Dogtrots in New Orleans: An Urban Adaptation to a Rural House Type

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Dogtrots in New Orleans:
An Urban Adaptation to a Rural House Type

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
University of New Orleans
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Master of Science
in
Urban Studies

by

Jennifer K. Anderson
B.A., Southern Methodist University, 2007

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Dedication

Dedicated to the three dogtrot Creole cottages located at 315-25 North Miro Street, which were destroyed by fire on March 24, 2013 shortly before this thesis was submitted.
Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my Committee Chair and academic advisor Dr. Jane Brooks for her encouragement and guidance throughout the duration of my program at the University of New Orleans. To my colleagues at the Preservation Resource Center of New Orleans, particularly Patricia H. Gay, Michelle Kimball, and Rebecca O'Malley Gipson, who were always willing to give assistance and advice when needed. And to my family and friends who have provided me with unending love and support over the years.
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ABSTRACT

The dogtrot house type is an important type of vernacular architecture in the American landscape, particularly in rural areas of the southern United States. Little is formally written or known about the dogtrot type houses in New Orleans, which appear to be a unique evolution of the rural dogtrot form specifically adapted for the urban environment. This thesis examines the existing literature regarding the dogtrot house type and analyzes the architectural history of the remaining dogtrot type homes in New Orleans in order to establish that they are correctly classified, and also to investigate any possible links with rural dogtrots. The findings promote awareness of the dogtrot house type in the urban setting, and contribute to the larger picture of vernacular architectural adaptation in the United States. Further, this thesis lays the foundation for landmarking the 16 remaining dogtrots in New Orleans.

Keywords: Dog trot, dogtrot, open-passage house, double-pen, possum trot, vernacular architecture, Upland South, Scotch-Irish, historic preservation, New Orleans
CHAPTER ONE: PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Introduction

A dogtrot is traditionally a rural architectural house type found mostly in heavily forested areas of the deep South, including Louisiana. These double-pen houses consist of two rooms that are separated by a central breezeway and all connected under a common roof. Although the type has its roots in 18th century Pennsylvania, dogtrots rose to prominence when Scotch-Irish frontiersmen discovered the excellent adaptability of the house type, along with the inherent cooling benefits of the breezeway. They took the dogtrot house with them in their march through the Appalachians forests and into the Upland and Lowland South, where it became a very popular type of rural dwelling. The New Orleans version of the dogtrot is significantly smaller than its rural counterpart and specifically adapted for an urban setting. The narrow lot sizes meant that the breezeway width shrunk from an average of 6-12 feet wide to approximately 2-3 feet wide. As a result, New Orleans’ dogtrots are unlike any other in Gulf South, or the United States for that matter.

Importance of the Study

While much has been written about the rural form of the dogtrot house type, there have been no formal studies published about the dogtrot-like homes in New Orleans. Furthermore, there is currently no formal consensus among local architecture historians regarding the origins of the New Orleans dogtrot or whether they are directly related to the rural dogtrot. Currently, there are sixteen (16) dogtrots remaining in New Orleans, making them one of the most rare housing types in the city. This study investigates the link between the rural dogtrot and New Orleans dogtrot, inventories the existing dogtrots in New Orleans and
examines the context of the neighborhoods where they appear, and establishes the groundwork for nominating the remaining New Orleans dogtrots to the National Register of Historic Places.
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Cultural Diffusion vs. Independent Adaptation

A key question when discussing the origins of the Upland South dogtrot is whether or not the house type was an independent adaptation of pioneers from the Midland Cultural Region or if it was imported by Europeans to the United States via a process called diffusion.

Independent adaptation occurs when people who are separated by geography but have the same opportunity and resources develop the same idea or artifact independently, without any external stimulus or contact between them (Erickson and Murphy 54-55). The contrasting theory to independent adaptation is diffusion, which is the “spread of ideas, innovations, substances, practices, enterprises, styles, religions, or organized sports from a point of origin” (Pitzl 56). For the purposes of this thesis, it is necessary to differentiate the actual process of diffusion with the widely criticized diffusionist theoretical model that was described by early 20th-century anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski (Erickson and Murphy 54-57). Diffusionism as a theoretical model took the actual process of diffusion and imposed a Eurocentric hegemony over indigenous cultures and viewed most cultures as uninventive (Blaut 30). Instead, this study will focus on the process of diffusionism as the flow of ideas and building types from one region to another while assuming the uniformitarian view that all communities have equal potential for invention and innovation (Blaut 34).

Gerald Pitzl writes that there are two types of cultural diffusion—expansion diffusion and relocation diffusion. Expansion diffusion occurs when ideas or substances are spread from a point of origin out to adjacent areas (Pitzl 56). Relocation diffusion occurs via the relocation of people who bring ideas or substances with them from a non-adjacent point of origin (56). For
example, relocation diffusion occurred as thousands of immigrants brought their language, religion, food, and culture to the United States during the 19th – early 20th centuries.

Certainly, a mixture of independent adaptation, expansion diffusion, and relocation diffusion can all be present at once in a community. New ideas and materials may be introduced via independent adaptation or relocation diffusion, and spread as a result of expansion diffusion. Blaut refers to this process as crisscross diffusion, “where traits or trait modifications will be generated, transmitted, and received frequently and will diffuse quickly. “At all times novel traits will be crisscrossing the landscape” (Blaut 36). When crisscross diffusion occurs within a cultural region such as the Upland South, it is difficult to pinpoint a center for a particular trait, and instead “we would assume that the entire landscape participated in the transformation” (36).

Once a trait in vernacular architecture was proven to be useful, modification was rare. According to Jonathan and Donna Fricker, local builders “follow a local tradition, uninformed by the contemporary fashion of the outside world... he is simply doing what the local people do—what they have always done” (5). Vernacular architecture “varies greatly over distance, as one encounters different traditions, and not much over time, as traditions are handed down” (Fricker and Fricker 5-6).

The lack of variation and resulting success of vernacular architecture in many communities was due to the practical needs of the local folk builders, who often had limited resources due to primitive living conditions. This was the case with log construction in the American frontier. Cultural geographer Dr. Martin Wright noted that “log house construction cannot be accomplished single-handedly. The sheer weight of the logs makes additional help a
necessity” (Fricker and Fricker 6). As a result, the method of construction had to be familiar to all who participated in what became known as a “raising bee,” which consisted of a group of neighbors pitching in to construct a family home (6). Fricker writes that “eventually in Louisiana, the log housing of the yeomen farmers were generally accepted and copied by Southern planters” (6), resulting in the diffusion of log house styles from primitive frontiersmen to wealthy plantation owners.

