

# Cane River Creole

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
National Historical Park



Photo courtesy of Judge Henlev Hunter

Photo courtesy of Library of Congress



# Junior Ranger Activity Book

# The duties of a Junior Ranger



As a Junior Ranger, you are responsible for upholding and spreading the goals of the National Park Service.

The National Park Service is here to protect the places in our country that show its natural beauty and help us to remember its past and unique cultures.

Cane River Creole National Historical Park seeks to preserve Cane River's Magnolia and Oakland Plantations and to remind us of their rich Creole heritage.

The National Park Service's symbol is in the shape of an arrowhead to represent America's rich history and archaeology. The buffalo and Sequoia tree represent its plant and animal life. The mountain, forests, and lake stand for the beauty of its natural landscapes. As you explore Cane River Creole National Historical Park and other national parks, remember to consider each of these things.

As you learn about the history of Cane River Creole National Historical Park, complete **6** of the activities in this book to earn your Junior Ranger badge.



When you see this cotton boll symbol, it means that this activity is a Junior Ranger challenge, meaning it is more difficult.

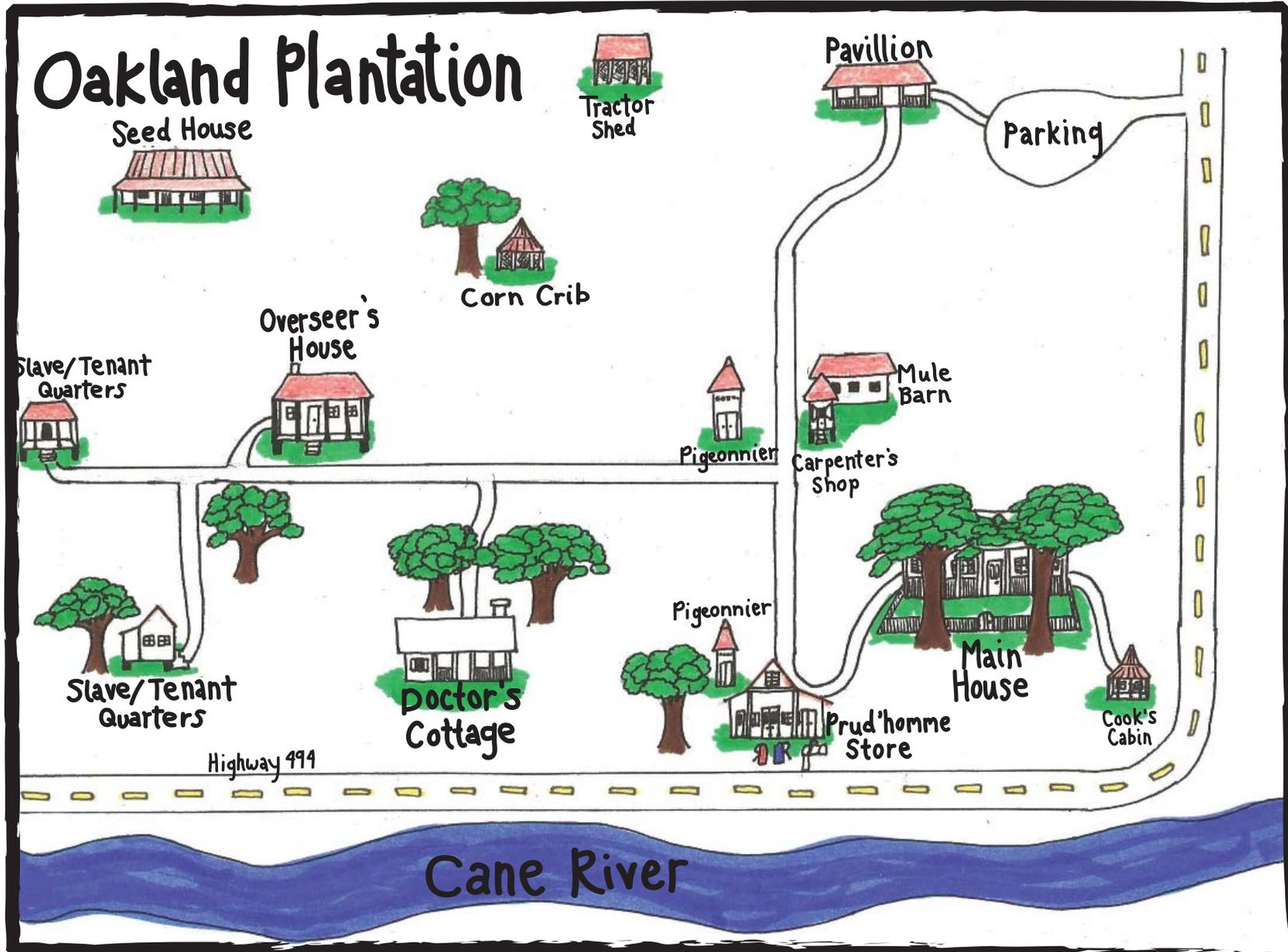


When you see this symbol, it means you need to walk to a particular location in the park or participate in a tour to complete the activity.

