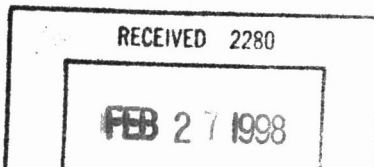


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Levert - St. John Bridge

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number O'Neal Boudreaux Rd. near La. Hwy. 347 N/A not for publication

city or town St. Martinville vicinity

state Louisiana code LA county St. Martin code 099 zip code 70582

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Gerri Hobdy February 13, 1998
 Signature of certifying official/Title Gerri Hobdy, Date
LA SHPO, Dept of Culture, Recreation and Tourism
 State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

 Signature of commenting official/Title Date

 State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register. See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain): _____

Robert W. Beall Signature of the Keeper
3/26/98 Date of Action

Levert - St. John Bridge

Name of Property

St. Martin Parish, LA

County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
_____	_____	buildings
_____	_____	sites
1	_____	structures
_____	_____	objects
1	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Transportation / rail-related

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Transportation / road-related

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Other: Warren through truss swing span

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation wood

walls N/A

roof N/A

other steel

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Levert-St. John Bridge, St. Martin Parish, LA

Section number 7 Page 1

The Levert-St. John Bridge is a single-lane vehicular bridge which crosses Bayou Teche at O'Neal Boudreaux Road between the small rural communities of Levert and St. John, near St. Martinville. All available evidence points to an 1895 construction date for the bridge and a 1900 date for its erection in the present location. The bridge's historic appearance is clearly evident, as it has undergone only one major alteration--an asphalt overlay which allowed the change of the bridge's use from rail to vehicular traffic. The wooden pilings on which the bridge trusses rest have been replaced over the years through routine maintenance. The swing-span bridge is a two-span riveted Warren through truss with verticals.

The Levert-St. John bridge was erected at the request of J.B. Levert, the owner of St. John Plantation, located on the bayou's east bank just south of the bridge. A January 1908 contract indicates that in 1900 Levert asked the Morgan's Louisiana & Texas Railroad & Steamship Company to extend their tracks across Bayou Teche for his "convenience and benefit"--to service his sugar refinery operation which was located on the bank of the bayou. An earlier agreement with the rail company had allowed tracks to be constructed on Levert's plantation property for the benefit of the railroad.

Levert purchased and erected the bridge crossing the bayou and the rail company then laid the tracks, providing materials and labor. According to Levert's contract with the rail company, the bridge was erected in 1900; a plate which forms part of the portal bracing indicates a presumable construction date of 1895.

Levert's plantation and sugar operation, the Levert-St. John Company, was founded in 1880 and became a strong player in the local economy. Levert himself served as president of the Louisiana Sugar Exchange in the 1880s and was recognized in 1892 as "one of the prominent and leading men of the new South."

The bridge is 264 feet long and 14.7 feet wide, allowing for only one lane of traffic. It is composed of two Warren trusses and a center component of generally rectangular shape, which allows for operation of the "swing-span" aspect of the bridge; as wedges are removed from the four corners of the bridge, the bridge can rise from its original level and swing open, allowing the passage of water traffic. In its open position, the bridge allows unlimited vertical clearance and approximately 50 feet of horizontal clearance. Due to increasing difficulty in opening the span, however, the bridge has been opened only two times in the past ten years.

CONTINUED

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Levert-St. John Bridge, St. Martin Parish, LA

Section number 7 Page 2

According to one source, the asphalt overlay of the bridge apparently occurred in the late 1950s, when the sugar mill ceased utilizing the railroad as a means of cane transportation. The St. John Mill may have been the last sugar mill to use rail transport.

Each of the bridge's two Warren trusses are composed of four panels which exhibit a pattern of diagonal and vertical bracing. The smaller vertical members are solid pieces, while the diagonal members are reinforced with single bar lacing. The center component is also reinforced with single bar lacing, as are the top lateral braces of the Warren trusses. The bridge features inclined end posts, which are more common than vertical end posts in the Warren truss design.

Assessment of Integrity: Alterations to the Levert-St. John Bridge have been limited to an asphalt overlay of the bridge to modify its usage. As the oldest known bridge in Louisiana, as well as the only known bridge of its type in the state, the Levert-St. John Bridge retains sufficient integrity and significance to warrant candidacy for the National Register.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

XX A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

XX C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations N/A

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

B removed from its original location.