The spread of the dogtrot style can be explained via diffusion and noting that the style roughly followed the path of Upland South frontiersmen through the Upland and Lowland South. However, cultural geographers strongly suspect that the dogtrot style originates in Finland and was imported to America by immigrants via relocation diffusion. This theory will be detailed later in this chapter. Certainly, Louisiana contains abundant examples of vernacular architecture whose origins were from outside of the United States. French Colonial, an architecture type that is specific to Louisiana, is actually a mixture of West Indies, Normandy, and Saint-Domingue architecture (Vogt, New Orleans Houses 15; Toledano 62). Creole cottages “may have originated in the West Indies and been introduced to New Orleans by refugees from Haiti” (Vogt, New Orleans Houses 16). Finally, the origins of the ubiquitous New Orleans shotgun house isn’t certain, but is widely believed to have originated in Haiti or West Africa, and thought to have developed in rural areas prior to being introduced to the New Orleans urban setting (Vogt, New Orleans Houses 22). In summary, all of Louisiana’s vernacular house types were the result of ideas and housing styles that were imported to this region via the process of diffusion, and then subsequently adapted for this specific environment.
Rural Dogtrot History and Context

Defining the Dogtrot

The dogtrot house type is characterized by two pens, or rooms, separated by a central breezeway and joined under a common side-facing gabled roof (Fig. 1). The breezeway was normally 6-12 feet wide, and the well ventilated, shady space could be used as a place for family gatherings, a dining room, sleeping quarters during the warmer summer months, and work space (S. Owens 10, 55). In addition to the breezeway, dogtrots were normally constructed with a front porch, “most notably, the full façade veranda with shed or hipped roof, or the partial vernacular portico with front facing gable roof” (S. Owens 16). This shady porch had the effect of extended the living space for the family.

Often, one pen was used as the primary living space of the family. The use of the second pen varied and, in addition to living quarters for an expanding family, could also have been intended as workspace, a tavern, school house, or an inn (S. Owens 7). Therefore, some dogtrots had chimneys located on the outside end of each pen, while some simply had one chimney on the outer wall of the pen that was used as the primary living quarters (Kingsley 24).
The entry doors of the dogtrot house plan were often located facing each other in the breezeway. However, there were plenty of examples with front facing entry doors, and some examples that contained both front facing and breezeway entry doors. Windows in dogtrots were not standard. Sheldon Owens explains that most dogtrots had one or two windows in the front wall of each pen (Fig. 2), and often the same configuration on the opposite rear wall of the house, while earlier dogtrots may not have had any windows at all (S. Owens 16).

Occasionally, a dogtrot would contain a half-story that was used as an attic or sleeping quarters, access of which was gained by a ladder or stair in a corner next to one of the hearths, or by a stair in the hall in most lumber dogtrots (Newton 184; S. Owens 16). Still other dogtrots had a full second story, turning the dogtrot into an I-house type (S. Owens 48).

Room additions were often constructed in the back of just one of the pens, creating an L-shaped floor plan, or additions to the back of both pens (S. Owens 17) (Fig. 1). A pent roof was usually constructed over the back additions (Newton 184). Newton notes that some early Upland South houses seem to have included kitchen space within the main structure, but more commonly they were located in these back rooms, or by a porch extension of the central hall (Newton 184). In later adaptations, builders erected the house with two pens on each side, creating a four room plan (S. Owens 17). Since the breezeway is still open and unaltered with these modifications, these houses can still be classified as dogtrots (S. Owens 17).
**Evolution of the Dogtrot**

The dogtrot house plan evolved over time as owners made modifications to the home to suit their needs (Gentry 2). Jordan-Bychkov notes that in pioneer times, the basic dogtrot plan itself was a modification that most often arose from the expansion of a single-pen house (Jordan-Brychkov 36; S. Owens 22).

As the type spread across the Upland and Lowland South, the dogtrot was modified in very similar ways across the region. The most common alteration to the dogtrot house type was the addition of double doors on the front and back of the breezeway, or closing off the breezeway permanently with clapboards, effectively changing the house type into a center hall cottage (S. Owens 46-48). Occasionally, this adaptation would occur early in the house’s history (Fricker and Fricker 22).

After the appearance of sawmills and factory-produced wire nails in the late 1800’s, most dogtrots were built using machined lumber and weatherboarding (Roach-Lankford 94; S. Owens 21). However, there was enough overlap between log and frame construction that using construction method and materials as a precise dating tool is problematic (S. Owens 21-22). Eventually, “machine manufactured building materials, such as metal hardware, windows, bricks, and various types of roofing became readily available and cost effective for most Americans. In some cases, weatherboards were used to cover the exterior of log dogtrots to better insulate them (Fricker and Fricker 22). Manufactured building materials gradually became incorporated into the construction of most new dogtrots as the frames version of the house type enjoyed widespread popularity throughout the South” (S. Owens 21). During the
first decade of the 20th century, balloon framing became the dominant method of construction (Newton 188).

European Origins

Determining the origin for any type of American vernacular architecture has always been problematic due to the complex mixing of cultures and traditions in the United States, and unanimous stories of origins are rare (S. Owens 23). There have been several proposed origins for the dogtrot type. Some researchers, including Louisiana State University geographer Fred Kniffen, believed that the dogtrot was an adaptation of an English center hall house (Fricker and Fricker 16; T. Jordan, “Cultural and Ecological Context” 60), the Welsh longhouse (S. Owens 16), or Germany (S. Owens 16).

Other researchers believed that the American dogtrot was derived from northern Europe, specifically Finland and Sweden. When first introduced, the Northern European origin theory for the log dogtrot house was dismissed on the grounds that the population of Finnish and Swedish immigrants in America was too small to have had any lasting impact on vernacular architecture, particularly the dogtrot type which became so widespread in the Southern states (T. Jordan, “Cultural and Ecological Context” 59). To tackle this critique, cultural geographers Terry Jordan, Martin Wright, and other historians such as Walter Prescott Webb, note the identical corner notching between Swedish/Finnish log houses and American log houses (Fricker and Fricker 4).