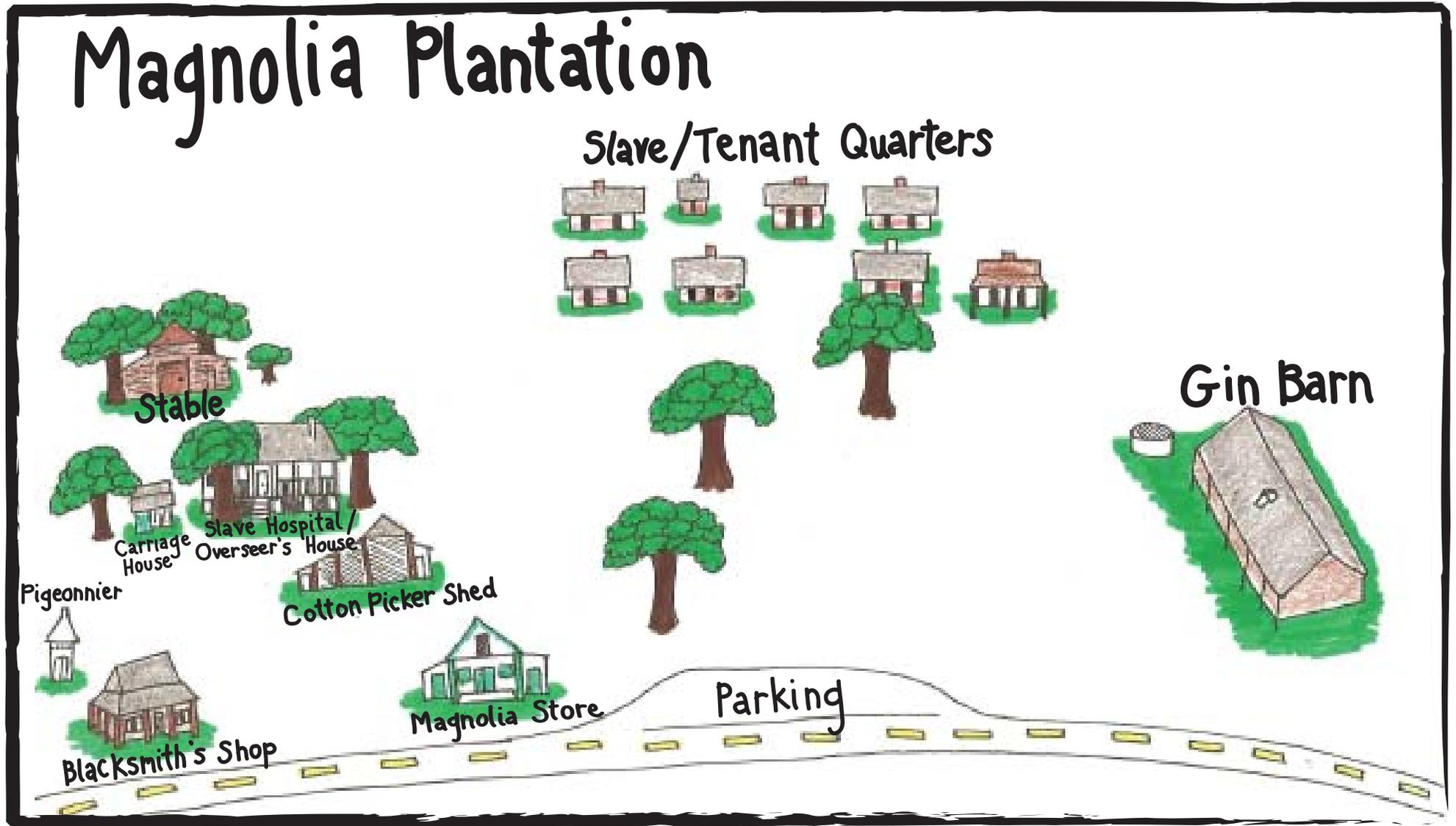


# Getting the lay of the land

Welcome to Cane River Creole National Historical Park! It is made up of two separate plantations called Oakland and Magnolia. Plantations are large farms on which many people lived and worked to grow and harvest crops. Use the maps on this and the next page to help find your way around. Circle the buildings as you see them in the park.



# Getting the lay of the land



# Oakland and Magnolia stand the test of time

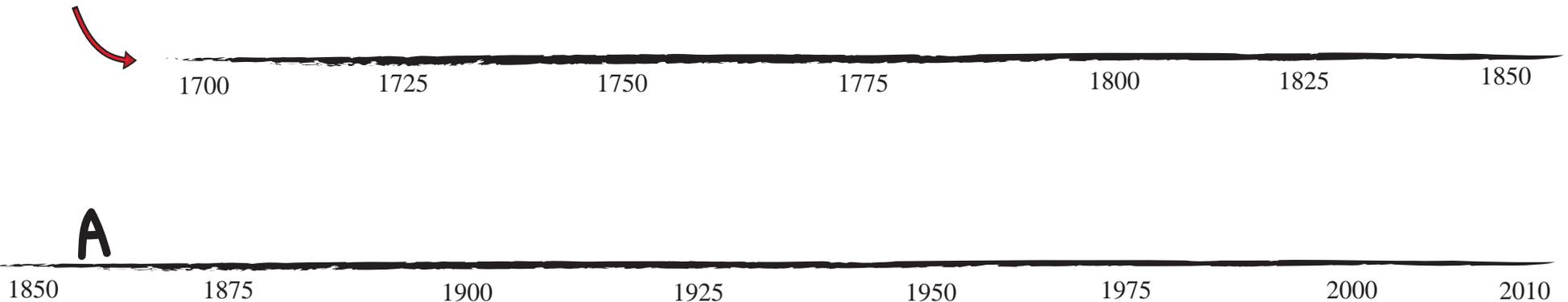
Oakland and Magnolia Plantations have survived many years and many challenges. To the side is a list of scrambled dates and events that are important in the history of Cane River Creole National Historical Park as well as the United States. Place them on the time line using their letters, and then fill in important dates in your and your family's lives.

The first one has been done for you as an example.

- A. 1861: The Civil War begins and two Prud'hommes join the Confederate army
- B. 1941: America enters World War II,
- C. 1950: Oakland plantation buys its first mechanized tractor
- D. 1785: Jean-Pierre Emmanuel Prud'homme establishes what is now Oakland Plantation
- E. 1994: Cane River Creole National Historical Park is established
- F. 1904: The boll weevil appears in the Cane River area
- G. 1865: The Civil War ends and slavery is outlawed
- H. 1803: The Louisiana Purchase occurs
- I. 1776: Americans sign the Declaration of Independence
- J. 1917: World War I begins and J. Alphonse Prud'homme II joins the fight
- K. 1714: The French establish the outpost of Natchitoches next to a Native American settlement
- L. 1864: Magnolia main house is burned by the Union army
- M. 1812: Louisiana becomes a state



Beginning of timeline



# The Cane River and its people



Read the paragraphs about the Cane River and its uses below to complete the Venn diagram.

## Source of food

The river and its banks were common places for people to catch fish, turtles, and crawfish for use in their cooking.