C a birthplace or grave.

D a cemetery.

E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

F a commemorative property.

G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A

preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested

previously listed in the National Register

previously determined eligible by the National Register

designated a National Historic Landmark

recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #

recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

transportation

engineering

Period of Significance

1895, 1900

Significant Dates

1895, 1900

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

unknown

Primary location of additional data:

XX State Historic Preservation Office

Other State agency

Federal agency

Local government

University

Other

Name of repository:

Levert - St. John Bridge
Name of Property

St. Martin Parish, LA
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property less than one acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1

1	5
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6	1	4	4	0	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

3	3	3	6	7	2	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Zone Easting Northing

3

--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Zone Easting Northing

4

--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

 See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title National Register staff
organization Division of Historic Preservation date November 1997
street & number P. O. Box 44247 telephone 504-342-8160
city or town Baton Rouge state LA zip code 70804

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name St. Martin Parish Police Jury
street & number P. O. Box 9 telephone 318-394-3711
city or town St. Martinville state LA zip code 70582

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Levert-St. John Bridge, St. Martin Parish, LA

Section number 8 Page 1

The Levert-St. John Bridge is of state significance in the area of engineering as the only known surviving example of a recognized historic bridge type. It is also significant in terms of state transportation history because it is the oldest known bridge in the state, according to the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development.

The Levert-St. John Bridge is the only known Warren truss swing-span bridge in the state according to the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development, which is evidence of its significance to the field of engineering in the state. Warren truss bridges utilizing riveted construction and vertical members became an adopted standard for the railroad industry in the early 1900s and represent the most common form of Warren truss. The simple design, which originally featured only equilateral triangles in the web, was developed by British engineers and patented in 1848 (the truss is named for engineer James Warren). Although the Warren truss was used in the design of railroad bridges more than road bridges, it was nevertheless also embraced for its efficiency, since this design required less steel than one of primarily vertical posts. However, vertical members may be added to provide further bracing for the Warren's triangular web system, as is the case with the Levert-St. John Bridge. The truss design is also noted for its use of diagonal members which withstand both tensile and compressive forces. This historic design's simplicity and success has allowed it to continue to be used by engineers in modern bridge design.

The bridge's significance also must be assessed within the overall history of bridge construction in Louisiana. The use of bridges as the principal form of traversing waterways came to the state comparatively late. In fact, very few bridges existed in Louisiana until 1924, when the Louisiana Department of Highways began to replace ferry services. Prior to that time, Louisiana's waterways were crossed principally by boat. Sixteen bridges known to have been constructed prior to 1920 still exist; of these, only the Levert-St. John Bridge was built prior to 1910. Clearly, the fact that the construction of this bridge pre-dates that of all of Louisiana's historic bridges by at least 10 years sets it apart in its significance to the history of bridge construction in Louisiana.

Recent local efforts have prevented the removal and replacement of the Levert-St. John Bridge, prompting the Department of Transportation and Development to modify the plan through the construction of a new bridge slightly more than one-half mile upstream from the current bridge. The current bridge will be closed to vehicular traffic and opened for pedestrian use only; the responsibility of the bridge's maintenance has been transferred to the St. Martin Parish Police Jury, with the St. Martin Historic District Commission acting as an oversight authority for the bridge's preservation.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Leveret-St. John Bridge, St. Martin Parish, LA

Section number $\frac{9}{10}$ Page $\frac{1}{1}$

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bergerie, Maurine. "Economic and Social History of Iberia Parish 1868-1900." Master's thesis, Louisiana State University, 1956.

Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Louisiana. Vol. 1. Chicago: Goodspeed, 1892. 3 vols. Baton Rouge: Claitor's, 1975.

Comp, T. Allan and Donald Jackson. *Bridge Truss Types: A Guide to Dating and Identifying*. Historic American Engineering Record Technical Leaflet.

Gritzner, Charles F., Jr. "Louisiana Waterway Crossings." *Louisiana Studies* 2 (1963): 213-232.