Reviewing the extensive fieldwork in Sweden and Finland by Martin Wright in the 1950’s and later conducting his own fieldwork in northern Europe in the 1970-80s, Terry Jordan provided convincing arguments for the previously discredited Fenno-Scandian origin for the
dogtrot house type (Fricker and Fricker 4; T. Jordan, “Reappraisal” 80-81; S. Owens 25). Jordan, who was the leading contemporary proponent of a Fenno-Scandian origin for the dogtrot house type prior to his death in 2003, specifically believed the dogtrot housing type originated in southern Finland and Soviet Karelia. Jordan stated that the “widespread occurrence of the Karelian roof in frontier Midland American provides seemingly irrefutable evidence both of diffusion from northern Europe and of subsequent adoption of Finnish traits by the pioneer American population as a whole” (T. Jordan, “Cultural and Ecological Context” 74).” Because Jordan originally believed that the American dogtrot was derived from the Salzburger log, open-runway, double crib barn, he also conducted fieldwork in the British Isles, the Celtic Highlands, and central Europe (T. Jordan, “Reappraisal” 80) to investigate the British and Germanic origin theories (S. Owens 36). His fieldwork convinced him to abandon both Western and Central Europe origin theories, as he noted that “the double-crib plan occurs widely in Sweden, Norway, and parts of Finland,” and are “much more prevalent in Northern Europe than in German-populated regions of log construction in Central Europe” (T. Jordan, “Reappraisal” 87-88). Jordan concluded that a Fenno-Scandian origin is the most likely source for the American dogtrot type “because open-passage dwellings occur nowhere else in Europe and, more importantly, because houses with this feature existed in a cultural context that was very similar to that of Midland America and enjoyed selective advantages identical to those on the New World frontier” (“Cultural and Ecological Context” 67). Jordan reaffirmed this belief in his later years, noting that “the concept of a two-room dwelling with an open-air hall running at right angles to the roof ridge is known only in Northern Europe” (“Reappraisal” 81).
The similarities in the cultural context in which Fenno-Scandian and American double-crib log houses exist are remarkable and provide further evidence of a direct link. Both landscapes consisted of dense forests whose backwoods inhabitants were skilled in log construction. Jordan points out that the dogtrot house form even today is “restricted to remote, poverty-stricken districts of Midland America and to the hinterlands of northern Europe where vestiges of woodland pioneering remain” (T. Jordan, “Cultural and Ecological Context” 72). This cultural similarity did not exist between the builders of British and American log houses. “Highland Britons, who arrived later, particularly the Scotch-Irish and Welsh, were unfamiliar with forest settlement and might have accepted substantial segments of the already implanted Finnish cultural complex, including log construction and the interchangeable pen plans” (T. Jordan, “Cultural and Ecological Context” 72). Although Jordan admits that proving the Fenno-Scandian origin of log construction is problematic (“Reappraisal” 84), he concludes that “this ethnic pattern leads me to propose that the Finns serves as the principle agents of diffusion in the introduction of Fenno-Scandian form elements that survived in Midland America” (84, 93).

_Upland South Culture and Adoption by Scotch-Irish_

The most important group to spread American frontier culture and, in turn, Southern folk culture and architecture, were the Scotch-Irish who began to arrive in Pennsylvania during the 18th century (Burrison 10). Second only to the English as the largest ethnic group to immigrate to the New World in the 18th century, the Scotch-Irish comprised as many as 1 of every 10 Americans by the time of the American revolution (Chepesiuk 1). The Scotch-Irish “hailed from the British Isles where traditions of joinery and construction knew
nothing of log-on-log architecture” since much of the dense forests of their homeland had been cut down centuries earlier (Fricker and Fricker 4). The Scotch-Irish quickly assimilated into mainstream American culture and, unlike many other ethnic groups, did not make a large scale concerted effort to maintain a separate ethnic identity (Chepesiuk 2). They originally settled in the same region of the Delaware Valley as the Fenno-Scandian of New Sweden, adopted log construction techniques from these expert builders, and carried these techniques with them as they settled further and further west to eventually dominate the Upland South culture region (T. Jordan, “Reappraisal” 94; Fricker and Fricker 3). Terry Jordan and Matti Kaups “identifies the Scotch-Irish as the largest single genetic input to what they call the ‘backwoods population’” (Fricker and Fricker 3).

Ethnic Germans arrived in the Delaware Valley during the 18th century but, like the Scotch-Irish, they did not have a tradition of log construction in their homeland as would subsequent German immigrants of the 19th century (T. Jordan, “Reappraisal” 94). Therefore, Germans who arrived in Pennsylvania and the Delaware Valley in the 18th century “were as ready as the English and Scotch-Irish to adopt the expedient Fenno-Scandian [log construction] techniques” (94).

The Fenno-Scandian population of the Delaware Valley did not continue west with the Scotch-Irish and German populations. Instead, their log construction tradition lived on and was modified via crisscross diffusion in what would eventually become American pioneer culture—a blend of Scotch-Irish and German characteristics, as well as characteristics of the American Indians who greeted and sometimes clashed with pioneers as they moved westward (T. Jordan, “Cultural and Ecological Context” 62; S. Owens 38). Pioneer culture, as described by
Terry Jordan, was a largely classless and marked with locational instability that placed a high degree of importance on individualism, personal freedom, and mutual aid ("Cultural and Ecological Context" 62). Mutual aid amongst one’s neighbors was essential for survival. Log homes, as discussed previously, could not be built without help, and these log rollings and raising bees became social occasions, as well as an important part of the exchange system (Roach-Lankford 95). This practice reinforced log culture and its overwhelming success in the backwoods frontier.

The dogtrot house type likely held many benefits for pioneers that perpetuated its success. The dogtrot plan represented the easiest way to expand a residence from one to two pens. The natural length of logs limited the size of rooms, and grafting the logs together, notching corner by corner, was far more tedious and labor intensive than creating a separate pen and joining the two pens under a single roof (Fricker and Fricker 16; S. Owens 23-24; T. Jordan, “Cultural and Ecological Context” 62-63). Eventually, the dogtrot came to represent prosperity and became status symbols in Upland South culture that indicated a successful farm and family (T. Jordan, “Cultural and Ecological Context” 66).

Ease of construction alone, however, does not explain why the dogtrot house type remained popular even after the advent of balloon framing construction. Although the American roots of the dogtrot house type began in the colder climate of the Delaware Valley and Northeastern United States, they flourished amongst the pioneers in the hot, humid climate of the Upland South and, subsequently, all of the Southern states in the Lowland South (S. Owens 7; Jordan 61). Terry Jordan states that “an accidental pre-adaptation to the humid subtropical climate most likely explains the persistence of the type” (Cultural and Ecological
The breezeway of the dogtrot house provided a cooling benefit that would have been especially prized in an era before central air conditioning (Owens 7; Gentry and Lam 2-10). The efficacy of the breezeway as a natural cooling feature was tested by Aaron Gentry and Sze Min Lam, two students in the School of Architecture Department at the University of Mississippi. The results of their study showed “the geometric and disposition and orientation of the dog trot house to be extremely successful in creating passive ventilation” (Gentry and Lam 1). The breezeway offered a shady place to work and rest, while the narrowness of the breezeway accelerated interior wind flow up to three times that of exterior wind flow and kept interior spaces cooler (Gentry 9-10). This effect was maximized when the dogtrot house was oriented with the breezeway facing a north-south direction to take advantage of prevailing wind patterns of the Southern states (Gentry 10).

Movement into Louisiana

After adoption by Scotch-Irish and German pioneers, log construction quickly spread from the Delaware Valley and southeastern Pennsylvania region throughout the mesothermal forests of the United States (T. Jordan, “Cultural and Ecological Context” 61-62). Terry Jordan states that the bearers of log construction “moved from the Appalachians to the Oregon Country in a period of only 70 years, and the dogtrot plan accompanied them wherever they went” (62). There are specimens of log dogtrots even as far-flung as Toronto, Buffalo, NY and New Jersey (60). As discussed previously, however, log construction and the dogtrot plan was most prolific in the heavily forested Appalachian Mountains, the Upland South, Lowland South and, eventually, the forested areas of Texas and Oklahoma. This may have been due to the large number of pioneers settling into these regions. Owens notes that “due to the typography
of eastern North America, pioneer cultures such as the Scotch-Irish and Germans were ‘funneled’ south as they attempted to move west” (S. Owens 33; Fricker and Fricker 1). As a result, Upland South culture was spread in a southwestward direction.