Photo courtesy of the Library of Congress

## Recreation

During the hot months, people from all over the community enjoy refreshing swims in the Cane River to cool off and visit with friends.

## Communication

Since telephones did not exist until later, people of the Cane River area received news from other towns and plantations by talking with people traveling on boats along the river.



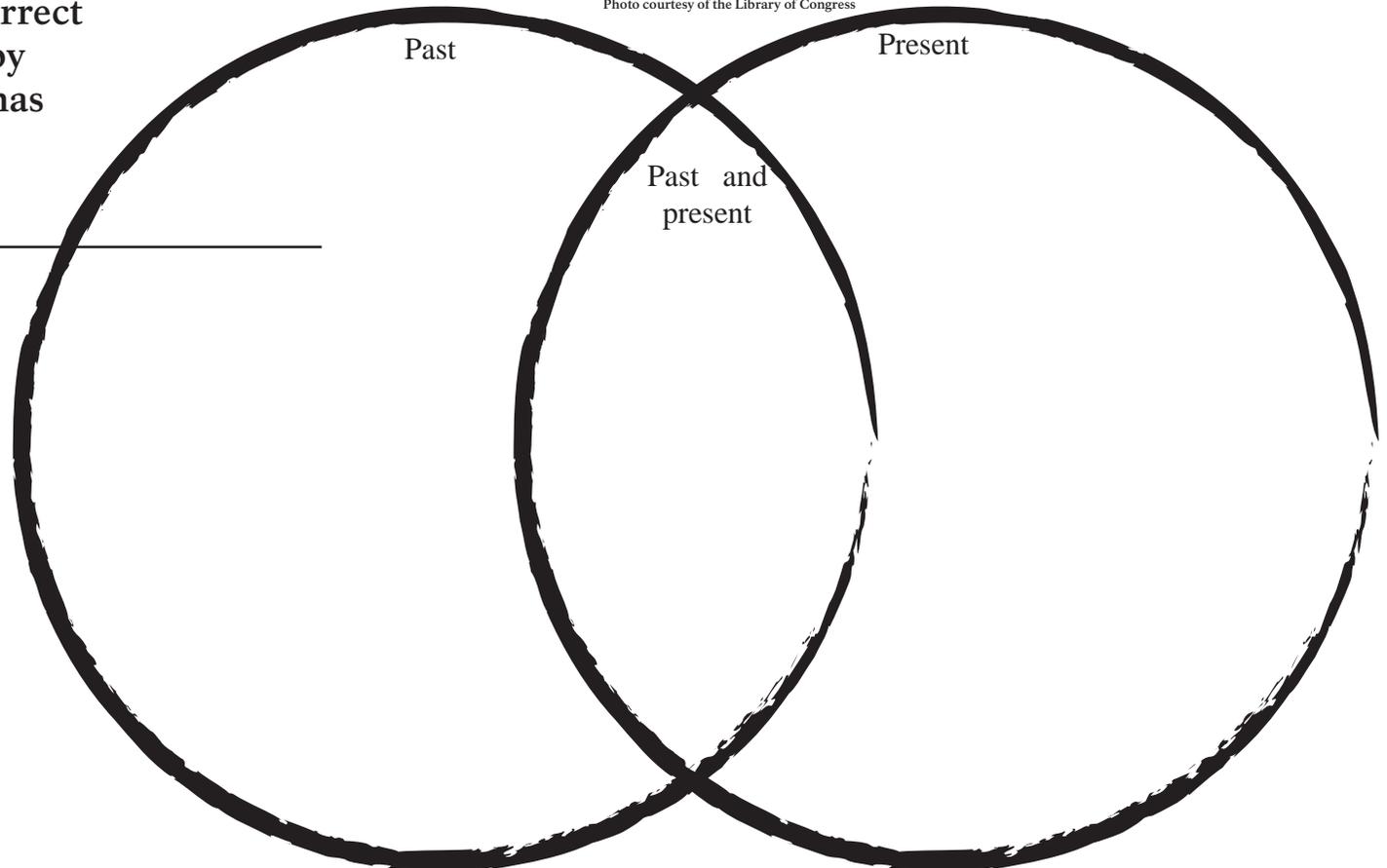
Photo courtesy of the Library of Congress

## Goods

Until recently, there was no easy way to travel to a city to shop from the Cane River area. So, people from the area received shipments from boats traveling from New Orleans along the river.

Put these things into their correct spaces in the Venn diagram by drawing lines. The first one has been done as an example.

- People receive news mainly from boats traveling the Cane River.
- People go to the grocery store to buy fish and crawfish.
- People from the community swim in the Cane to cool off.
- People receive news mainly by telephone, television, or the internet.
- Things purchased elsewhere are brought to the Cane River community by boat.
- Turtle is a main ingredient in many dishes.
- The river is an important feature that ties the community together.



# Cane River Creoles

## Word scramble

Unscramble these Creole words after reading the paragraphs about Creole culture.

- b u g m o \_\_\_\_\_
- f c f o e e \_\_\_\_\_
- i o u \_\_\_\_\_
- m r u d s \_\_\_\_\_
- i a t r g u \_\_\_\_\_
- o n j b r u o \_\_\_\_\_
- s h w r c a i f \_\_\_\_\_
- x u o r \_\_\_\_\_
- d n a e s c \_\_\_\_\_
- a c k e \_\_\_\_\_
- r p e s p e p \_\_\_\_\_
- i e d f d l \_\_\_\_\_
- A u i e r v r o \_\_\_\_\_

## You might be Creole if...

- Your ancestors were born in Louisiana before the Louisiana Purchase in 1803.
- Your heritage is any combination of French, Spanish, Native American, and African.
- You belong to a Catholic church.

If you answered “yes” to any of these questions, you might be a Creole!

## Creole food

Creole food is very unique here on the Cane River. Typical dishes include rice with gumbo—a stew made with a type of gravy called roux, vegetables, and meat. Crawfish are eaten in the spring and fall when they are in season. Many types of peppers are included in Creole cooking. Coffee and cake are often enjoyed after meals or served to visitors.



## Language

French was the main language spoken in the area for many years, and some families along the Cane River still speak it. Here are some useful french words for you to learn.

