised seven children in it.

132 Davis Avenue

Lolette Wittmann, owner

The house is a small 1920's single-family vernacular structure, gabled roof, wood frame on piers. It is located a couple of blocks off the main beach route in what little remains of the business district. The owner requested an overall assessment of the structure. It was early evening and we inspected the house with a flashlight. Through a hole in the porch, the house still appeared to be sitting on its foundation,



132 Davis, Porch Column Shifted

though there was evidence that the house had shifted several inches to the north pulling the porch fascia off and tilting the concrete masonry unit (CMU) perimeter wall. We assured Mrs. Wittmann that the CMU merely enclosed the crawl space and was not her foundation. The base of one rear porch column had shifted a several inches out of line. There was one soft spot in the wood floor in a front room, possibly caused by a toppled brick pier. The attic and crawl spaces were inaccessible. There were no missing roof shingles observed from the ground and the asbestos siding was intact. Sediment was deposited on the interior but no apparent cupping or warping of the floorboards. Our overall assessment of the damage was considered minor. We recommended that the crawl space be inspected for any possible damage to piers, and for the owner to remove gypsum board to allow the building to dry out.

Friday, October 7, 2005

PASS CHRISTIAN

The Mississippi office requested a team to return to Pass Christian to assist in continuing to assess historic residences, and so Amy and Lyman headed that direction. Jennifer Baum, of the MDAH, recommended that we contact William Bourdin upon our arrival but did not have an address or contact information for him. She told us that the owners of 132 Davis Street, who Susan and Lyman had visited the previous evening, would be able to direct us to him. They pointed us to the historical society member who lives alone above his plumbing supply business across the street at 139 Davis Avenue. Mr. Bourdin is the de facto Pass Christian Historical Society archivist. Records and photographs share space with plumbing supplies on the first floor of his business. Mr. Bourdin appeared exhausted. After initial hesitation, Mr. Bourdin welcomed us to examine the damage.

139 Davis Avenue

Sediment from the storm surge was still in the building. Water reached a height of 6–7' or so, damaging most of the photographs on the walls. Written records stored in the attic were damaged from water leaks. Mr. Bourdin reported having been promised assistance from the MDAH but to date no one had arrived. We were later told by Richard Cawthon that the MDAH had in fact offered to work on the photographs and documents in Jackson but Mr. Bourdin would not allow them to leave Pass Christian. With help from a relative, records were lined up on the second floor porch to be aired out. The records were in plastic sleeves separated by plastic forks for air circulation, and loosely covered with a plastic tarp.

The photographs on the first floor were still in their original location in plastic sleeves on a vertical turnstile. Many images were damaged but still legible. Mr. Bourdin had fans operating and the windows and doors were open. Mold was not prevalent. On the way to Pass Christian, Cheryl Widell had phoned recommending we contact local historic preservation activist Edwin MacDiarmid and during our visit with Mr. Bourdin, Mr. MacDiarmid entered the store. He agreed to take us to meet property owners in the area.

607 East Beach

Mr. Macdiarmid took us to his Colonial Revival residence at 607 East Beach (Scenic). According to photographic evidence as provided by the owner, he believes the house to have been built prior to 1875. The Mississippi State Historic Preservation Office dates the house to 1896. This is the year his family purchased the house. In the 1920's, the family added a concrete terrace, side wing porches, and changed the simply detailed columns to fluted Ionic. It was noted in a local historical society publication as being the only beachfront property to retain its original multi-thousand foot depth.

Mr. Macdiarmid reported the site elevation at 28' above sea level. The site took most of the brunt force from the 30' plus storm surge. The house suffered minor wind damage to the roof and side porches and moderate foundation damage from the storm surge. A 1920's concrete terrace protected most of the brick piers from the remainder of the 30' plus storm surge although several piers along the perimeter had been undermined and collapsed. Temporary screw jacks were in place. The surge eroded the foundation at the perimeter of the concrete terrace and temporary supports were in place. The two side porch additions suffered minor damage. The servant's quarters in the rear of the property was

moderately damaged by the surge. Mold was prevalent and abatement was in progress. The surge ripped mechanical equipment and ducts from beneath the house. The storm deposited considerable tree debris and sediment on site. Because the home had weathered Hurricane Camille in 1969, Mr. Macdiarmid felt it wasn't necessary to evacuate, and he and his wife rode out the storm. I asked if he would ride out another one, and he said "nope".

