Opelousas

HISTORIC WALKING TOUR

Experience the Charm of Louisiana's Third Oldest City

Founded 1720

Bienvenue aux Opelousas
Louisiana's third oldest city!

Rich in history and culture, the city of Opelousas is influenced by a mixture of nationalities. Opelousas has been the crossroads of Louisiana for centuries. From its architectural offerings to its role in the American Civil War to its plentiful Cajun and Creole traditions, the city's diverse cultures are captured in many different ways.

Native Americans were the first inhabitants of the place we today call Opelousas. In fact, the city takes its name from one of the tribes, the Opelousa Indians. Opelousa translates into "black water" and, according to legend, the term *Opelousas* means "black hair" or "black leg," which was derived from two lakes near the area they occupied. The lakes evidently appeared black from the excessive quantity of leaves along the lake's banks. In the early 1700s, French courier de bois ("runner of the woods," or hunters and trappers), carried on trade with the Opelousas. In 1720, the French established a trading post, le Poste des Opelousas, which also served as a stopping point for colonists traveling between Natchitoches and New Orleans. Opelousas is the third oldest settlement in Louisiana.

By the time the Spanish took control of the Louisiana colony from the French in 1763, Opelousas was a thriving outpost. Records indicate that one of the first Spanish colonial land grants to a settler in the Opelousas area was made in 1763 to Louis Pellerin, a French officer stationed at the Opelousas Post. From this grant, Pellerin laid out the town of Opelousas in 1764.

The establishment of the Opelousas Post brought a wave of diverse ethnic groups to the area. French settlers brought black slaves with them. German colonists arrived in the mid-1700s and Spanish settlers began to arrive in the 1770s. Soon, Irish, Italian and Scottish settlers began arriving in the late 1700s and early 1800s. One of the most influential groups of people arriving in 1765, were the French-speaking Acadians, who were exiled from Canada by the British. Equally important were the Créoles. Créole derives from the Spanish word "criollo" (a child born in the colony). Créoles were the descendants of the early French and Spanish colonist of Louisiana. Later, in the nineteenth century, the word "Créole" had also become associated with people of mixed heritage that spoke French fluently. "Créoles de Couleur," or Creoles of Color, refers to descendants of French and Spanish colonists that intermingled with the Native Americans, Haitians and Africans. Famous Creoles include the pirate Jean Lafitte, a French Creole, and Amédé Ardoin, a Creole of Color, who made the first audio recording of zydeco music. Opelousas is truly a cultural mosaic!

As a result of the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, the area was divided into two parts. The lower section became known as the Territory of Orleans, and "Upper Louisiana." This territory was divided into twelve counties, which included the County of Opelousas. In 1805, Opelousas became the seat of government for this county. A year later, the first Opelousas County Courthouse was built on a square in the center of town. Today, the area around the courthouse is designated as a National Historic District. In 1807, Louisiana was divided into 19 "parishes" (because of the strong Roman Catholic heritage of Louisiana, the political subdivisions are called parishes instead of counties). The original Opelousas Parish then became *Imperial* St. Landry Parish. It is named after the St. Landry Catholic Church located here. Called "Imperial" because the area was the largest parish in the state at the time. The original parish extended from the Atchafalaya River on the east to the Sabine River on the west, north to the present boundary of Avoyelles Parish to the Gulf of Mexico in the south. A total seven parishes were created from St. Landry.

Louisiana was admitted to the Union in 1812. Opelousas was formally incorporated in 1821 by a legislative act that included all land within one-half mile of the courthouse. During the Civil War, Opelousas became the capital of Confederate Louisiana in May 1862, after Union forces occupied Baton Rouge. The Lieutenant Governor at that time was Charles Homère Mouton, whose home in Opelousas became the temporary residence of the

Governor. As a courtesy to this, Mouton's home became the Governor's Mansion – a title it still bears to this day.

Famous residents of Opelousas include Jim Bowie, legendary adventurer and hero of the Battle of the Alamo; General Garrigues de Flaugeac, a soldier under Napoléon Bonaparte who was a hero at the Battle of New Orleans; Louisiana governors Jacques Dupré and André Bienveau Roman; Olympic gold medalist Rodney Milburn; Swamp Pop music legend Rod Bernard; the "King of Zydeco" Clifton Chenier; novelist John Ed Bradley; and, Eula Savoie, founder of Savoie's® Cajun Food Products. Perhaps the most famous Opelousas natives are Chef Tony Chachere, founder of Tony Chachere's Famous Creole Seasoning®, and Chef Paul Prudhomme, who is credited for introducing Cajun food to the world.

Opelousas offers both a city historic district and a National Historic District, showcasing much of 19th and early 20th century architecture. This walking/driving tour is only a suggestion. It is impossible to showcase every home, church, building, and historic site, so feel free to explore other avenues of this historic city. We know that you will enjoy this charming, storied place with its picturesque landscape and warm Southern hospitality.

Further information on the history of Opelousas is available at the Opelousas Tourist Information Center, the Opelousas Museum and Interpretive Center, the Opelousas Public Library, or on our website: www.cityofopelousas.com.

Enjoy your visit and come back soon!

Notes that the property is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Downtown Tour

1. St. Landry Parish Courthouse, 1939

118 S. Court Street

Built at a cost of $280,000, this Art Deco style courthouse is a three-story building with a limestone façade. It features the original Art Deco lamps flanking the steps and a brushed aluminum spiral staircase inside. Also flanking the courthouse are two Victorian lamp poles that were placed on the square in the 1890s. The globes were hand-made in the former Yugoslavia. Since 1806, five courthouses have stood on the courthouse square. Also on the square, as in most old towns, are monuments to the parish's war dead. The Opelousas Civil War monument is distinguished not by the usual Confederate soldier, but by Louisiana's state bird, the brown pelican, feeding her young. In addition, there are other monuments to soldiers who have served in our nation's other conflicts. This is the heart of *Old Opelousas*.