- “Oui” = yes
- “Bonjour” = hello
- “Au revoir” = goodbye

## Cane River Creole music

Music is an important part of the social lives of people from Cane River. In the past, dances were held at people’s homes. At these dances, a small band would play music for people of all ages to dance to. The bands usually were made of 3–5 people who played instruments such as the guitar, fiddle, drums, and bass.



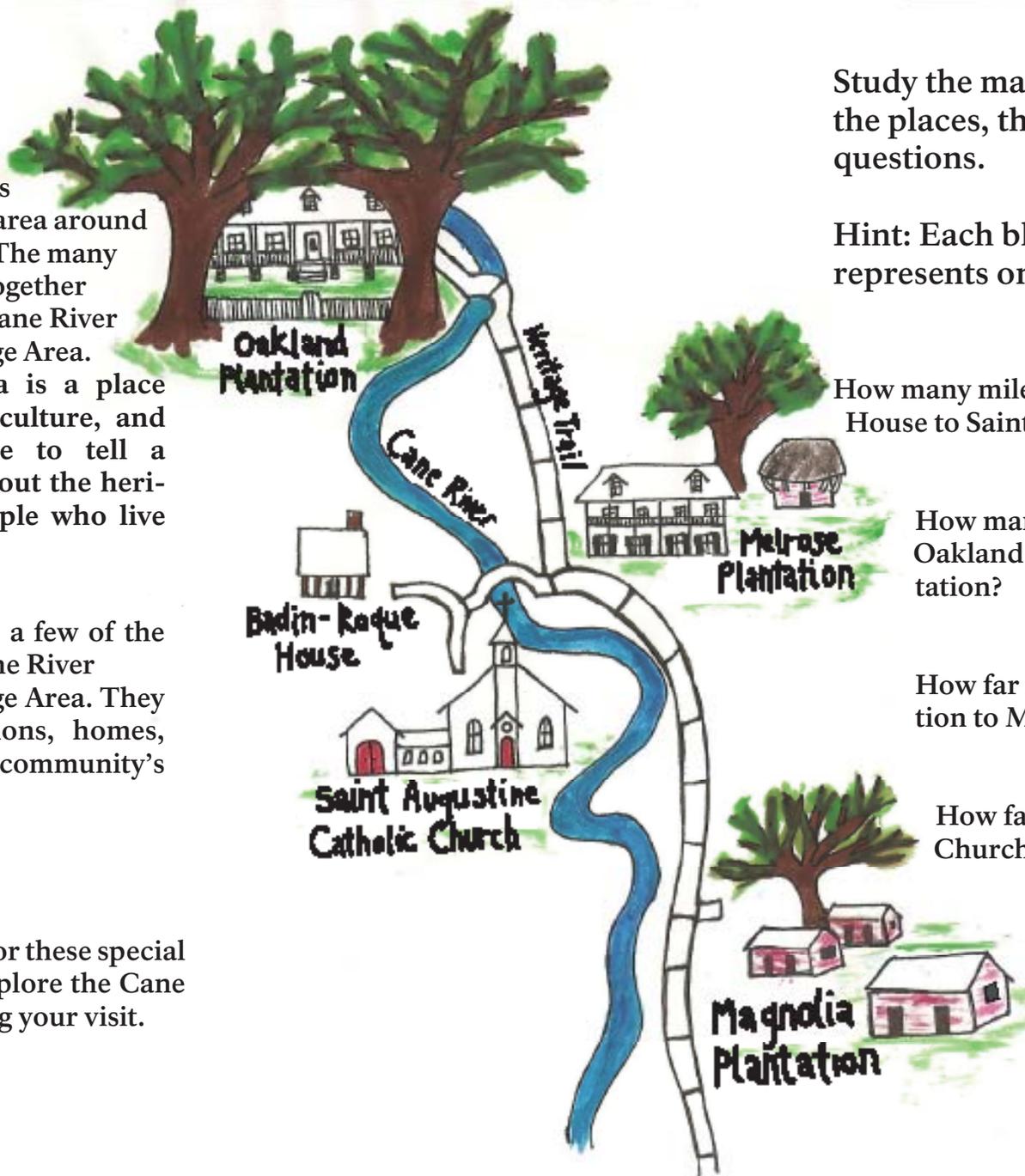
# Cane River National Heritage Area



Cane River Creole National Historical Park is only part of the area around the Cane River. The many historic places together are part of the Cane River National Heritage Area. A heritage area is a place where history, culture, and nature combine to tell a unique story about the heritage of the people who live there.

This map shows a few of the places in the Cane River National Heritage Area. They include plantations, homes, and one of the community's oldest churches!

Be sure to look for these special places as you explore the Cane River area during your visit.



Study the map and distances between the places, then use them to answer the questions.

Hint: Each block on the Heritage Trail represents one mile.

How many miles is it from the Badin-Roque House to Saint Augustine Church?

How many miles is it from Oakland Plantation to Melrose Plantation?

How far is it from Oakland Plantation to Magnolia Plantation?

How far is it from Saint Augustine Church to Magnolia Plantation?

How far is it from Melrose Plantation to the Badin-Roque House?

# Slavery on the Cane River

## Enslaved life

As an enslaved worker on a plantation, you would primarily pick cotton, which was supervised by the overseer. He directed slaves and the growing of cotton. After the Civil War and emancipation, slaves were freed. Many chose to stay on the plantation to work as tenant farmers or sharecroppers.

## The Code Noir

The Code Noir (French for “black code”) was a set of laws for slavery created by the French when they settled Louisiana. Although it still considered enslaved people to be property, it prevented slave owners from splitting up families and required that they care for workers who were elderly or disabled.

## Solomon Williams

Solomon Williams lived and worked at Oakland. He was an enslaved man whose talents as a blacksmith are still evident today. As a blacksmith, he created things like tools, nails, hinges, locks and beautiful grave markers using iron.

## Magnolia slave quarters

At the Magnolia site, you will find small rectangular buildings called quarters. It was in these small cabins that workers lived. They are unique, since very few brick slave quarters still exist.



Answer the questions and then find the words in the wordsearch.