861 East Beach (Scenic)

McCutchon-Butler House, 1848.

Greek Revival. Frederick Sutter, Builder. Elizabeth Jones, owner.

Similar to 607 East Beach, this property is located well above sea level and set back from the beach



861 East Beach

front. There was minimal damage to the structure. Wind blew the front doors open and wind blown water affected interior plaster finishes in the center hall. A metal roof added in 1911 was undamaged. Chimneys were lowered in previous work. The storm surge ripped out mechanical equipment beneath the house. A side addition settled slightly away from the main house, creating a small rise in the wood floor at the intersection of the two structures. The site suffered considerable erosion, and uprooted trees along with their debris and sediment deposits littered the site. The house is currently undergoing interior restoration. The owner, who rode out the storm in his attic, was most interested in references for horsehair plaster specialist, which staff provided upon our return.

905 East Beach (Scenic)

Antebellum.

The house was raised and enlarged in 1900. A local publication describes the house as one of the few remaining houses in the Pass with shingle style features. The front gabled roof was torn completely off and a blue tarp had been installed. Gutters and downspouts were torn away from the structure. The interior was inaccessible. A corner column to the front porch was laying in the yard. Most windows facing the beach were blown out. Contents visible through the openings were water damaged and mold was prevalent. The owner was not onsite and repairs had not begun. Except for the missing roof, the house appeared structurally sound and on its foundations suggesting there was minimal impact from the storm surge.



905 East Beach, toppled column



905 East Beach, rear view

BILOXI

After leaving Pass Christian, Amy and Lyman drove along the shoreline to Biloxi. Entering the community of Long Beach, every lot is vacant, as opposed to every few lots in Pass Christian. More buildings remain along the waterfront in Gulfport and Biloxi, but these are heavily damaged. Even the casinos in this central area have been hit hard, although tall buildings such as the Beau Rivage casino in Biloxi were large enough to protect downtown from even more damage from the storm surge.

We stopped again at Beauvoir where the removal of the debris at the hospital was underway. Two archaeologists and a National Guard volunteer were sifting through the rubble in order to find whatever they could to salvage. So far they've found musket and cannon balls, some bones and a Confederate ten dollar bill. They told us that there is an overwhelming amount of debris that should all be carefully sifted through, but there is not enough time and too few workers. The National Guardsman stopped his work long enough to give us another tour of the grounds, taking us several yards back toward the cemetery that was the furthest area to capture debris.

Old Biloxi Cemetery

The cemetery is situated on an elevated portion facing the beach. The old section of the cemetery extends in a long narrow strip. A road to the rear separates the old from the newer extended area. Large sections of a wood boardwalk running along the roadway ripped away by the surge destroyed the brick and iron fence and crypts. Sections of the boardwalk and the brick and iron fence wall were strewn about the grave plots and crypts. The surge eroded grave plots, topped tombstones. Two large oak trees rooted by high winds were resting on crypts, its roots ripping grave plots. Damage was severe within the first 30 yards of the fence. Some exposed crypts were wrapped in blue tarps. One large iron casket was completely exposed. Further back into the cemetery, damage to tombs and headstones was limited to fallen tree limbs. Some limbs had been cut for removal.



Old Biloxi Cemetery



Old Biloxi Cemetery

PASCAGOULA

L&N Depot



L&N Depot, Southeast Elevation

At the city's request, Stan and Susan accompanied Richard back to Pascagoula to meet again with Liz Ford and assess the damage to the L&N Depot and the Old Spanish Fort. We met with Joey Duggan of Compton Engineering, the locally hired structural engineers, and toured the interior of the building. The depot had flooded during the storm, and our first recommendation was to remove all carpeting and open floor hatches so that the building will dry out. No standing water could be seen through floor hatches but the ground was still very damp at the foundation. Stan recommended the city install a vapor barrier at the foundation once it had completely dried out. Some floor boards had buckled due to water damage, and we recommended that once floor boards dry and shrink, those still buckled be removed and milled as necessary to fit.