2. Lawyer's Row, c.1860

136 – 100 W. Bellevue Street

Located across from the courthouse, between Market and Court streets, this group of commercial office buildings range in age from 50 to 150 years old. Throughout the years, this historic section has been occupied by attorneys and was given the name, "Lawyer's Row."

3. Union Bank Building, 1911

107 S. Court Street, corner of Court and Bellevue streets

This building once housed the old Union Bank and Trust Company. Later it became Planter's Bank and then First National Bank of St. Landry Parish. The building is Beaux Arts in design and features a Baroque-style roof and a bas-relief of a pelican above the main doors.

4. Old *Rexall New Drug* Store, c. 1895

128 S. Court Street

Situated across from the courthouse, this building's ornately decorated tin ceiling makes it architecturally unique. The drug store sat next to the site of the Lacombe Hotel. A hotel had occupied this spot since 1789. During the Civil War, the hotel was called Eureka House Hotel and it was the meeting place of the Louisiana Legislature from 1862 – 1863, as Opelousas served as the state capital of Confederate Louisiana. The courthouse served as the actual capitol building during this period. In 1890, the hotel became known as the Lacombe Hotel. It was demolished in the early 1940s.

5. Old Federal Building, c.1890

131 S. Court Street

This prominent three-story building, in Romanesque Revival style, has been an Opelousas landmark for well over a century. In 1933, the Federal Court Building and post office workroom were added and the entrance was moved from Landry Street to Court Street. The building sits on the site which once belonged to Manon Baldwin, a free woman of color and prominent businesswoman. As well as serving as Baldwin's residence, the property was also a boarding house and tavern.

6. Savoy Building, 1905

161 E. Landry Street

This one-story brick building features decorative bands of cast fleur-de-lis. For years, this was the home of the Dietlein Jewelry Store. On the west side of this building is artist Tony Wimberly's mural depicting life in St. Landry Parish in the early 1800s, and illustrates a chapter in the life of Jim Bowie, famed hero of the Battle of the Alamo, and one-time Opelousas resident.

7. Early Merchandise Stores, c. 1920

108 & 106 E. Landry St.

These identical one-story brick buildings feature elaborate detailing and retain their period fixed awnings, complete with lion heads holding the awning chains in place. On the east side of this building, the *Seven Brothers Oak* mural, by muralist Robert Tinney, shows early settlers of the area dancing and celebrating under the centuries old oak.

8. Shute Building, 1924

102 E. Landry Street

Established at the turn of the 20th century by Dr. Creighton Shute, this building served as a general merchandise store and pharmacy. This property is of significance in U.S. history, Clyde Barrow of the notorious "Barrow Gang," received his last shave here from Otis Welch of the Star Barber Shop, located inside the drug store. Barrow and his accomplice, Bonnie Parker, were gunned down just days later in north Louisiana by federal agents.

9. Old Parish Trust & Savings Building, 1927

103 W. Landry Street

This two-story brick structure is adorned with a bas-relief eagle, two linear panels with stylized fretwork, and diamond shaped patterns above its windows. For many years it served as a bank. It now houses Java Square Café coffee house, where patrons can enjoy their coffee in the old bank's original vault.

10. Sandoz Law Firm, c. 1905

113 & 117 W. Landry Street

This two-story Italianate stucco over brick building has been a law office since its construction. The building was once part of the famous Waldorf Hotel of Opelousas. The *Acadian to Cajun* mural depicts the journey of the Acadians from Nova Scotia to south Louisiana. The painting is by local artist Jerome Ford and is located on the east side of the building.

11. Old Greco Building, 1921

123 W. Landry Street

This building served for more than half a century as Joe Greco's Shoe Repair Shop. In 1991, it became Back in Time Restaurant & Gift Shop. Stop in and have a glass of freshly squeezed lemonade and a delicious one-of-a-kind sandwich.

12. 19th Century Law Office, c.1845

129 W. Landry Street

This one-story Greek Revival law office is constructed of Louisiana cypress. It was sold on October 10, 1850, by George King, the first judge of the Parish of St. Landry, to Lucius Dupré, who occupied the building during the late-19th century. Through the years, it has been used as a law office by several prominent attorneys, and at one time housed the Jim Bowie Museum & Tourist Center.

13. Jim Bowie Oak

W. Landry Street next to the Homère Mouton Law Office

This giant live oak tree is over 350 years old and is named in honor of legendary adventurer and hero of the Battle of the Alamo, Colonel James "Jim" Bowie, who lived in Opelousas for part of his life. The Jim Bowie Oak is a charter member of the Louisiana Live Oak Society. The Jim Bowie Courtyard, located behind the oak, is built on the site of what is believed to be a blacksmith shop belonging to Bowie.

14. Homère Mouton Law Office, c. 1840

133 W. Landry Street

Built for his son-in-law, Charles Homère Mouton, in the mid-1800s by Lastie Dupré, a wealthy St. Landry Parish landowner and organizer of the first bank in the area. Mouton served as Louisiana's Lieutenant Governor from 1858 – 1860. During the Civil War, Mouton's home on Liberty Street was used by Confederate Governor Thomas O. Moore as his executive residence. This building also once served as the Jim Bowie Museum & Tourist Center.

15. The Palace Café, 1954

135 W. Landry Street

Originally named the Palace Sandwich Shop, this old restaurant was established in 1927 by George and Mary Doucas. Immigrants from Greece, "Mama and Papa Doucas" specialized in Creole and Cajun dishes, such as their famous crawfish bisque, fried chicken salad and, in bringing the old world with them to Opelousas, baklava. The original building, which was built in 1893, also rented rooms to travelers. The old structure was demolished and the present building sits on the same site at the corner of Market and Landry streets.