In Louisiana, there are three main areas where historic log buildings were concentrated: north-central Louisiana (also known as the Hill parishes), western Louisiana and Washington Parish, and the eastern corner known as the Florida parishes (Fig. 3) (Fricker and Fricker 1). Frontier settlement in these three areas began as early as the 1790s, and was well underway during in the first few decades of the 19th century (Kingsley 24; Fricker and Fricker 1).

According to Fricker and Fricker, the general consensus is that log buildings in the north-central region of Louisiana are associated with the Upland South culture, while “published scholarly materials are inconclusive as to the sources of log construction in western Louisiana and Washington Parish” (1). The north-central parishes were the recipients of a large wave of predominantly Scotch-Irish and English migrants from middle Tennessee, which cultural geographers consider the major diffusion point for log construction, including dogtrotts (Fricker and Fricker 10-11; Roach-Lankford 1985). Importantly, these migrants were usually born in the Carolinas, moved westward into Tennessee, and into north-central Louisiana, sometimes within one generation (Fricker and Fricker 10; Roach-Lankford 1985).
1985). This underscores the general mobility of the group, which facilitated the rapid spread of log culture and construction. A second wave of migrants began to arrive in north-central Louisiana from Georgia and Alabama, beginning in the 1830s (Fricker and Fricker 10-11; Roach-Lankford 88), two states that also contained a heavy concentration of log buildings and dogtrots (S. Owens 32). Regardless of the source of log construction techniques in the Florida Parishes and western Louisiana, log construction was the preferred building method among Anglo-Saxon pioneers settling in the dense cypress and pine forests of both the Upland and Lowland South regions of Louisiana. Notably, log buildings were not favored in areas settled by French Creoles, who had their own building traditions in place (Fricker and Fricker 2).

The Florida Parishes in particular were technically below the dividing line that distinguishes Upland South from Lowland South plantation culture. However, with the exception of St. Francisville, this area had more in common geographically and culturally with North Louisiana and is considered a part of the Upland South culture (Roach, “North Louisiana Folk Life;” M. Owens, “Louisiana Traditional Cultures” ). The Florida Parishes historically contained longleaf yellow pines that reached from 80-100 feet (Wilds, Dufour, and Cowan 235-236). Neither French or Spanish culture was well established in this area during the colonial period, so it was ripe for settlement by Scotch-Irish, British-American, and English pioneers (Roach, “North Louisiana Folklife;” Gardner, “The Florida Parishes”), who took advantage of the abundant timber and natural resources.

Fricker and Fricker are careful to note that it is extremely difficult to connect all Louisiana log structures with Upland South Culture since, unlike the northern hill parishes which can positively be associated with Upland South Culture, there is very little published scholarly
opinion on the origins of the western Louisiana and Washington Parish log houses and the people who built them (9). At its height in the mid-nineteenth century, log culture—as well as dogtrots—“spread across the Macon Ridge in the Mississippi River flood plain and the natural levees of the Tensas Basin and the Red River and Tangipahoa River Valleys” (Roach-Lankford 88). All three valleys flow southeast towards New Orleans. The dogtrot house type certainly would have been familiar to Scotch-Irish and German migrants coming in to New Orleans, which was the primary transaction center and transportation hub for the Gulf Coast (Pillsbury 9; M. Owens, “Louisiana Traditional Cultures”).

Dogtrots in the New Orleans Context

Historic Settlement Patterns in New Orleans

In order to establish the context in which the New Orleans dogtrots were built, an understanding of overall settlement history in New Orleans is essential. The following is a brief history of historical settlement patterns in the city. Figure 4 shows a map of New Orleans’ historic neighborhoods that will be discussed in this section.

New Orleans was founded in
the year 1718 when, in the spring of that year, Bienville chose a strategic sliver of land between Lake Ponchartrain and the Mississippi River to establish a new French colony (Campanella 6). Almost immediately his decision to build New Orleans in this specific location was called into question by French colonists due to the area’s high vulnerability to flooding and endemic disease (6). A year later, thousands of settlers from France, Germany, and Switzerland were recruited to live and work in South Louisiana. Despite the fact that the new colony was plagued by disease, flooding, and a devastating hurricane within the first five years of its existence, Bienville and the colonists persisted (p. 6). The beginning foundation for present day New Orleans was solidified.

The primary concern among early city planners was keeping residents safe from the seasonal flooding and diseases that were associated with flood-prone and poorly drained areas. Richard Campanella notes that “so correlated was topography to urban development in nineteenth-century New Orleans that, at quick glance, city maps of the era resemble elevation maps” (Campanella 94).

In his book, *New Orleans: The Making of an Urban Landscape*, geographer Peirce Lewis separates the history of New Orleans development into four distinct eras (32-75). While settlement patterns in New Orleans have been influenced by a complex web of topographical conditions, economic variables, and relationships between the many cultural groups who coexisted in the city, on close inspection Lewis’ division of eras are largely based on the material resources that were available to the New Orleans region and how those resources shaped the urban landscape.
Lewis refers to the first era of New Orleans’ urban landscape history as the European Era, dating from the city’s founding in 1718 to the Louisiana Purchase 85 years later in 1803 (Lewis 32). During this time period, the city was shaped by its French and Spanish rulers. As they did in many colonial towns in the New World, the French founding fathers laid out the streets and central square of the new town long before there were enough people to inhabit the grid, which did not happen until after 1800. This much repeated city plan “represented a perfect, purified Europe, ready to be stamped on the soil of the New World wherever the Europeans willed it” (Lewis 32). Richard Campanella describes the French Quarter plan as representing “the more rigid and orderly end of the urban-planning spectrum of New France, featuring a symmetrical grid pattern [eleven-by-six blocks] with a central place fronting the institutions of church and state, dramatically perches upon a cusp of the Mississippi River” (Campanella 92). This need for order and predictability in city planning was surely needed in a time of such uncertainty and social upheaval that occurred in new French colonies.

The European Era was a time of slow migration and population growth among Europeans. Slaves were imported to fill the labor shortage and, by the end of the 18th century, more than half the city’s population was black (Lewis 33). Nonetheless, the population did begin to fill in the grid by the mid-18th century, and by 1788 suburban growth began in earnest when Bernard Marigny began dividing up his property downriver from the French Quarter into small lots intended for residential use (Greater New Orleans Community Data Center, 2002). The second development to spring up outside of the French Quarter was the Faubourg Treme, which was subdivided for residential use near the end of the 18th century (Greater New Orleans Community Data Center 2002; Robinson 2006). Faubourg Treme was a popular location
for not only Creoles and whites, but for Free Persons of Color as well. Finally, near the end of
the European Era in 1805, Americans began arriving in New Orleans in large numbers. After
finding themselves unwelcome in the city’s Creole neighborhoods, they established the
Faubourg St. Mary upriver from the French Quarter in what is now known as the Central
Business District (Campanella 92).