Several years earlier, the city rehabilitated the building though it appeared to be a cosmetic approach that did not fully address structural concerns though Mr. Duggan stated that the building had been leveled at that time. No overall lateral movement could be seen in the foundation but both the building's exterior and interior displayed clear evidence that the building was tilted horizontally across its short elevation toward the north but until we reviewed the attic structure with the engineers, it was not clear why. The east end exhibited much more tilt than the west end of the building. Though overall the structure was relatively sound, Stan pointed out that the attic framing lacked proper cross bracing – both in plan and elevation. Wind forces applied to the roof's large overhangs during the storm caused the improperly braced east end of the roof structure to rack toward the north, giving the building a very unsafe appearance. The uplift might have been prevented if the diagonal struts connecting the roof to the building had been properly bolted down to the building, and we recommended this be done to prevent future uplift. Plumbing stacks penetrated the corner plates – leaving the ceiling joists untied, and during a previous rehabilitation a structural wall had been removed from the middle of the building without installing columns to support the roof load, which caused the roof structure to pull away from the top plates and sag. Stan recommended creating a sheer wall at the top of the ceiling joists by providing diagonal bracing across the ceiling structure as well as diagonally bracing the rafters to the top plates, and the installation of support at the previous location of the structural wall. Stan advised Mr. Duggan that the building would need to be hoisted back to vertical using a turnbuckle and then supported.



Roof structure dropping due to missing structural wall below



Plumbing stacks penetrating corner plates disconnecting ceiling joists

Old Spanish Fort

After our meeting at the Pascagoula Depot and a wonderful lunch of fried chicken, fried okra, fried green tomatoes and amazingly fried corn on the cob, we accompanied Miss Ford to the Old Spanish Fort, apparently Mississippi's oldest surviving structure. It is estimated to date from the early 18th-century and thought to have been a carpenter shop on the estate of Joseph Simon de La Pointe. The tabby walls (early shell concrete) remain from the original structure, and the slightly later bousillage walls (mud and



Old Spanish Fort, East Elevation



Snapped Rafter Tails

moss) and roof structure are thought to date from the late 18th-century but the porches and overhangs had been reconstructed. Jackson County currently owns and operates the building and nearby museum, and a county representative joined us and Compton Engineering on site.

Overall the building survived the storm well, particularly considering its location on a peninsula on the south bank of Beardslee Lake. As one of the oldest houses, the original owner selected one of the highest elevations and during the storm the lake's edge lapped at the back porch but never entered the building or reached the bousillage walls. Several rafter tails snapped at the top plate, the associated roof materials had fallen near the south porch entry and some wood shingles had blown off the roof. The brick piers and mud walls appeared sound but termites have severely damaged the wooden portions of the structure. The wood posts and beams on both the north and south porches had tilted in toward the building, leaving the rafters shifted and raised up off the beams. The roof structure appeared to be in very good condition, and had been reinforced at some point with some bracing and turnbuckles. Stan did note rotting rafters and plates at the west end, most likely due to termite damage. The attic door under the gable at the west end of the porch had blown in to the attic but was in good condition. From what could be seen through a floor hatch, the foundation appeared to be undamaged by flood waters.

The two most significant issues that need to be addressed at the Old Spanish Fort are not storm-related items but rather termites and rising damp. On the interior, the inappropriate elastomeric paint traps moisture in the walls by not allowing them to breathe. We recommended removing this paint and applying a more permeable lime plaster to preserve the original bousillage and tabby walls.



Inappropriate elastomeric paint trapping moisture in original bousillage walls



Termite damage typical to porch structure

Saturday, October 8, 2005

NEW ORLEANS

The storm passed to the east of the city, sparing catastrophic damage to structures from the highest force winds. Windows and roofs of high rise structures in the central business district including the superdome received severe damage from winds. One masonry steeple on an historic church in the Uptown area was toppled and a tower cupola of an 1860's era church in the Bywater historic district was exposed when the sheet metal roofing was ripped away. St. Louis Cathedral recently had its roof and steeples restored. It and the historic buildings flanking Jackson Square escaped with minimal wind damage. Some masonry facades of buildings in older sections of the city collapsed. There was moderate roof, gutter and downspout damage observable throughout the city. Tree uprooting and tree limb damage was moderate to severe throughout the city, damaging structures and downing utility poles and wires.