16. Delta Grand Theatre, c. 1933

120 S. Market Street

The original Delta Theatre opened April 1, 1934, by Collins Conrad of Breaux Bridge, who operated it for four months,

after which he sold it to Joe Guillory. Southern Amusement Company, Inc. of Lake Charles purchased the business in 1936 and the entire property in 1940, and was the sole owner and operator. In the 1950s, the Delta Theatre was completely remodeled and air-conditioned. It reopened on June 4, 1955, with the latest equipment for CinemaScope pictures and wall speakers for stereophonic sound with a wall-to-wall screen. The current renovation of the theater has brought new life to the building. It now serves the community as a multipurpose facility hosting plays, live concerts, art exhibitions, showing movie classics and other events.

17. Old City Hall – Opelousas Town Market, 1888

131 W. Bellevue Street

Built of handmade brick, this building was once the center of commerce when it served as the town's market. It was an arcaded, open air market with a hip roof and a large mansard cupola. In addition to fresh vegetables, fruits and other food items, it also housed a coffee shop. It is the second such market to sit on this site. The earlier market was built before the Civil War. In the early 1900s, the building housed the Electric Light Supply Storage Company, and it even served as the Opelousas Public Library for a time. When women won the right to vote during the 1920s, Opelousas ladies exercised their rights at the Old Town Market polling place. In 1932, the building was renovated into the neo-classical style, as it appears today, and served as the city hall.

18. 19th Century Dentist Office, 1880

234 S. Court Street

Built by Dr. Charles Bercier, a local dentist, this Victorian style building served as a dental office for many years. Later, it was used by several physicians.

19. Judge Dupré House, c. 1890

312 S. Court Street

This building was constructed by prominent attorney, state representative, and later district judge, Gilbert L. Dupré, the great-grandson of Governor Jacques Dupré of Opelousas. In the 1920s, Judge Dupré wrote one of the first political histories of St. Landry Parish.

20. Watkins-Saizan Home, c. 1888

405 S. Court Street

Built by Dr. Joseph Saizan, this home featured the first indoor bathroom in Opelousas. The home has had many restorations and additions through the years including closing in the front gallery for bedroom purposes. Many beautiful panels of cut glass are found around the home as well as frescoes and gingerbread work. The home is bound by an original wrought iron gateway.

21. Mosley-Boagni Home, 1922

410 S. Court Street

Built with cypress and pine flooring with lumber from one of the oldest academies in Opelousas, this cottage underwent major renovations under the ownership of Mrs. Josephine Mosley, daughter of E. B. Dubuisson, who married Vincent Mosley, a prominent lawyer, cattleman and civic leader. A screened front porch was added in 1941, and the upstairs completed in 1950.

22. Pettijean Home, 1900

508 S. Court Street

This home was constructed by Dr. Ernest Pettijean. A detail to note is the green ceramic tile roof with each shingle weighing approximately five pounds. Many of the window panes are individually beveled and a high vaulted ceiling can be found in the formal dining room. The beautiful camellia trees in the yard are over 100 years old.

23. Gilbert Mistric Home, c. 1920

536 S. Court Street

This beautiful and spacious Federal Colonial home was built by long-time Opelousas dentist Dr. Gilbert Mistric, son of Pierre Mistric, and his bride, Marie Louise Mayer. It was the first home to be built on this block. The home is constructed of pine.

24. Pierre Mistric Home, c. 1882

612 S. Court Street

For more than 100 years, this home has been occupied by descendants of Pierre Mistric, who bought the home in 1912 for his family. Built of cypress and oak, it was originally a mid-Victorian two-storied structure complete with a steeple and encircling porch. After a fire destroyed portions of the house, renovations made in 1950 simplified the architecture to a Georgian Colonial home.

25. John Thistlethwaite House, 1925

631 S. Court Street

Built by John Thistlethwaite, this Greek Revival home is made with cypress and features massive fluted columns. Mr. Thistlethwaite owned and operated Thislethwaite Lumber Company and Macland Plantation just outside of the town of Washington. In addition to two staircases, the home holds two mirrors that once hung in Spanish Colonial Governor Alejandro O'Reilly's mansion when he was Governor of Louisiana in 1769. In 1950, John Thistlethwaite's son, Hugh, purchased the home from his siblings and lived here until his death.

26. Lewis Home, c. 1888

711 S. Court Street

John Lewis, a prominent attorney in Opelousas, built this beautiful Victorian home featuring a formal living room and dining area reached by cut glass doors. Many beautiful cut glass windows are found throughout the home. The formal rooms feature hand-painted ceilings with

cherubs. Of particular interest, this home was where Julia Anderson, of Bobby Dunbar fame, stayed while in town for the trial. In 1912, a young boy, Bobby Dunbar, went missing after he was last seen during a camping trip with his parents. Eight months later, a boy was found with a handyman named William Walters. The Dunbars claimed him as their own, "winning" Bobby in a court case against a woman named Julia Anderson, who also thought the child was hers.

27. Persimmon Place, c. 1891
809 S. Court Street

This cypress home was built by St. Landry Parish Judge William Charles Perrault and his wife Amanda Lastrapes Perrault. It contains a parlor, living and dining rooms, four bedrooms, two porches and six fireplaces. It houses a rare, circa 1840s, six-foot beveled edge "diamond dust" mirror. The persimmon tree located in front of the home is over 100 years old and is believed to be one of the oldest producing persimmon trees in the state.

28. Trosclair Home, c.1891
812 S. Court Street

This Louisiana cypress home was built by former Opelousas Postmaster J.P. Trosclair. The home, which is Victorian in style, includes five bedrooms, a formal living room and dining room.