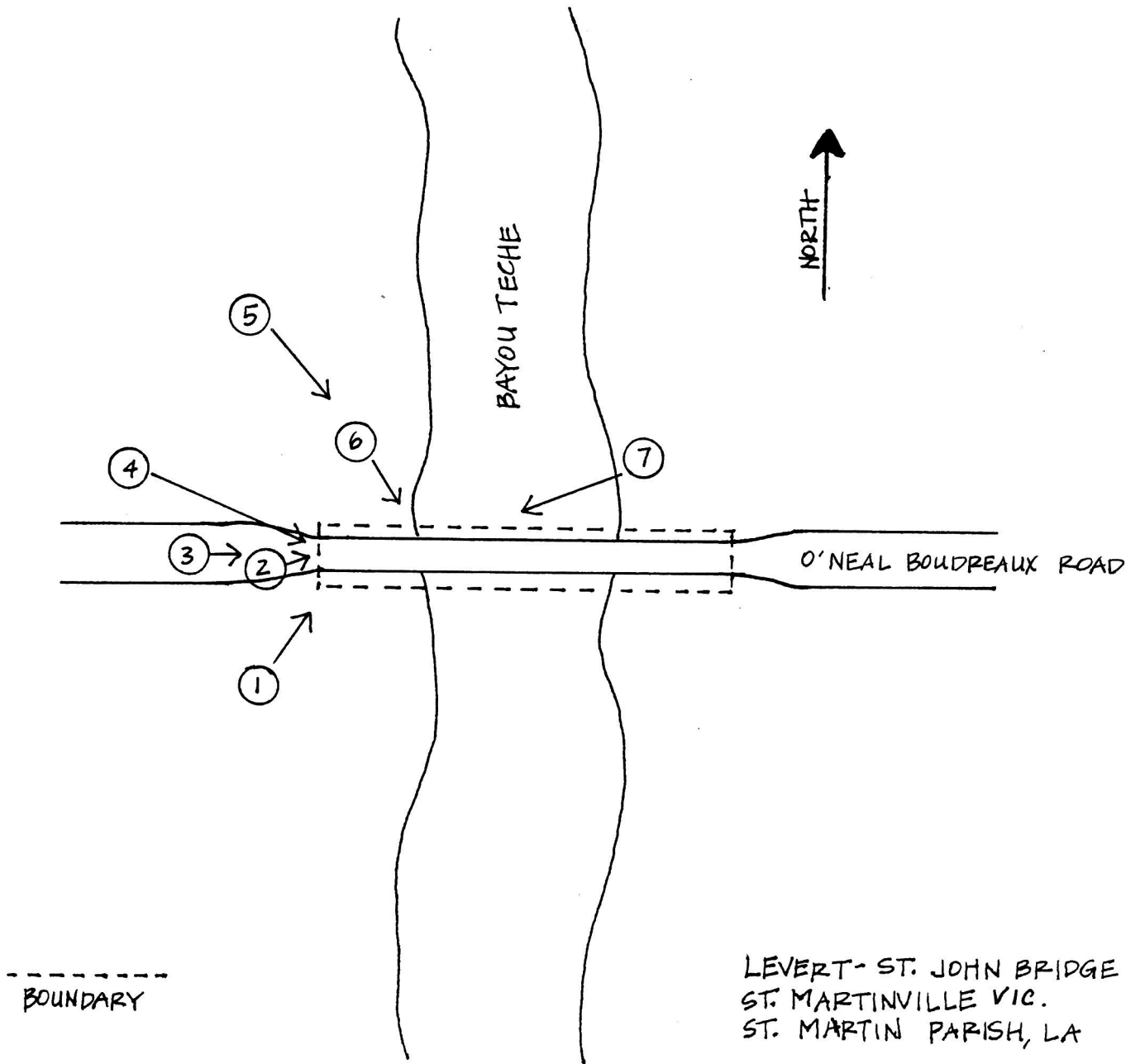
Heitmann, John Alfred. *Modernization of the Louisiana Sugar Industry: 1830-1910*. Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1987.

State of Louisiana. Parish of Orleans. Agreement between Morgan's Louisiana & Texas Railroad & Steamship Company and J.B. Leveret. January 23, 1908.

Weitzman, David. *Traces of the Past: A Field Guide to Industrial Archaeology*. New York: Scribner, 1980.

Boundary Description: Please refer to enclosed sketch map.

Justification: Boundaries were chosen to discretely encompass the nominated bridge.