In Geographies of New Orleans: Urban Fabrics Before the Storm, Richard Campanella
explains the factors that were involved in choosing the placement of suburbs for the French
Quarter. He explains that “the first condition in the expansion of bourg [meaning ‘town’] to
faubourg [literally meaning ‘false town’] was immediate adjacency to an existing urbanized
area” (Campanella 92). The Faubourg Marigny, Treme, and St. Mary were all immediately
adjacent to the French Quarter and flanked it on all three available sides (Fig. 4). Human
habitation beyond these neighborhoods was problematic due to marshy soils and frequent
flooding during rainstorms. “Human habitation of the backswamp mostly comprised of raised
fishing camps and squatter shanties” (94), and very little infrastructure other than a handful of
roads and a drainage canal were provided during the European Era.

The second era using Lewis’ sequence is America’s Western Capital from 1810 – 1865
(Lewis 37). This era begins after the transfer of the Louisiana Territory from French to American
control via the Louisiana Purchase. The Americans, thanks to proximity and phenomenal growth
in the shipping industry, were far more successful in enticing its citizens to relocate to New
Orleans and in the first 7 years after the Louisiana Purchase the population of the city tripled
(37). By this time, the city’s European Era footprint was beginning to become crowded as not
only Americans, but German and Irish immigrants fleeing their homeland, began to pour into
the city over the next half century. Still a city deeply divided by culture, the Americans along
with many white European immigrants chose to expand further upriver from the French
Quarter beyond Faubourg St. Mary, while the Creole population continued to build along
Esplanade Ridge, Treme, and downriver from Faubourg Marigny towards the Bywater (Lewis
38-39). For the first time, housing also began to spring up in the backswamps [also known as
the “back of town”] toward Lake Ponchartrain (Lewis 38-39). New infrastructure in the form of
new transportation options made expansion possible. The Carondelet Canal—originally
constructed in 1794 and ran south from Bayou St. John, through Treme, and to the French
Quarter— was widened and deepened in 1805 to allow for navigation (Robinson 2006). This
increased the population of the once tiny agricultural community of Bayou St. John (Campanella
93) and in neighborhoods adjacent to the new canal. The New Orleans and Carrollton Railroad
(built in 1833) allowed easier access to communities upriver of the French Quarter such as
Faubourg Bouligny and Carrollton (Campanella 93-94). Finally, the Ponchartrain Railroad (built
in 1835) connected the core of the city center to the Milneburg neighborhood, a “booming
mini-port and resort area on Lake Ponchartrain” (Campanella 93-94).

During America’s Western Capital era of building and expansion, Lewis notes a strong
correlation between class and infrastructure. He observes that affluent whites concentrated
along the grand boulevards and major transportation hubs. The lower income black population
increased behind the grand homes and boulevards and created low-income “superblocks”
(Lewis 46) that were characterized by more modest housing. Racial segregation, unlike class
segregation, was not necessarily absolute. Lewis notes that while the cores of superblocks were
not always all black, the racial makeup along the boulevards were usually all white (46).
By the onset of the Civil War, several enclaves of working-class immigrants had been established in New Orleans. Most of them were sited based on their proximity to jobs and access to affordable housing. The Irish and German population in Lower Garden District, for example, were drawn to that specific neighborhood by the abundance of unskilled labor opportunities made possible by the flatboat and steamboat traffic lining the levee (Campanella 267). The large numbers of working class Eastern Europeans and Jewish people near the old Dryades Market in Central City were drawn to the area by the opportunity to work in the market while taking advantage of the functional and inexpensive cottages and frame houses located in the neighborhood (Campanella 276). Immigrant workers were also drawn to this neighborhood by the work on the New Basin Canal (State Historic Preservation Office 11).

Finally, the back of town areas behind the French Quarter, present day Treme and Mid-City, began to fill in with both Free Persons of Color and European immigrant workers.

The end of the America’s Western Capital era coincided with the end of the Civil War (which ended in 1865) and, Lewis argues, marked the end of the “Golden Age” in New Orleans (Lewis 48).

The third era in Lewis’ sequence is The Mature City, dating from the end of the Civil War in 1865 to the end of World War II in 1945. Decline in the years following did not occur directly because of the Civil War. Rather, decline occurred because of increased competition from other cities for trade routes during the rapid industrialization that characterized this period of American history (Lewis 48). Thanks to expansion of the country’s rail infrastructure, New Orleans was no longer the quickest or cheapest route for transporting goods. New Orleans trade was, fortunately, able to evolve thanks to rail improvements and the development of the
cargo ship which better facilitated the movement of bulk cargo from the Central and Upper Midwest (Lewis 48). River traffic began to revive in a new form, and New Orleans’ “location at the juncture of the Mississippi Valley and Gulf of Mexico turned out to be marvelously advantageous for plucking the wealth of new commercial agriculture that had begun to flower both in the American South and in Latin America” (Lewis 48). Lewis also notes that considerable improvements to the port facilities were made when authority for the port was transferred from private to public hands (55).

Neighborhood development during the Mature City era continued at a steady pace with the expansion and improvement of the streetcar lines, which were all converted to electric power by 1893 (Lewis 55). While German and Irish immigration had begun to slow, a new wave of Jewish and Eastern European immigrants began to arrive in New Orleans in droves (Lewis 57), as they had in the rest of the country. By this time, New Orleans had reached its limit on its ability to expand based on the technology available at the time. Continued expansion in the backswamp towards Lake Ponchartrain was still extremely risky using the inadequate pumping technology of the time, and development abruptly stopped at the upriver Orleans-Jefferson Parish line where the protection levee was located (Lewis 58). Flood protection was grossly inadequate on the downriver end of the city where the political influence of the Creoles were diminished (58).

The only option for an increasingly crowded city that could not yet expand its boundaries was to increase density within the existing footprint. Shotgun houses, which rose to popularity near the end of the Civil War, were built as doubles. Shotgun houses were the least expensive housing type to build, and were considered “rental housing” that served the lower
income and black population most (Lewis 58-60). Developers built this housing type in rows in the “superblocks,” and they quickly became New Orleans’ quintessential housing type. According to a report by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), Central City contains the most shotguns of any neighborhood in the South, let alone New Orleans (State Historic Preservation Office, “Mid City” 10). SHPO estimates that 95% of its 2800 shotguns houses were built by the late-nineteenth century as rental housing for migrant workers during the digging of the New Basin Canal (11).

Suddenly, in 1913, everything changed. The city of New Orleans discovered it could drain the backswamps and open the land up for further development. Richard Campanella states that “aside from accessibility and proximity [to an existing urbanized area], the next most important factor [to city expansion] was whether the land was available to flooding” (Campanella 94). In 1913, Sewerage and Water Board employee A. Baldwin Wood developed the screw pump in an effort to solve the city’s drainage issues and reduce the breeding ground for the disease-carrying mosquitoes (AMSE Report 9). Due to its elevation, any water drained out of the city had to be lifted up and over the edges of the “bowl” that surrounded up the city of New Orleans. The Wood screw pump was capable of raising huge volumes of water and debris, up to 392 million gallons each per day, up and out of the city (9). Wood’s invention not only greatly reduced the occurrence of mosquito-borne illness in the city and improved sanitation, it dramatically and permanently reshaped New Orleans’ urban landscape.