29. W.C. Perrault Home, 1933
819 S. Court Street

Built by attorney W.C. Perrault, this home is built of cypress weatherboard. The surrounding block of residences once belonged to members of the Perrault family.

30. McCain Home, c. 1902
119 W. Jefferson Street

Walton McCain, a former mayor of the Louisiana community of Basile, bought this home and an additional 500 acres stretching west towards Railroad Avenue in 1922, for he and his family to escape Basile. An attempt was made on the mayor's life after he prevented Basile's saloons from being open around the clock. This home is built in the "Country Victorian" style of architecture. The home features 10 foot ceilings throughout and is made of Louisiana cypress.

31. Littell House, c. 1935
908 S. Market Street

This simple one-story Colonial Revival home was built by Opelousas physician Dr. William C. Littell. Later, the home was owned by Dr. Robert and Gillis Bienvenu Locket. The home features a bomb shelter-like cellar.

32. Wier Home, 1939
431 S. Market Street

Built by Harvey Wier, this home is constructed with stone brought by train from West Texas and is reminiscent of a Spanish ranch style home. Many fossils can be found in the stones that make up the exterior walls. The home once featured one of the first air conditioning systems built into the walls.

33. John Van Hudspeth Home, 1924

424 S. Market Street

This cypress and pine house is designed in the Georgian Cottage architectural style. The home is furnished with Victorian pieces containing a walnut marble top bedroom set from 1860. Exterior moldings were added in 1980 and in 1983 the leaded glass entry was installed.

34. Asher-Allen Home, 1900

330 S. Market Street

This old family home was built around the turn of the century for Mr. and Mrs. Phil L. Asher. Asher was an entrepreneur and a champion of the multiple uses of cotton seed oil. He was also a driving force behind the area's agricultural diversity. The home has been owned by the Allen family for several decades. J.A. Allen, noted Opelousas artist, owns the home.

35. Burleigh Home, c. 1905

322 S. Market Street

This Victorian home has been renovated throughout the years and now serves as a law office.

36. L. Austin Fontenot, Sr. House, c. 1890

313 S. Market Street

This lovely Queen Anne Revival home was purchased by the L. Austin Fontenot, Sr. family in 1918 from J. Austin Perkins. The home features a unique square turret on the northwest side of the home.

37. Veazie-Pavy Home, c. 1905

130 W. Vine Street

This lovely Queen Anne Victorian style home was built by Edward P. Veazie. His daughter Marie Aline, and her husband Paul Pavy, later owned the home. Built at a cost of $5,000, it is made with Louisiana cypress and features a rare hand carved cypress staircase. The home also has a servant's staircase in the kitchen area. On the exterior, brick columns support the triple wood columns around the home. Of interest is the pitched roof over the domed section of the home, which is actually a brass cupped roof, and the frescoes found in the gables are hammered aluminum. Paul Pavy was the brother of State District Judge Benjamin Pavy, who was gerrymandered out of office in 1936 by his political rival, the infamous Huey P. Long. One of Pavy's sons-in-law, Dr. Carl Austin Weiss, was the alleged assassin of Long.

38. Dupré-Pavy House, 1927

119 W. Vine Street

This home was built by Dr. Felix Octave Pavy and his wife, Fannie Estilette Dupré Pavy, on property donated to Fannie by her mother, Fannie Estilette, the wife of State District Judge Gilbert L. Dupré. This simple pyramidal roof cottage property cost $5,000 to build.

39. Old LaSalle Home, c. 1886

332 W. Landry Street

This Victorian home was built by the LaSalle family. It features 12-foot ceilings and is easily spotted standing proudly on its own hilltop. The home was purchase in the 1980s and restored.

40. Jacobs Home, c. 1920

232 S. Liberty Street

This Neoclassical style home was a popular design in the early part of the 20th century. The style used decorative elements typical of ancient architecture. Note the large classical columns on the full-height entry porch and the elaborate front door. This house was once the home of Adophe Jacobs. Jacobs was the owner of Dietlein & Jacobs Wholesale Grocery Company in Opelousas, established around 1906.

41. Sheriff Swords - John Fakouri Home, 1907

306 S. Liberty Street

This unique Queen Anne style house was built by former St. Landry Parish Sheriff Marion L. Swords, who was killed in July 1916 by the fugitive Helaire Carriere. Sheriff Swords built this home for a little more than $12,000 between the years 1906-1907. John Fakouri, Sr. purchased the home in 1932.

42. St. Landry Lumber Company, c. 1890

207 N. Railroad Avenue

This is the oldest business in Opelousas sill functioning in its original building. Founded in about 1888 by Alonzo C. Skiles, this unique two-story Queen Anne Revival structure is one of the last remaining lumberyard buildings in Louisiana. It represents the era of the Louisiana Lumber Boom of 1885 – 1930.

43. Rozas Home, 1939

209 N. Liberty Street

This Colonial Revival home was built by Alice Boagni-Rozas and her husband Dr. Sidney J. Rozas, for $50,000. The home is constructed of cypress, with massive columns along the front which originated from Chicago. It includes five bedrooms, four baths, formal living room, dining room with crystal chandeliers, and an outside maid's quarters.

44. McBride Home, c. 1890

219 N. Liberty Street

This home was built at the turn-of-the 20th century and has passed through families such as the Elms, Boagnis and McBrides. It is constructed of cypress in a Victorian design with red pine floors. Throughout the home are plaster medallions and heavy millboard woodwork.