1" = 100'

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Levert--St. John Bridge

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: LOUISIANA, St. Martin

DATE RECEIVED: 2/27/98 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 3/10/98
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 3/26/98 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 4/13/98
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 98000268

NOMINATOR: STATE

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 3/26/98 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER _____ DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N



LEYERT-ST. JOHN BRIDGE
ST. MARTIN PARISH, LA
DONNA FRICKER
NOV. 1997
LA SHPO
PHOTO 1
NORTHEAST



1895

LEVERT- ST. JOHN BRIDGE
ST. MARTIN PARISH, LA

DONNA FRICKER

NOV. 1997

LA SHPO

PHOTO 2

EAST



LEVERT- ST. JOHN BRIDGE
ST. MARTIN PARISH, LA
DONNA FRICKER
NOV. 1997
LA SHPO
PHOTO 3
EAST



LEVERT- ST. JOHN BRIDGE
ST. MARTIN PARISH, LA
DONNA FRICKER
NOV. 1997
LA SHPO
PHOTO 4
SOUTHEAST



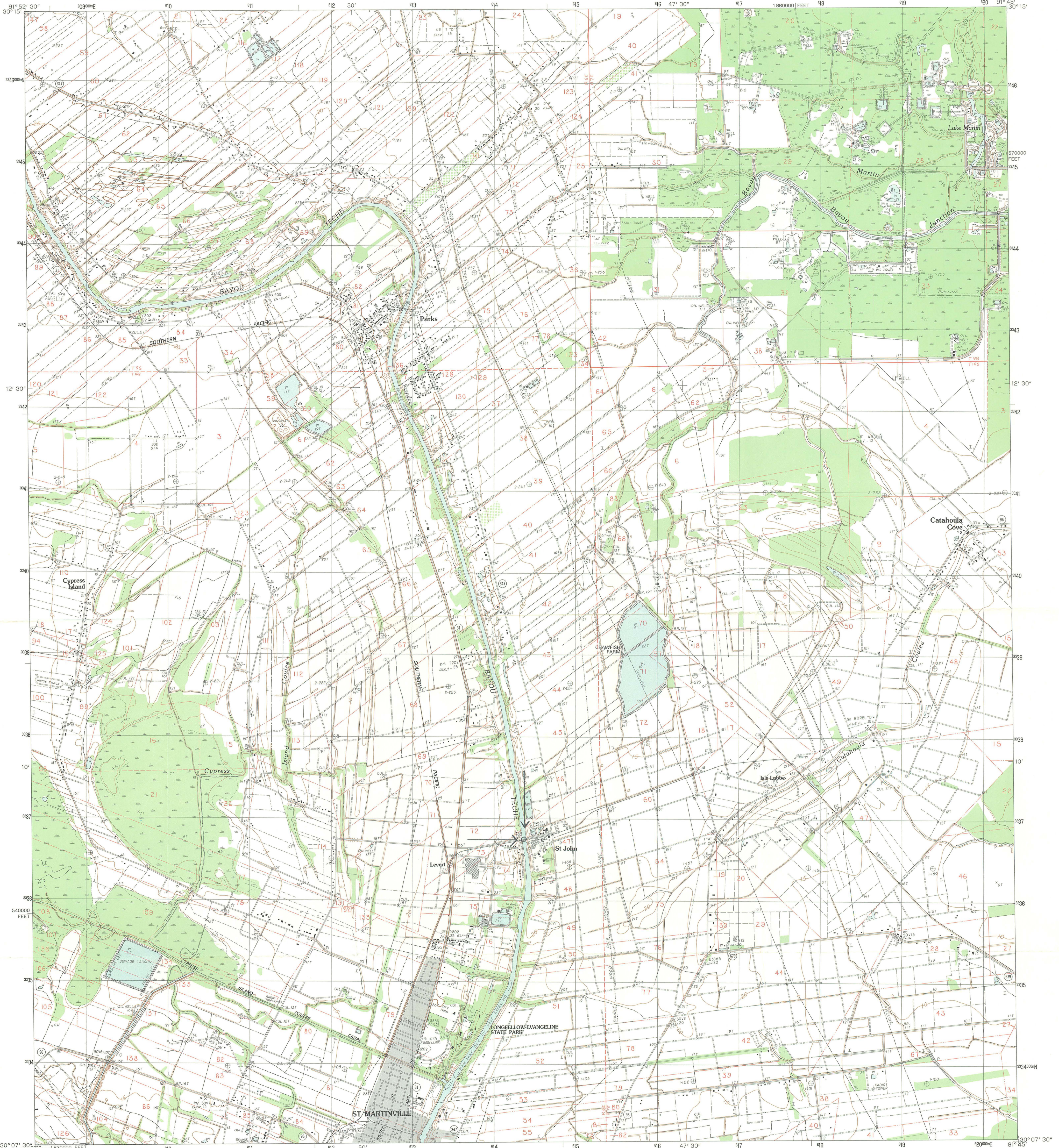
LEVERT-ST. JOHN BRIDGE
ST. MARTIN PARISH, LA
DONNA FRICKER
NOV. 1997
LA SHPO
PHOTO 5
SOUTHEAST