Despite the availability of Wood’s new technology, drainage and subsequent population growth in the backswamp occurred at a slow pace in the beginning. The new technology was expensive, costing around $15,000 per pump, and expensive pilings were required to keep the
pumps and the pumping stations from sinking into the soft soils. Due to these prohibitive costs, growth in the “back of town” was limited to affluent whites who could afford the prices in the subdivisions (Lewis 62). Lewis points out that even if members of the black community could afford to purchase homes in the pricey subdivisions, these new neighborhoods were developed during a time when Jim Crow legislation was in full effect and racial propaganda was rampant. Many developers would not sell to blacks during this time period (62).

Expansion towards Lake Ponchartrain was also slow due to the onset of the Great Depression, which paralyzed growth in the city just as it had in almost every other community in America. Lewis states that “as soon as the Wood pumps began to make headway in the 1920’s, the Depression hit and stopped it” (Lewis 75). Nonetheless, the “back of town” slowly began to fill with people and homes, many in the Arts and Crafts and California Bungalow style that were so popular during this time period (Lewis 62). Lake Vista, a subdivision near the shores of Lake Ponchartrain, was completed in 1938. Laid out in the City Beautiful design, Garvey notes that “Mayor Maestri called [Lake Vista] the ‘poor man’s project,’ but prices in this area of premium location and planning would prove the slogan absurd. It was to become one of the wealthiest areas in the city” (Garvey 185).

Finally, the onset of World War II also helped shape the Lakefront’s residential makeup. As the country was lifted out of the Great Depression by phenomenal public and private investment in the infrastructure of the United States and in manufacturing for the war effort, the Lakefront began to fill in. By 1942, the shores of Lake Ponchartrain boasted the Art Deco style Shushan Airport along with several military installations. Housing developments for members of the military and their families were built in present day Lakeview.
The fourth era in Lewis’ sequence of New Orleans history begins in 1945 after the end of World War II, and is called the New and Uncertain City. Much of the new development towards the Lake Ponchartrain changed to peacetime construction and private companies (Garvey 184-185). International trade experienced phenomenal growth, growing from a $300 million in 1940 to $1.3 billion by the late 1940s. The East and West Lakeshore subdivisions, completed in 1953, include 352 residential lots on the sites of the old Army and Navy Hospitals. Lake Terrace was completed in 1953. (Garvey 185).

As a result of the increased economic activity and increased housing demand after the war, the New Orleans metropolitan area experienced a huge residential boom. Lewis states that New Orleans essentially became two cities... the compact old pre-war city, and “around it in all directions is the new exploded tissue of suburbia.” (Lewis 75). The construction of major thoroughfares and federally funded highways facilitated this suburban explosion (Garvey 190). It was no longer vital for people to live close to where they worked since one could easily commute by car. Unfortunately for the city of New Orleans, the new highways meant the very beginnings of neighborhood decline and abandonment.

**Defining the New Orleans Dogtrot**

New Orleans is not widely regarded as a city that contains dogtrots, either presently or historically. This is possibly because the focus of dogtrots among historians and geographers has been based largely within the context of log construction and pioneer history. Geographer Martin...
Wright did not consider New Orleans to be a geographical area that contained log construction during the extensive fieldwork he conducted from 1949-1951 (Fricker and Fricker 9). However, the presence of traditional dogtrot features in New Orleans dogtrots has led local architectural historians as well as prominent historian and New Orleans architecture expert Roulhac Toledano to classify these homes as dogtrots and, more specifically, as dogtrot Creole cottages (Toledano and Christovich 124). Figure 6 is a floor plan of a traditional dogtrot Creole cottage in New Orleans, with accessory buildings shown.

Figure 6: Floor plan for traditional dogtrot Creole cottage
The following is a description of common features found in the 16 existing New Orleans dogtrots.

**Exterior**—The majority (88%) of the dogtrot Creole cottages remaining in New Orleans were constructed with balloon framing and weatherboarded on all four elevations (Fig. 8). Two masonry dogtrot Creole cottages remain—1012-14 Ursulines and 1609 St. Ann. Dogtrot Creole cottages were most commonly positioned at or within a few feet of the sidewalk (Fig. 5). 921-23 St. Andrew is an exception to the rule and exhibits a significant setback from the sidewalk.

Occasionally, rows of dogtrots were constructed, which is illustrated nicely in the 300 block of North Miro street (Fig. 7). Where these groupings of dogtrots occurred, there was no space left between one dogtrot and the next, and access to the back of the property was solely through the breezeway. 315-319 N. Miro share a party wall between the two houses, while the roofline on 323-25 N. Miro suggests that it may have been constructed at a later date than its sister properties.

![Figure 7: Row of three dogtrots at 315-25 N. Miro](image)
Style—Although a few of the dogtrots are highly styled with Italianate and Greek Revival details, many exteriors exhibit simple Classic-style details.

Roof—14 of the remaining New Orleans dogtrots have a side-gabled rooflines with incorporated overhangs, which were common after 1835 (Fig. 8) (Toledano, Evans, and Christovich 44). 1609 St. Ann Street and 1012-14 Ursulines, the two remaining masonry dogtrot Creole cottages, both have a parapet gables and originally had abat-vents (the abat-vent is still present on 1012-14 Ursulines). The side-gabled roof on all 16 dogtrot Creole cottages extend across the breezeway to cover both front and back pens. Dogtrots with hipped roofs did exist, but they were far more rare (Toledano and Christovich 166). There are none known to this author that can be classified as true dogtrots in the city of New Orleans.

Additionally, 1609 St. Ann (pictured in Appendix A) is an example of a dogtrot with dormers, but dormers were not common on New Orleans dogtrots, particularly not in Faubourg Hagan where they were most concentrated.

Rooms and entrances—Unlike rural dogtrot houses which were sometimes built in separate phases, New Orleans dogtrots
were all built in one phase. All of the dogtrots found in the city are two rooms wide and two
rooms deep (Fig. 6). Three of the dogtrot Creole cottages originally had two full length doors on
both sides of the breezeway, while the remaining 13 (81%) have one door and a short double-
hung window on both sides of the breezeway (Fig. 9). After 1840 it was more common to have
a door and a short double-hung window (Toledano, Evans, and
Christovich 44). The dogtrot Creole cottages appear to have followed
this trend in their design.

Breezeway (dogtrot)—The small lot sizes in New Orleans
limited the size of the breezeway. As discussed previously, in a rural
setting the breezeway could be anywhere from 6-12 feet wide. In
New Orleans, the passageways are approximately 31 inches across. The breezeways are all at
ground level (2036 Camp, shown in Appendix A), appears to have been raised and converted
into the house’s main entrance) and open directly onto the sidewalk or lot. Traditionally, the
breezeways were either fully or partially covered with lattices or screens, as shown in Figure 10
(Toledano and Christovich, 124). None of the New Orleans dogtrots have access to the house
from inside the breezeway, as
would have been common in
rural dogtrots.