45. Old Governor's Mansion, c. 1848

231 N. Liberty Street

This handsome Greek Revival home was built by wealthy planter Lastie Dupré for his daughter Célimène and her husband Homère Mouton, who later became Lieutenant Governor of Louisiana. When Opelousas became the state capital during the Civil War, the home became the Executive Mansion for Governor Thomas O. Moore. The back of the home is almost identical to the front and originally featured an octagon cupola on the roof that could be reached by a rear spiral staircase constructed of Louisiana cypress. The ceilings in the home are 15 feet in height and the interior walls are plastered. There are three bedrooms, a dining room, ballroom and an Italian marble mantelpiece. It is the oldest remaining Governor's Mansion in Louisiana.

46. James Robert Home, c. 1900

233 W. Grolee Street

Originally located in Rapides Parish, the home is constructed of pine and cypress and is furnished with English and French pieces including an antique walnut Jenny Lind four-poster bed. The leaded front glass entry takes its design from a prominent home in New Orleans.

47. Old Ray Homestead, 1853

346 W. Bellevue Street

This one and one-half story plantation style home was built by Dr. James Ray for his bride, Margaret Mitchell Hill, daughter of Dr. George Hill, a surgeon and scientific sugar planter of that era. During the Civil War, the home was used by the Confederate Army as the 9th Brigade Medical Headquarters when Dr. Hill served as chief surgeon in March of 1862. Built off the ground, brick covered with cypress, the home has both Creole and Anglo-American Greek Revival elements. Of note is an oriental lightning rod above the home and the old horse hitching post in front of the home. The massive oaks that form a canopy around the home are over 200 years old and are all members of the Louisiana Live Oak Society.

48. First Baptist Church, 1952

326 W. Bellevue Street

The First Baptist Church of Opelousas was founded November 6, 1880. Following a series of revival services held at the courthouse by Dr. W.C. Friley, then Corresponding

Secretary of the Louisiana Baptist Convention, and Rev. Edward Kelley, a small congregation was formed. The first wood frame meeting house was erected on Bellevue Street in 1883. In 1952, the current brick building was constructed. Today it is home to Bellevue Street Baptist Church.

49. Labyche-Estorge Home, 1827

417 S. Market Street

Built by Cahors, France native Pierre Labyche, this Antebellum home, which was built with slave labor, exemplifies the transition from the area's popular Creole architecture to Greek Revival. Constructed of cypress and handmade red brick, it features beautifully hand-painted ceilings. Pierre Labyche married the widow of Jean Estorge, Marie Theresa Castille of Grand Coteau. Jean and Theresa had one child together, Dr. Joseph Leonard Estorge. During the Civil War, when fighting broke out around the Opelousas area, wounded soldiers were treated here on the front lawn by Dr. Estorge. Today, the home is still owned by descendants of Jean Estorge.

50. Calla-Kerr, c. 1930

519 N. Court Street

Constructed solely of Louisiana cypress, this bungalow style home features five bedrooms, a grand foyer and formal dining room. The home is named Calla-Kerr after owner Robbie Sebastien's favorite canvas flower and after his great-grandfather, Judge Ennis Shaw Kerr, the first District Judge of Opelousas. Of special interest in the home is a four poster Empire style C. Lee bed made in New Orleans in 1864 for his great-great-grandfather, Rudolf Mayer, who invented and patented the first breech loading rifle.

51. Morning Glory, c. 1883

509 N. Court Street

Built by the Alex Sandoz family, this lovely home located on the corner of Bloch and Court streets was restored in the 1980s by the late John Van Hudspeth, a local interior designer. The Victorian home has an unusual symmetrical design which was created by Opelousas architect Tilghman George Chachere, Sr. in 1881. The symmetrical design forms seating areas in four major rooms.

52. Edward Benjamin Dubuisson House, 1927

419 N. Court Street

This distinctly southern Colonial Revival mansion was built of cypress and pine on the site of an earlier family home. The home was built by E. B. Dubuisson, who was a planter, banker and district attorney of St. Landry Parish for many

years. The grounds are graced with large oak trees and crepe myrtles. The massive columns are cypress and the lower level windows are beveled glass. The home also features a grand staircase; a wine cellar unusual to the homes in this area; and, servants and guests entrances in the rear.

53. DeLaRue-Chachere Home, c.1882

125 W. Littell Street

Located on the corner of Court and Littell streets, this house became the property of the DeLaRue family by an act of exchange between John Ogden and Frank DeLaRue. For many years it was owned by the Chachere family who married into the DeLaRue family. This is the childhood home of the late Tony Chachere, famous chef and founder of Tony Chachere's® Famous Creole Seasoning. Tony's father, Tilghman George Chachere, Sr., was a prominent Opelousas architect. The home features bouissage walls covered with cypress. On the west side of the home is a servant's entry with a lattice archway which was extremely popular in its day.

54. Marguerite Chretien (Lacombe Home), 1821

124 W. Grolee Street

This French Creole house was built for Marguerite Chretien by Etienne Fouillade. Marguerite married Honoré de la Chaise, the last colonial commandant of Poste des Opelousas. Constructed of cypress over mud and moss walls, the original contract for the home is on file in the St. Landry Parish Clerk of Court's Office and is the oldest contract found to this date in existence in the office. The original contract for the home called for two front rooms with a central fireplace and three back rooms. While the home has been renovated many times throughout the years, all of the original rooms are intact.

55. Opelousas City Court Building, 1907

127 E. Grolee Street

This building, built by J.B. Sandoz, was the first three-story building in Opelousas. Over the years, this building also housed Fields & Larcade Furniture Store and Abdalla's Furniture Store. In its early years, the exterior had wrought-iron balconies looking down on Main Street.

56. Opelousas Sanitarium, c. 1886

217 N. Main Street

This building, located on the corner of Grolee and Main streets, was the business and residence of J.C. "Kossuth" Sandoz. Later, it became the first hospital in Opelousas and was known as the Opelousas Sanitarium. It features 8,400 square feet of high ceilings and hand-

carved woodwork. As with the city court building, the exterior of this building also had wrought-iron balconies.