LEVERT- ST. JOHN BRIDGE
ST. MARTIN PARISH, LA
DONNA FRICKER
NOV. 1997
LA SHPO
PHOTO 6
SOUTH/SE



LEVERT- ST. JOHN BRIDGE
ST. MARTIN PARISH, LA
DONNA FRICKER
NOV. 1997
LA SHPO
PHOTO 7
SOUTHWEST

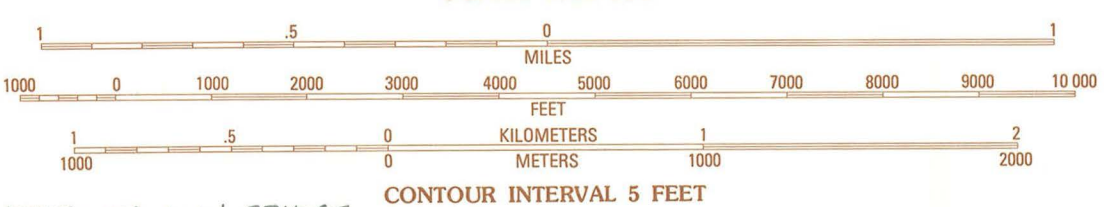


PRODUCED BY THE UNITED STATES GEOLOGICAL SURVEY CONTROL BY USGS, NOSNOMA AND LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF HIGHWAYS COMPILED FROM AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHS TAKEN 1976 AND 1980 FIELD CHECKED 1982. MAP EDITED 1983 PROJECTION LAMBERT CONFORMAL CONIC GRID: 1000-METER UNIVERSAL TRANSVERSE MERCATOR ZONE 15 10,000-FOOT STATE GRID TICKS LOUISIANA, SOUTH ZONE UTM GRID DECLINATION 09° EAST 1983 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION 4°09' EAST VERTICAL DATUM NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929 HORIZONTAL DATUM 1927 NORTH AMERICAN DATUM To place on the predicted North American Datum of 1983 move the projection lines as shown by dashed corner ticks (18 meters south and 12 meters east) There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of any Federal and State reservations shown on this map Gray tint indicates areas in which selected buildings are shown All or part of this quadrangle lies within a subsidence area

PROVISIONAL MAP
Produced from original manuscript drawings. Information shown as of date of field check.

LEVERT-ST. JOHN BRIDGE
ST. MARTIN PARISH, LA
15/614400/3336720

SCALE 1:24 000



ROAD LEGEND

	Improved Road
	Unimproved Road
	Trail
	Interstate Route
	U.S. Route
	State Route

1	2	3	1 Breaux Bridge
2	3	4	2 Cecilia
3	4	5	3 Batae La Rose
4	5	6	4 Broussard
5	6	7	5 Catahoula
6	7	8	6 Youngville
			7 New Iberia North
			8 Loreauville

PARKS, LOUISIANA
NE 1/4 ST. MARTINVILLE 15' QUADRANGLE
PROVISIONAL EDITION 1983

30091-B7-TF-024

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092 AND THE STATE OF LOUISIANA, DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS, BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA 70804

183B



KATHLEEN BABINEAUX BLANCO
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

STATE OF LOUISIANA
OFFICE OF THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR
Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism
OFFICE OF CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT
DIVISION OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION

PHILLIP J. JONES
SECRETARY

GERRI HOBDY
ASSISTANT SECRETARY

February 13, 1998

National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
Mail Stop 2280, Suite 400
1849 C Street
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

Re: Levert-St. John Bridge, St. Martin Parish, Louisiana

To Whom It May Concern:

Enclosed please find a National Register form with supporting materials for the above referenced property. If there are any questions, please call me at 504-342-8160.

Sincerely,

Donna Fricker

Donna Fricker
National Register Coordinator

DF/df

Enclosure