Expansions—like their
rural counterparts, accessory
buildings were sometimes constructed in the back of the house to extend the living space (Fig.
11). A small shed with a low-pitch gabled roof was usually added to the rear. This small shed
would lead to an attached larger room that also had a low-pitch gabled roof (Fig. 11). The kitchen was normally located in one of these accessory buildings.

**Similarity to Other House Types**

In their New Orleans Architecture series books, the New Orleans dogtrot has been defined by Toledano and Christovich as ‘dogtrot creole cottages.’ This is due to the resemblance of the pens to standard Creole cottages. A typical Creole cottage can consist of two-, three-, or four-bays (Fig. 12), with openings evenly spaced across the façade (Toledano and Christovich 112). They have single-pitched side gable roofs. Most Creole cottages dating from the 1840s were “built up to the banquette, with gables at the sides, double dormers, and a front overhang or abat-vent” (113). Rural Creole cottages included a gallery, again illustrating that the variation between urban and rural architecture in the region that, as discussed previously, is also apparent in French Colonial architecture.

Creole cottage construction began in the 1820s and 30s, and increased in number as they were built by those who purchased property in the new Creole faubourgs in the 1840s (Toledano and Christovich 113). During the 1840s and 1850s, brick-between-posts, brickbats-between-posts, and frame constructed Creole cottages were constructed in large numbers. “Entire blocks of these were built by single speculators, investors, or...
builder.” (114). All of the four-bay Creole cottages share a party wall between the two units, making the breezeway of the dogtrot Creole cottage a unique adaptation to the style. Occasionally, 2 two-bay Creole cottages were built next to each other, and in many cases they would be connected by a courtyard between the two properties (Fig 13). The earliest two-bay Creole cottages have two full length doors.

Another house type that closely resembles the dogtrot Creole cottage façade is a variation of the four bay shotgun house. This shotgun house, which Louisiana geographer Milton B. Newtown describes as a “bungalow” double shotgun house (not to be confused with the California Bungalow style), has a passageway separating the two front rooms, “giving the bungalow the façade of a dog trot (Newton 187). There is one very good example of this house type that is known to this author. 616 Valmont street (Fig 14), commonly mistaken for a dogtrot, is a standard hipped roof shotgun that precisely resembles Newton’s description and that of the illustration he provides (186). There is a distinct difference between this house and standard dogtrots on the Sanborn map, however (Fig. 16), as the Sanborn map
shows that the passageway terminates halfway through the house (the door that appears today in the former passageway was a later addition, and the passageway would have originally extended several rooms deep). This distinguishing factor on the Sanborn is backed up by the New Orleans Architecture Series publication, which documents one example of a (now demolished) hippedroof dogtrot at 2331-29 Iberville (Toledano and Christovich 166). The Sanborn map for this hipped roof dogtrot shows a footprint exactly like any other dogtrot Creole cottage (see ‘A’ in Fig. 15) despite the hipped roof, and does not resemble that of 616 Valmont. Therefore, the lack of an original open breezeway disqualifies 616 Valmont as a true dogtrot and strongly suggests it is a variation of the shotgun house.

Likewise, 1012-16 Josephine Street is also commonly called a dogtrot by local preservationists, but does not conform to all of the standard signatures of a dogtrot Creole cottage. The Sanborn maps shows that while the house does contain an original open breezeway, the pens are not equal in size. It also exhibits a hipped roof with one dormer located directly above the breezeway, and another located on the left side of the hipped roof. Further study would be needed to determine whether or not this house is a dogtrot or a variation of the shotgun house type.

Anglo Creole Architecture in Louisiana

Significantly, rural dogtrot Creole cottages, like those in New Orleans, are located in areas where there would have been considerable mixing between Urban South culture and Creole cultures (particularly in the Florida parishes). There is considerable
evidence in the architectural record that the two cultures did interact and, as a result, blended their architectural styles. The Anglo-Creole type is widely considered to be a hybrid of Creole housing type containing a German-style center hall (State Historic Preservation Office, “Harlem”). One of the best examples of this type in a rural setting is the Harlem Plantation house in Plaquemines Parish (Fig. 16).

Dogtrot Creole Cottages in Louisiana

New Orleans is not the only place where the dogtrot Creole cottages can be found, although they are quite rare. The dogtrot Creole cottage known as the Miller Farmstead in Webster Parish, Northwestern Louisiana was built in 1840 by John Miller, a farmer (with a Scottish surname, no less) from Missouri (State Historic Preservation Office, “Miller”). According to the State Historic Preservation Office, this is the time period when Upland South farmers began settling this region of Louisiana (1830s). The National Register nomination notes that the roof on the milled lumber dogtrot has an unusually steep pitch for this housing type, and also has an integral gallery instead of a porch with a separate shed roof that was more typical of Upland South dogtrots. The author speculates that the owner may have been attempting to emulate the Greek Revival galleried cottages that was so popular at the time of the home’s construction. The steeply pitched incorporated roof of the Miller dogtrot is identical to that of the Creole cottage. The floor plan is also identical to that of the

Figure 17: Rural dogtrot Creole cottage in St. Helena Parish. Photo by Avi Morgan
Creole cottage, with two large rooms towards the front of the house and two smaller rooms towards the rear. The mark of Upland South culture is unmistakable, however, in the wide central breezeway which characterizes the house as a dogtrot.

The Allen House is an identical hybrid of Creole cottage and Upland South dogtrot housing type. It is currently located in DeSoto Parish, but its original location was in Caddo Parish in Northwestern Louisiana. The Allen House exhibits the incorporated steeply pitched roof line (although not as steep as the Miller dogtrot) with an integral gallery, along with the wide dogtrot separating the two pens on either side. Built a bit later than the Miller dogtrot (ca. 1848), it is unmistakably Greek Revival in style. The hybrid of Upland South dogtrot and high-style Greek-Revival is very rare, and the Louisiana State Historic Preservation Office notes in its National Register nomination form that approximately a six of these “half-breed” houses exist, and almost all are in Northwestern Louisiana where the Uplanders were a dominant culture group and well-established enough to develop architectural style (State Historic Preservation Office, “Allen”).

The Sylvest dogtrot in Washington Parish in Southeastern Louisiana is an earlier example of the dogtrot creole cottage. According to the National Register nomination, it was built by Louisiana native Nehemiah Sylvest in 1880-81 (State Historic Preservation Office, “Sylvest”). Like the Allen and Miller dogtrots, the Sylvest house has a steeply pitched roof with incorporated roof line, integrated gallery, and wide dogtrot separating two pens on each side. The Sylvest house is a late example of a log cabin, so is particularly notable for this hybrid style.
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Statement of Methodology

Determining that the New Orleans dogtrot-like houses are associated with the rural dogtrot houses of the Urban South culture required a review of not only their architectural characteristics, but their cultural context as well.