57. Leonce Roos Building, c. 1900
214 N. Main Street

This downtown merchant's building was built by Pascal Delbueno as a grocery store. Later it became the site of Leonce Roos Antiques. Roos was famous for *not* selling some of his prized antiques, as the price tag would simply read, "No Sale."

58. Opelousas City Hall, c. late 1930s
105 N. Main Street

Originally home to Abdalla's Furniture Store, and later Schiff Furniture, this building has been renovated and today serves as City Hall. Located on the north side of this building is Robert Baxter's *Zydeco Capital of the World* mural, which remembers the pioneers and award winners of zydeco music. Opelousas is the birthplace of zydeco.

59. Hope, Hook & Ladder Fire Co. #1, 1935
116 N. Union Street

One of the earliest fire companies in Louisiana, Hope, Hook and Ladder was organized in 1871. In 1901, a wood structure, that featured a curved façade on the northwest side of the building, was completed. The present fire station was built at a cost of $9,500. The building also houses a fireman's museum, containing many items and artifacts dealing with firefighting in Opelousas over the past 100 years. It is the third oldest volunteer fire company in Louisiana. Also of interest is the mural, *Early Fire Fighting: A Tribute to Lelle*, by a group of local student artists under the direction Cindy Pitre. This painting depicts the fire truck named after Marie Céleste "Lelle" Dupré Robertson.

60. Wier Building, c. 1820
106 N. Union Street

A rare example of classic Federal architecture, this two-story building, constructed of cypress and handmade brick, is one of the oldest structures in Opelousas. Also known as the Hebrard Home, the original building was first a single-story English-style tavern built sometime after 1811. The tavern was called "Sign of the Boar's Head." In 1945, Harvey J. Wier purchased the building for use as an

office for his oil and gas business. In 1995, the building was completely restored and opened as the Opelousas Museum of Art. Sadly, the museum has since closed.

61. Frank DelBueno House, 1921
413 N. Main Street

This bungalow house was built for $3,000. The location of this home was in convenient walking distance to the passenger railway station, which brought family and visitors to the DelBueno home during the Great Depression.

62. Sydney Sandoz Home, 1909
411 N. Union Street

This lovely home on the hill was built by Sidney Sandoz, Sr., the son of Jacques Sandoz and founder of J.B. Sandoz Hardware Store.

63. Opelousas Museum & Interpretive Center, 1934
315 N. Main Street

Built by the Sandoz family, this building was a former library, a church and a funeral home. In September 1992, it became the home of the city's history museum. This museum showcases various objects and artifacts relating to the history and culture of the city. Learn about the Native Americans, Cajuns, Creoles, and the French and Spanish. Discover the area's important role during the Civil War and learn about famous Opelousas residents such as Olympic gold medalist Rodney Milburn and Grammy Award winner Clifton Chenier.

64. J.B. Sandoz Hardware Store, 1952
312 N. Main Street

This is the second oldest business in Opelousas still in operation. At the time it was built, it was the largest hardware store in the United States. The store began as a blacksmith shop owned and operated by Mr. Joseph Jobin. Jacques Benoit Sandoz, who was an apprentice of Jobin, married Jobin's daughter after her father's death in 1877. In 1878, the business was renamed J.B. Sandoz Hardware Store. It is still owned and operated by the Sandoz family.

65. Brick Sidewalks, c. 1830s
Grolee Street

This section of old brick sidewalks date back as early as 1838. The bricks, along with those on Court and Bellevue streets, are the only original brick sidewalks still in existence in Opelousas.

66. Yesterday, 1900
420 E. Grolee Street
This summer cottage was built by Celestine Chachere Brooks, the widow of Tom Brooks. Over the years, it has been owned by six different families and is also known as the Vance Miles Home. Mr. Miles was a former Clerk of Court for St. Landry Parish.

67. Old Terracina & Lupo Grocery Store, c. 1880
430 E. Grolee Street
The Lupo family purchased this building in 1915. The family added the store front a short time later. The building served as their home and store. For over 62 years, it was home to Terracina & Lupo's, a place which offered freshly made, authentic Italian specialties.

68. Mornhinveg House, c. 1903
610 E. Grolee Street
This was the home of the Mornhinveg family for many years. It was built extremely high off the ground adding for ventilation in the summer heat. Dr. and Mrs. Lloyd Boulet restored the home to its original beauty and added some modern conveniences such as a swimming pool. In the 1990s, famous fiction author, and Opelousas native, John Ed Bradley owned the home.

69. Childs Home, 1910
619 E. Grolee Street
The simply cottage style home has beautiful interior woodwork and cut glass window panels along the top of the windows.

70. Smith House, c. 1906
626 E. Grolee Street
Built of cypress by Opelousas attorney Peyton R. Sandoz for his wife and their eight children, this home was purchased in 1968 by Mr. and Mrs. Anthony Lavergne. The home has changed hands several times from the original owner and is thus referred to as the Old Smith Home. This Victorian home is adorned with beautiful gingerbread accents, complete with a fleur-de-lis wreath design, arches and gables. The home's staircase is hand-carved with wood imported from France and it contains five original fireplaces with carved mantels. The cement pillars in the yard at one time had chains connecting them for use as hitching posts for horses and buggies. The large grotto in the front of the home contains a stone replica of Michelangelo's Pietà.

71. Donald Elder Home, c. 1880
701 E. Grolee Street
This lovely Victorian cottage was built by Jim Chachere. It is one of the oldest Victorian cottages in the area.

72. Sloane Home, 1904
741 E. Grolee Street
Also called *Maison Rose*, all of the home's furnishings pre-date the house. The floors are pine and the woodwork is cypress. It also features six fireplaces.