1. The slave quarters at Magnolia are built from \_\_\_\_\_.
2. The major crop picked by enslaved people on the Cane River was \_\_\_\_\_.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ was a very talented blacksmith who worked at Oakland.
4. The Code Noir was a set of laws for slavery created by the \_\_\_\_\_.
5. A former slave might choose to stay on a plantation after the Civil War to work as a \_\_\_\_\_.
6. The \_\_\_\_\_ stated that enslaved families could not be split up.
7. The \_\_\_\_\_ ran the plantation and directed enslaved workers.
8. A \_\_\_\_\_ is someone who creates things out of iron.

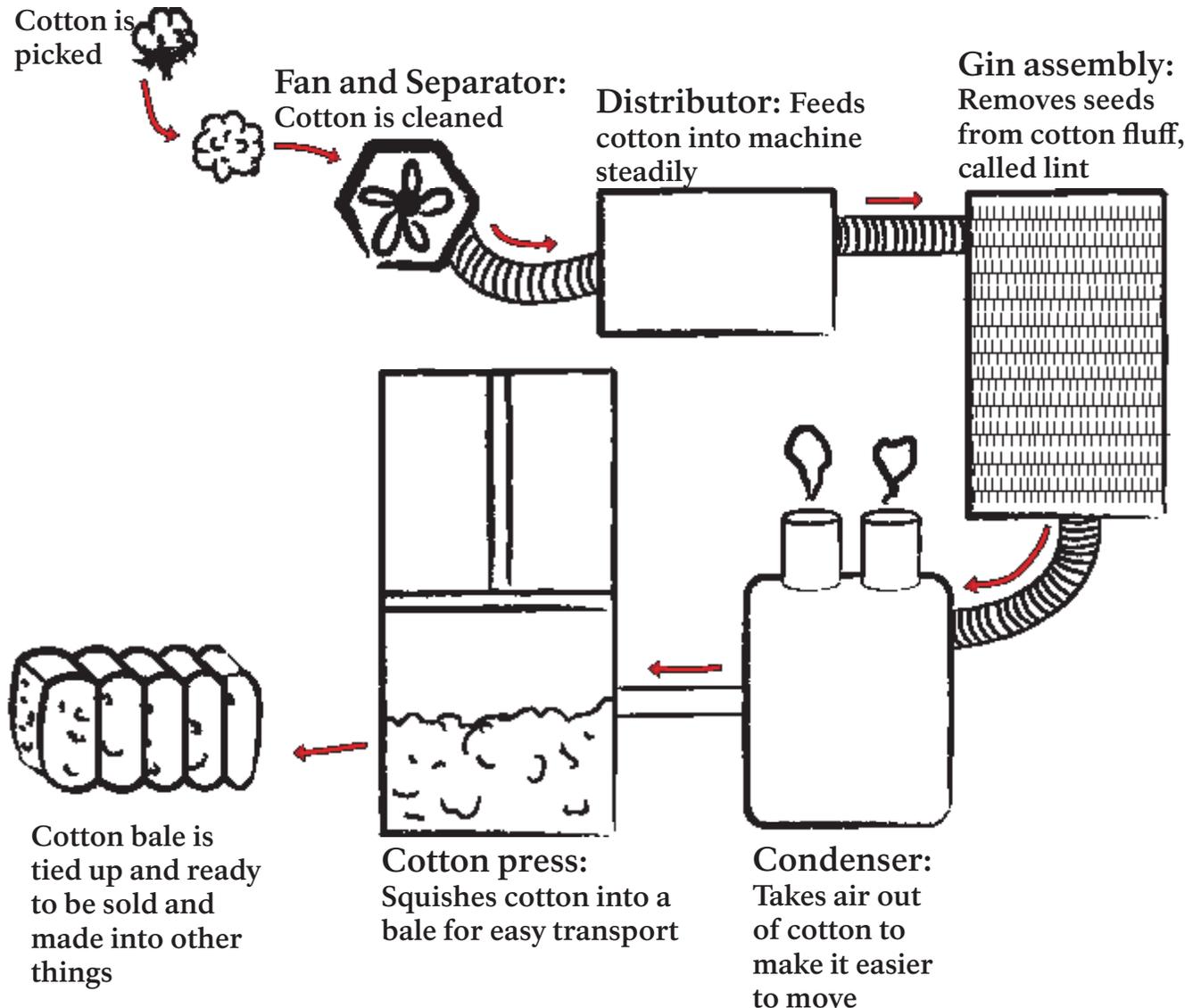
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# Cotton ginning

Below are the steps to produce a bale of cotton that is ready to be sold. Number them 1–8 to place them in the correct order. The first has been done for you.

- Cotton goes through the condenser.
- Cotton is loaded into the cotton press.
- 1 Cotton is picked.
- Cotton is ready to ship off to sell.
- Cotton goes through the distributor.
- Cotton goes through the gin assembly.
- Freshly picked cotton is loaded into the fan and separator.
- Cotton is squished in the cotton press to make a rectangular bale.

Cotton is not ready to be sold right after it is picked. It must first go through the processes of ginning and pressing. The gin removes the seeds from cotton, and the press squishes it into a bale. While you are at Magnolia's gin barn, take a look at the gin and see if you can identify the different parts!



# Magnolia's wooden screw press



Before steam-powered cotton presses were used, mule-powered screw presses were used to create bales of cotton. Screw presses are made of many parts that work together to squish cotton into a compact bale.

Go to the gin barn at Magnolia and take a look at the cotton press. Match the parts by drawing a line from the drawing to the photographs below to help you understand how it works. The first one has been done for you.