Wind driven water from Lake Ponchartrain caused levees along two drainage canals to fail. Waterlines of 8–10' were observed in the lakefront area neighborhoods that stretch from the parish line of the west (the 17th Street Canal) to New Orleans east, some of the lowest areas in the city. A few residents were observed cleaning their homes but by and large this area of the city was lifeless. Many homes are brick veneer on slab. They can be considered to be a total loss. Some of the older homes are wood frame and raised on piers but many floated off their foundations. Some of the raised cottages and bungalows constructed higher 7' above grade may have been spared with only the enclosed areas beneath damaged.

Wind driven water overtopped the Industrial Canal levee, eventually causing a breach. Water flooded the Holy Cross historic district in the ninth ward downriver and into St. Bernard Parish. A second overtopping due to Hurricane Rita re-flooded the same area of the city. Floodwater was reported to be 8–10' deep in this area. This part of the city was inaccessible.

We drove through the Bywater and Faubourg Marigny historic districts located downriver from the Vieux Carre. These districts are on higher elevation on the riverside of St. Claude Avenue. A mix of raised creole cottages and Victorian shotguns predominate. There appeared to be minimal flood damage to structures in this area. Activity was light with some residents seen cleaning debris and trash. Neighborhood bars and cafes were open but restaurants for the most part are still closed. No flooding was reported in the Vieux Carre district. A popular restaurant on Esplanade Avenue had just reopened the day before our visit.



Bywater Residential Historic District



Bywater Residential Historic District

Mid-City Historic District

A central city neighborhood, this area received 3–5' of water. Many houses are raised on piers 3–7' above grade and depending on the block, many appeared to have only minor damage from flooding. Some residents were observed cleaning enclosed ground floor spaces.

Garden District, Uptown and Carrollton neighborhoods on the riverside of St. Charles Avenue were largely spared of flooding. Many residents remained during the storm and this was one of the first areas where residents were allowed to return permanently.

Gentilly

This is a turn of the century neighborhood established on one of the naturally high ridges in the city. A few blocks back from the main thoroughfare, houses received approximately 18" of water. Residents were cleaning homes and cleaning crews were picking up trash, garbage, and debris from the streets.

Central Business District

Cleaning crews were observed pumping water from many of the downtown buildings but otherwise the area was vacant and lifeless. Most of the city's hospitals and medical centers are located in this area and are closed. The city morgue was flooded and is operating out of a makeshift facility upriver from New Orleans.



Faubourg Marigny Historic District

Sunday, October 9, 2005

PORT ARTHUR and ORANGE

We entered Orange on US90 from Louisiana and I-10. Immediately we could see wind damage to buildings. There had been debris and tree damage visible since Lake Charles. Driving downtown, the damage was less than we anticipated. The Orange County Courthouse appears not to have been hit. The same can be said for the Stark Museum and City Hall. However, the First Presbyterian Church had some damage to a few stained glass windows and the base of its central dome. There were many trees down but historic homes seem to have been spared.

In Port Arthur, a row of historic homes including Rose Hill and the Pompeiian Villa seemed not to have sustained any structural damage but may have suffered from flooding. There was some minor damage to the wooden porch at Rose Hill and the carpet from the Villa had been piled up on the roadside for removal. Downtown saw a bit of wind damage, mostly broken windows, torn roofs of smaller buildings and peeled back slipcovers revealing interesting architectural detailing on some older commercial buildings similar to those seen in Beaumont on our way to Mississippi. As in Orange and Beaumont, the most prolific damage was to trees although, in all three communities, there were several homes with roof damage. We had a Cajun lunch in Winnie at a restaurant that had been closed as we drove east a week prior.



Pompeiian Villa



Rose Hill

This was an amazing and emotional visit to a severely damaged part of the country. There is an immediate need for preservationists and structural engineers to participate in the physical stabilization and ultimate reconstruction of the coastal communities in Mississippi, and then the needs of New Orleans should begin to be met in earnest. While change is in the air, no one need worry about the deaths of these communities. We encountered a miraculous human spirit all along the Mississippi Gulf Coast strong enough to get them through even this devastation. Still, there is a desperate need for the preservation community to get involved to assist in the proper development and restoration of these towns, and for preservation specialists to pitch in their expertise at all levels in the next several months.