73. Pulford-Caldwell Estate, c. 1900

704 E. North Street

This estate was built by Dr. Pulford, a noted Opelousas dentist. The home is constructed completely of Louisiana cypress with a large eight-foot wide foyer. Classic curved woodwork can be found throughout the home on baseboards and moldings complete with acorn adorned corners. In 1910, Pulford added four hand-carved mantels to the home, which were made in New Orleans, complete with hand-painted and baked hearth tile. For many years the home was owned by the Caldwell family who ran a successful dairy on the grounds.

74. Charles Mayer Home, c. 1874

629 E. Bellevue Street

This striking restrained Greek Revival and Italianate style home is made of cypress on three foot, six inch raised brick pillars and was built by Rudolf Adelbert Sebastien Mayer, a professor of music who was born in Germany. Professor Mayer invented the first breech loading rifle patented to M. Martini and was used by the British Empire for more than 30 years. Mayer moved to Louisiana in 1852 and married Mary Dunnon O'Rourke. The home has remained in the family since it was first built. The ceilings are twelve feet throughout the home with a beautiful Louisiana cypress staircase in the foyer. Dr. Mayer's famous revolving medicine cabinet, and an armoire originally owned by Louisiana Governor Francis T. Nichols, also graces the home.

75. Louisiana Memorial United Methodist Church, 1955

515 E. Bellevue Street

Opelousas is known as the "Cradle of Louisiana Methodism." Missionary Elisha W. Bowman established the Methodist church here in 1806. It is the oldest Methodist church congregation west of the Mississippi River. The present church sits on the site where two earlier churches existed. The property for the church was purchased in 1857 from the Fonda family.

76. Abdalla Home, 1939

427 E. Bellevue Street

Known as the pioneer merchants of Acadiana, this was once the home of the Abdalla family. The home is constructed of redwood in the New England style of architecture, which is unusual to the South. The copper canopy accents this property.

77. J.J. Bowden Home, 1857

420 E. Bellevue Street

Built by Antoine Christman for his wife, the former Malvina Bengueral, the home later became occupied by Fannie Bowden and then her nephew, Rev. Walter Bowden. Built of cypress, it is an Acadian Cottage style home with cypress doors and a cypress mantle. It also features pine floors. The ceilings are twelve feet throughout the home and the fireplace is still in use today. During the Civil War, Union soldiers camped across the street from the home.

North Tour

A. St. Landry Catholic Church, 1908-09

1020 N. Main Street

This cathedral-size church is the third building to sit on this elevated track of land. Founded in 1770 by French Capuchin friars, it is the second oldest church parish in the Lafayette Roman Catholic Diocese. The current edifice is a Gothic form of structure with Romanesque motifs. The stained-glass windows were made in France by German artisans. The building was designed by noted Opelousas architect Tilghman George Chachere, Sr. The church archives and records, located in the old Marianite Sisters of Holy Cross convent behind the church, are a treasure trove to genealogist and historians alike, as its records date back to the 1770s.

B. St. Landry Catholic Cemetery, c. 1798

980 N. Union Street

This historic cemetery contains graves that date back to the 1790s. Veterans from various wars are buried here, along with old, prominent families of the Opelousas area. Louisiana Governor Jacques Dupré and his wife are buried here, as well as one of Napoléon Bonaparte's soldiers, Gen. Garrigues de Flaugeac.

C. Michel Prudhomme House, c. 1770

1128 Prudhomme Circle

This French Colonial house is believed to be the oldest structure still located in its original location in St. Landry Parish. Built by Michel Prudhomme, who donated a large track of his land to build St. Landry Catholic Church, the home was later owned by the Ringrose family and some folks today still refer to it as "Ringrose Plantation." During the Civil War the home was used to house Union officers. It features one of the largest camellia trees in the country which produces a beautiful flower called *Opelousas Pink*. Also on the property is an

original pigeonnier constructed of hewn Louisiana cypress. Its last private resident was the late Ruth Robertson Fontenot, noted historian, genealogist, author and artist.

D. T. Lafleur Home, c. 1860
1015 N. Main Street

Located directly across from St. Landry Catholic Church, this building at one time served at the church's rectory. During the Civil War, it was commandeered to house Union Col. Thomas E. Chickering, as he served as the Federal Military Governor of Opelousas. Later, the house served as a general merchandise store.

E. Mt. Olive Baptist Church, c. 1950s
227 W. Church Street

This church traces its beginnings back to 1897, when it was one of only two private schools for Blacks. The school was called the 7th District Baptist School and later changed its name to the Black Academy at Mt. Olive Baptist Church.

F. Meyers House, c. 1840
633 N. Union Street

This house, original built along Bayou Teche near Port Barre, was moved to its current location well before the Civil War.

G. Holy Ghost Catholic Church, 1948
747 N. Union Street

Founded in 1920, this church parish is the largest all Black Catholic Church parish in the United States.

Fire Chief Alex Robertson, Sr. prepares to lead a patriotic parade through the streets of Opelousas; circa mid-1930s.

St. Landry Parish Courthouse, left, and the Eureka Hotel (later called the old Lacombe Hotel), right; circa 1887.

Other Area Attractions & Historic Points of Interest:

Le Vieux Village de Poste des Opelousas Historical Park and Museum

Le Vieux Village, French for the *Old Village*, is a collection of buildings from Opelousas and St. Landry Parish dating from the 1700s to the early 20th century. Among the many historic buildings, the village includes one of the oldest Creole homes west of the Mississippi River, a 19th century doctor's office and country store, and a school house from 1911. The village is also home to the Louisiana Orphan Train Museum. For free guided tours and more information, call 800-424-5442.