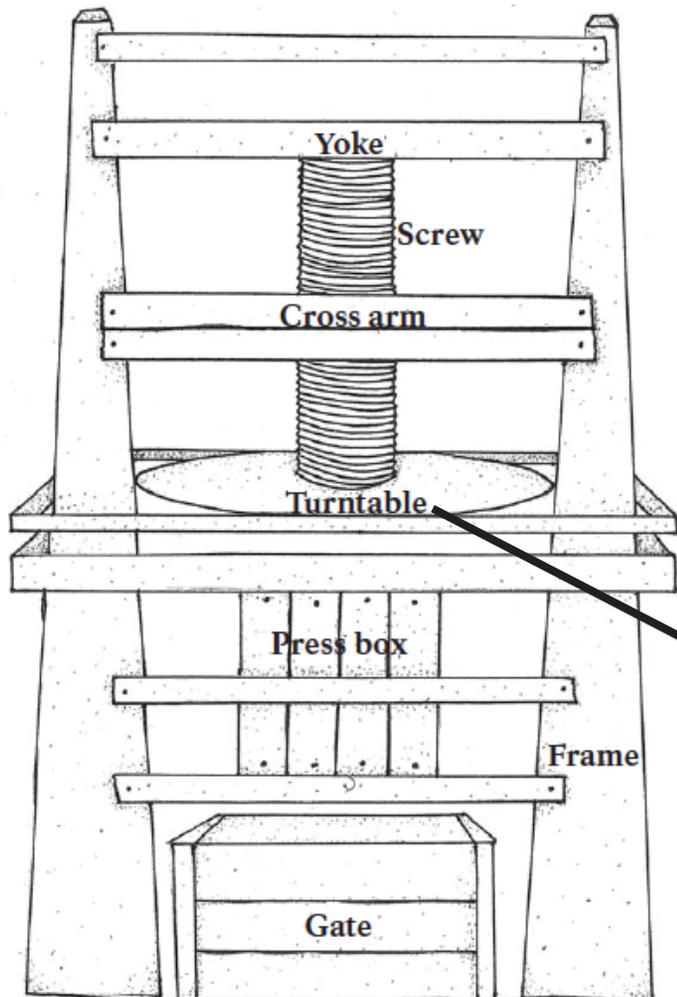


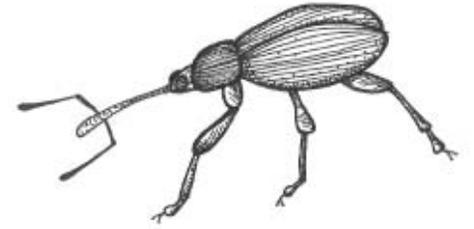
Photo courtesy of Library of Congress



Photo courtesy of Library of Congress

# Boll weevil invasion

In the early 1900s the boll weevil invaded northern Louisiana. The boll weevil destroys cotton crops by laying its eggs inside developing cotton parts called bolls. Once the eggs are laid inside the boll, the plant will not produce any cotton. Although the boll weevil did a lot of damage to the cotton crops on Cane River, many farming families overcame the challenge. See if you can spot all of the boll weevils on these healthy cotton plants. (Hint: There are 15.)



# El Camino Real de los Tejas

El Camino Real or “The King’s Road” was a trail used by traders, families, and soldiers to travel through Texas to both Mexico and Louisiana. Because it was so busy, many towns popped up along the way. The 2,500 mile long trail ran from Mexico City to Natchitoches.

Pretend you are a traveler on the El Camino Real. You must get all the way from Laredo to Natchitoches.

1. First, trace your route onto the map.
2. Then, circle five of the items below that you think are most important to bring with you on your journey. Remember, you can stop and buy things in towns when you pass through! Also remember that you will encounter other people while on the trail.

- journal and pen
- wagon
- hat
- water canteen
- dried food
- extra clothing
- matches
- horse
- map
- rope
- compass
- blanket
- money
- books
- pillow

Texas



Louisiana



Mexico



Why did you select the items that you did?

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# Civil War comes to the Cane



Interior of a slave cabin at Oakland

## The end of slavery

With the end of the Civil War came the end of slavery. Find a slave/tenant cabin at either Magnolia or Oakland and go into it. Take a few minutes to think about what it would be like to have lived there. How many people do you think could fit? Where would you have slept? Write your thoughts down here.

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## Civil War flags

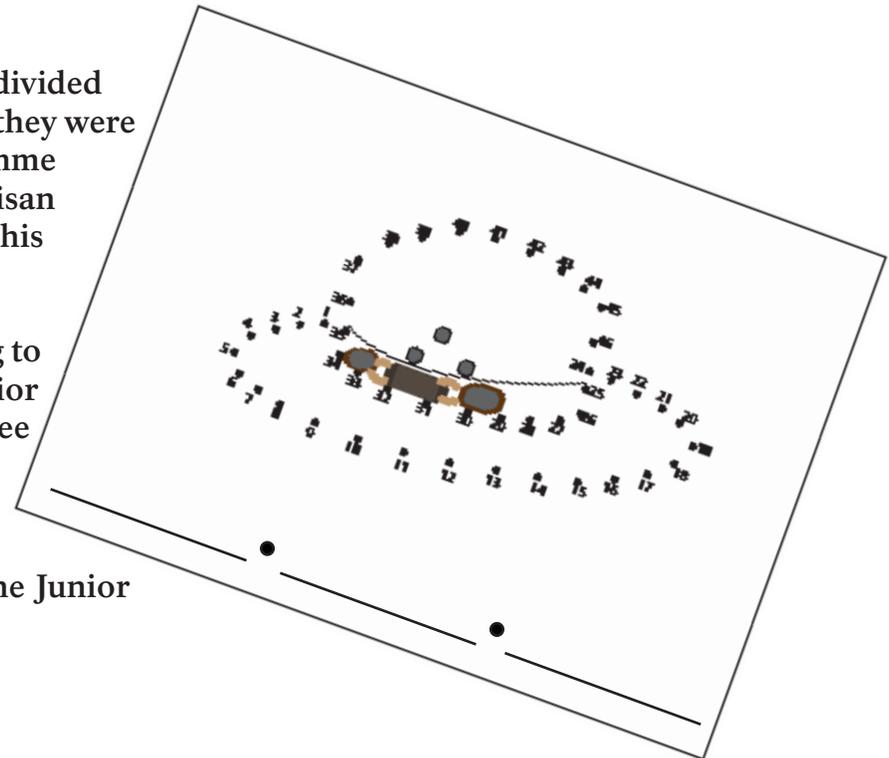
During the Civil War, soldiers were divided into regiments according to where they were from. Jacques Alphonse Prud'homme from Oakland served in the Partisan Rangers regiment. To the left is his regiment's unique flag.