Louisiana Orphan Train Museum

In 2009, a former Union Pacific Freight Depot was restored to become the Louisiana Orphan Train Museum. The museum features documents, artifacts and memorabilia dedicated to those who were part of the Orphan Train Riders who traveled from New York to Louisiana between the years of 1873 and 1929. Located inside Le Vieux Village at the Opelousas Tourist Information Center. For details,call (337) 948-9922.

Opelousas Museum and Interpretive Center

This museum showcases various objects and artifacts relating to the history and culture of the city. Learn about the Native Americans, Cajuns, Creoles, and the French and Spanish. Discover the area's important role during the Civil War and learn about famous Opelousas residents such as Olympic gold medalist Rodney Milburn and Grammy Award winner Clifton Chenier. For more information, call (337) 948-2589.

Opelousas
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Creole Heritage & Folklife Center

Learn about the rich heritage of the Creole people in Southwest Louisiana–from food to festivals. Committed to nurturing the unique identity of Creole culture, the non-profit organization offers demonstrations, information and events. For more information, call (337) 945-5064.

Little Zion Baptist Church
Myrtle Grove Cemetery
Opelousas Jewish Cemetery

Opelousas boasts a number of historical churches and cemeteries. Little Zion Baptist Church, one of oldest African American churches in Louisiana, traces its roots back to 1867. Nearby Myrtle Grove Cemetery and Opelousas Jewish Cemetery contain graves of many early Opelousas pioneers.

Fiddle Mania Public Art

Fiddle Mania is a downtown public arts project to enhance the historic downtown area and promote the arts and the community's unique history and culture. Fiddle Mania features large fiberglass and metal fiddles that were painted by community artists. In addition to the fiddles, Opelousas has a number of beautiful murals in the downtown area. All of these art project help beatify and celebration our historic city.

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5. Old Federal Building, c.1890
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8. Shute Building, 1924
9. Old Parish Trust & Savings Building, 1927
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11. Old Greco Building, 1921
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14. Homère Mouton Law Office, c. 1840
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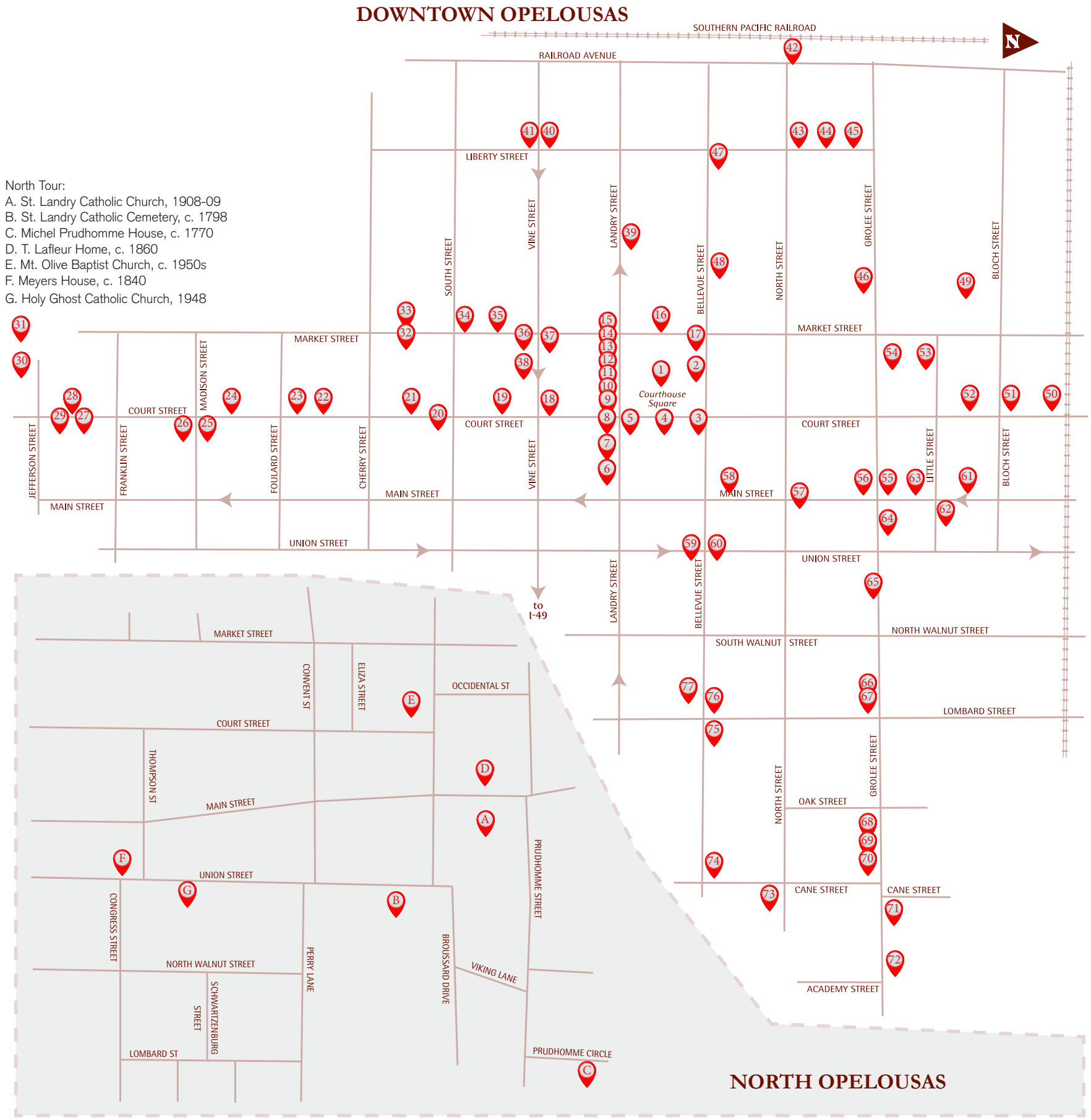
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