Connect the dots on the flag to the right to complete a Junior Ranger flag. Fill in the three spaces at the bottom with the Junior Ranger motto.

Hint: If you need help, find one of the Junior Ranger symbols in this book.



Image courtesy of Northwestern State University of Louisiana, Watson Memorial Library, Cammie G. Henry Research Center



# Plantation stores

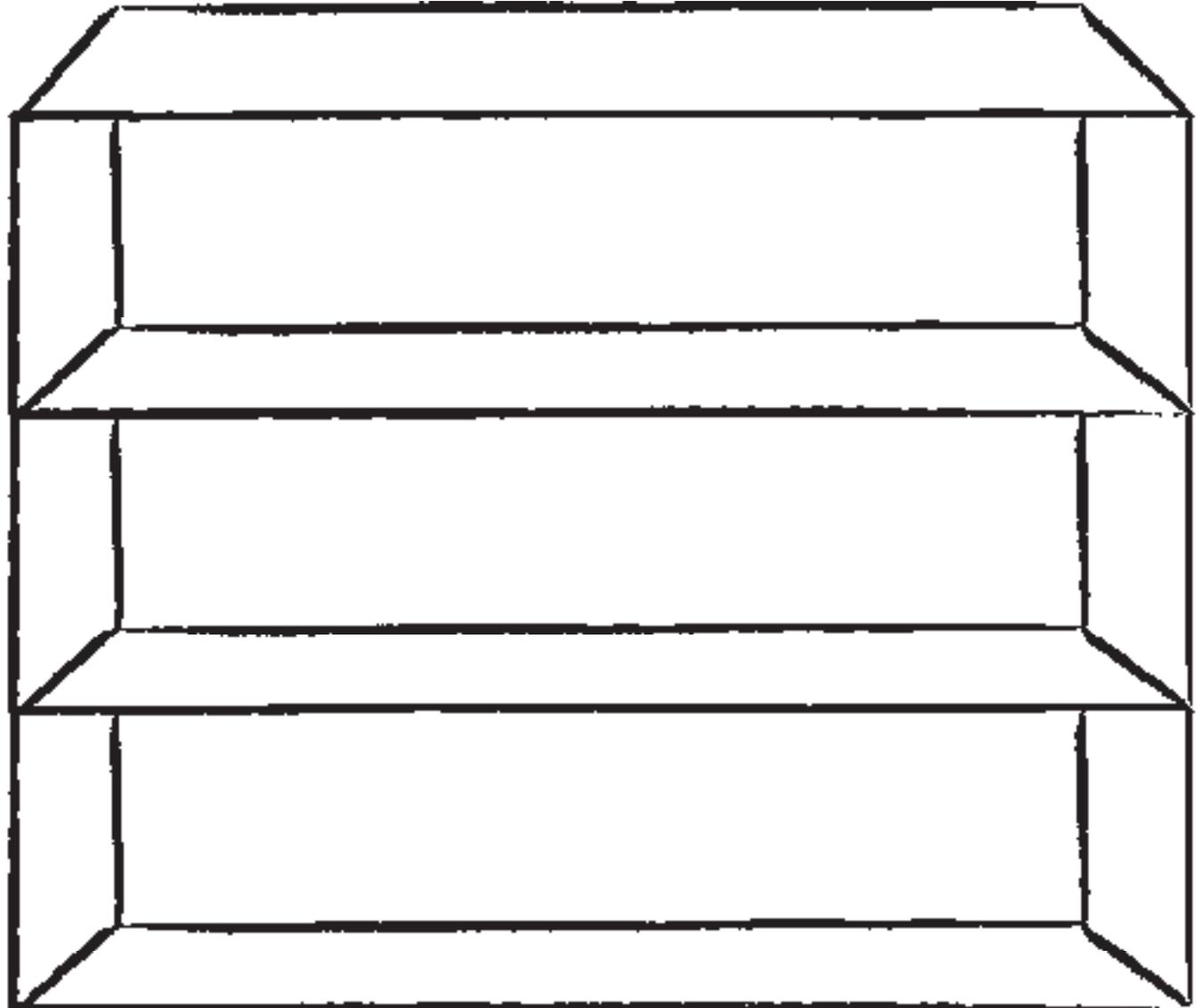


Plantation stores can be found at both Magnolia and Oakland. Though most people grew or made things that they needed, the store sold things that could not be grown or made at home.

Plantation stores sold things like...

- sewing needles and thread
- fabric
- tools
- hardware
- food
- candy and sodas

Go into one of the plantation stores and draw some of the things you see onto these blank shelves!



Magnolia Plantation store

# Crops, crops, crops

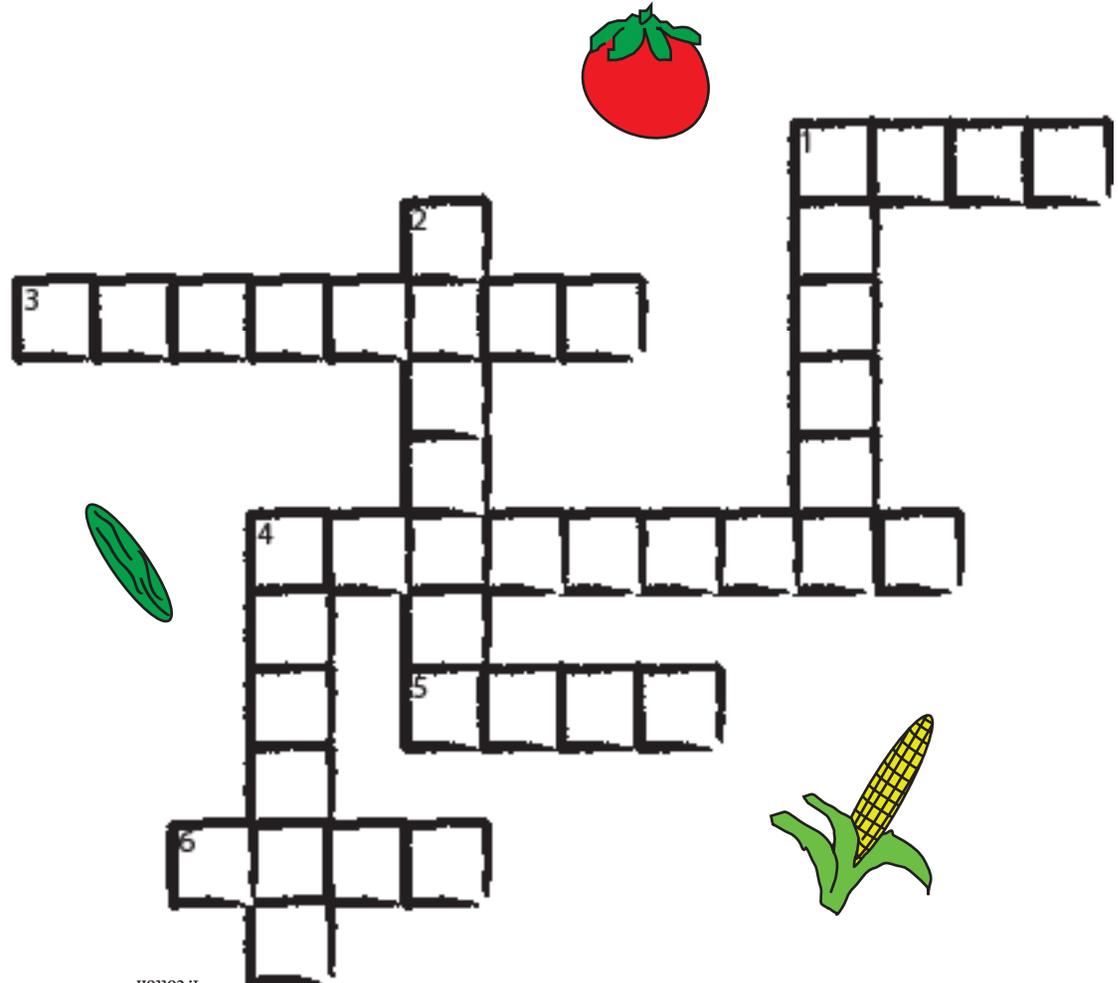
## Across

1. These are grown in a garden to eat as a side dish. They grow in structures called pods.
3. These round food items grow on vines and turn from green to red. They are used in most Creole meals in some way or another.
4. These vegetables grow on vines along the ground and are often stored in vinegar to make pickles.
5. This green vegetable is long and slightly prickly. It is used often in gumbo, or can also be fried.
6. This crop grows on long stalks in structures called ears. It is used for both human food and food for farm animals.

## Down

1. This spicy garden crop comes in yellow, green, and red.
2. This leafy green crop was grown in large quantities before cotton. Its leaves are used to smoke in pipes.
4. This crop was the main crop of the South for many years. It grows in structures called bolls and has a white fluff called lint.

Use your knowledge of the local crops to complete the crossword puzzle. If you are stumped, ask a ranger!



Across  
1. peas  
3. tomatoes  
4. cucumbers  
5. okra  
6. corn

Down  
1. pepper  
2. tobacco  
4. cotton

Turn the page upside down to reveal the answers.

# Catholicism in Creole culture



Photo courtesy of Library of Congress

## Saint Augustine Catholic Church

Many descendants belonging to Cane River's Creole families still live here and attend St. Augustine Catholic Church. The church was founded by a man named Augustin Metoyer in 1803. A life-sized painting of Augustin still hangs in the church today. He and many of the community's most important people are buried in the church's cemetery.

## Discovering Catholicism in Oakland's Main House

Like most French colonists, people who settled the Cane River Area were Catholic, though later arrivals introduced other belief systems to the area. Many people that live on the Cane River today still belong to the Catholic church.

Participate in a ranger-guided tour of the main house at Oakland. Keep an eye out for these items that represent the Catholic faith. When you see them, write down the name of the room where you found it in the blank space.



### Saint Thérèse

A painting of Saint Thérèse, the patron saint of florists

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### Holy water font

An item used to keep holy water in with which to bless oneself

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### Rosary

A religious item made of beads used to count one's prayers

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### Prie-Dieu

A piece of furniture used to kneel on while one is saying prayers

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# Stop, look, and listen

In addition to buildings, Cane River Creole National Historical Park has many kinds of trees and birds. Find a place to sit for a few minutes to listen to and observe your surroundings. If you see or hear any of the trees or birds below, check them off.

Blue Jay



Photo courtesy of Dr. Geoffrey Hill

Northern Cardinal



Photo courtesy of Dr. Geoffrey Hill

Northern Mockingbird



Photo courtesy of Dr. Geoffrey Hill

Live Oak



Pecan Tree



Resurrection Fern



**Almost there...** National Parks are important because they help to preserve cultures, but also they help to preserve our wildlife. How can you do your part in protecting our plants and animals?



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# Continuing on as a Junior Ranger

Take this space to write about your visit. What was your favorite part? What does it mean to you to be a Junior Ranger of Cane River Creole National Historical Park?

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After you leave Cane River Creole National Historical Park...

- Spread awareness about your national parks! Remember to talk to your friends about your experience here at Cane River Creole National Historical Park.
- You can continue your Junior Ranger experience online by becoming a WebRanger! To share your national park adventures with other Junior Rangers, visit:

[www.nps.gov/webrangers/](http://www.nps.gov/webrangers/)

- If a ranger was not available to present you with your badge, you can receive your badge and certificate by mail by sending this completed booklet to:



Cane River Creole NHP Headquarters  
400 Rapides Drive  
Natchitoches, LA 71457

- Continue to explore, learn, and protect your national parks!



# Congratulations!

You are now an official Junior Ranger at Cane River Creole National Historical Park.

As a Junior Ranger of Cane River Creole National Historical Park, I promise to preserve and protect from harm the natural and cultural resources of this nation. I promise to be a good steward of our environment so that we may all enjoy fresh air, clean water, open spaces, and places of historic importance. I promise to pass on the stories of the Cane River Region so that our heritage is protected.

\_\_\_\_\_

Date



\_\_\_\_\_

Junior Ranger signature

\_\_\_\_\_

Park Ranger signature

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Cut along here