On the 1885-86 Sanborn Maps, dogtrot Creole cottages are distinguished from other house types by two dashed lines directly in the center of the house indicating the two separate pens separated by the breezeway (Fig. 18). Luckily, this makes dogtrot Creole cottages rather conspicuous. Other types of doubles, such as shotgun and Creole cottage doubles, appear with a single dashed line separating the two units. To determine their distribution, a thorough search of the 1895-96 Sanborn maps was performed to locate both existing and demolished dogtrot Creole cottages. The search was started in the Lower Mid-City (formerly Faubourg Hagan), Treme, Marigny, Bywater, and Lower Garden District—all neighborhoods where known dogtrot Creole cottages exist today. Central City was also included since several dogtrot Creole cottages were demolished in this neighborhood following Hurricane Katrina in 2005. In all neighborhoods, the search was expanded in all directions until the frequency of dogtrots ceased.

Additionally, a history of the neighborhood and, when known, the builder’s history was compiled in order to determine if either can be positively associated with the Upland South
culture region. Finally, the architectural features for the remaining 16 dogtrot Creole cottages in New Orleans were recorded and analyzed to determine how closely their most common characteristics match those of traditional Upland South dogtrots.
CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

Results

Architectural Similarity

Comparison of traditional rural dogtrot characteristics with that of New Orleans dogtrot Creole cottage characteristics.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditional Dogtrot Characteristic</th>
<th>Present</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Open central breezeway</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Double-pen with pens equal or nearly equal in size</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roof of ridge covers both pens and breezeway</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Side-Gabled roof</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gallery with shed, hipped, or gabled roof</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breezeway same level as flooring</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passage used as communal space</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entire house including passageway on raised piers</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Comparison of rural dogtrot vs. existing dogtrot Creole cottage characteristics

The dogtrot Creole cottages, while having some differences from rural dogtrots of the Upland South, exhibit the factors that are most important to the classification a dogtrot house type. The open central breezeway, double pens equal in size, roof of ridge covering both pens and breezeway, and side-gabled roof are present in all of the existing dogtrot Creole cottages in New Orleans. Other factors—such as the lack of galleries in all but one example (921-23 St. Andrew), more narrow breezeway preventing communal use of the space, and level of the breezeway being different than that of the doors—are likely adaptations that were made to the house to fit in with the urban environment and to conform to standard building techniques in New Orleans.
Age of New Orleans Dogtrots

The majority of the existing dogtrot Creole cottages (88%) were constructed between the 1850s-60s (Table 2). Two existing dogtrots were constructed during the 1830s, and both are masonry structures. Since some of the above dates are estimates based on the known dates of similar dogtrots, it is possible that some may date to the 1840s, as this is when framed construction of dogtrot Creole Cottages in Mid City is thought to have begun (Toledano and Christovich 124). For example, the date of the now demolished dogtrot at 1909-11 Bienville was built between 1841-50 (Toledano and Christovich 151).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Neighborhood</th>
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<th>1830</th>
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Table 2: Ages of existing dogtrot Creole cottages in New Orleans

Distribution

The results of a search of the Sanborn maps, focusing on neighborhoods where dogtrots are still located or were known previously to exist, showed that the majority of dogtrot Creole Cottages clustered in the Mid City (formerly Faubourg Hagan) and Central City neighborhoods (Fig 19). A smaller cluster also appeared in Lower Garden District. Dogtrots were also found in...
the Bywater, Treme, Marigny, and French Quarter, but no clustering phenomenon was found in these areas.

Figure 19: Map of dogtrot Creole cottages in New Orleans (demolished and standing).

Figure 20: Neighborhood distribution of dogtrot Creole cottages
Table 3: Count of dogtrot Creole cottages in New Orleans by neighborhood

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<td>Totals</td>
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<td>77</td>
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Discussion

Origins of the Dogtrot Creole Cottages in New Orleans

The rural Louisiana dogtrot Creole cottages and the New Orleans dogtrot Creole cottages appear to be a hybrid between the traditional Urban South dogtrot and the classic Creole cottage found elsewhere in New Orleans, providing a convincing argument for the diffusion and blending of Anglo and Creole cultures in the region. Both the rural and urban forms of dogtrot Creole cottages showcase the distinguishing features of a traditional Upland South dogtrot while still containing the two-room deep floor plan and single pitch gabled roof that define the Creole cottage (Table 1). The New Orleans dogtrot expands on this house type in some cases by connecting two four-bay creole cottages with a dogtrot, and even four-bay and two-bay Creole cottages separated by a dogtrot (Fig. 21). These latter adaptation was exclusive to New Orleans and widely used in Faubourg Hagan as rental housing (Toledano and Christovich 124).
The adaptation of a rural type of architecture modified to suit the New Orleans urban environment is not without precedent in the city. Madame John’s Legacy, built in 1789 in the heart of the urbanized French Quarter, is considered an urban variation of French Colonial architecture. As previously mentioned, French Colonial is a form of architecture that—while believed to contain both Caribbean, African, and French influences—is specific to the sugar colonies of Saint-Domingue, French Guinea, and Louisiana (Vogt, “Historic Buildings” 34). French Colonial homes were built primarily as plantation homes, however, Madame John’s Legacy is a remarkable urban variation to the style. The house still contains the trademark double pitch hipped roof, living quarters raised a full story above a masonry built storage area, and a deep gallery supported by narrow columns, but is built up to the sidewalk and limited to a front gallery only rather than the traditional wrap-around gallery common to rural French Colonial houses (Vogt, Historic Buildings 33-34, 44-45).

The ages of the New Orleans dogtrot Creole cottages (detailed later in this section) and the dogtrot Creole cottages found in rural Louisiana (detailed in Chapter Two) coincided with the arrival of thousands of European immigrants as well as Scotch-Irish farmers. Those who arrived in New Orleans frequently settled in the “back of town” of Faubourg Hagan and blue-collar working class Central City—both neighborhoods where historically the largest number of dogtrot Creole cottages were found. An inspection of the 1880 US Census of the blocks where the dogtrots were located did indeed show a mix of working class and blue collar workers from elsewhere in the South and from European countries such as Ireland, Germany, and Sicily. There was also a considerable mix of blacks and whites in Faubourg Hagan, and a similar racial mix in Central City although the study area here had a greater amount of white immigrants than
did Faubourg Hagan. While the 1880 Census did not record whether or not the occupant of a house was the owner of the house or a renter, the occupations listed are largely blue-collar, which is in line with known demographics for the region and increases the likelihood that the occupants were renters. This evidence conforms to the idea that the serviceable and modestly decorated dogtrot Creole cottages was an affordable housing option for working class whites, immigrants, and Free Persons of Color (Toledano and Christovich 124).

Based on what is currently known about the builders of a selection of dogtrot houses in New Orleans, it is not possible to definitively connect the presence of these homes with a specific ethnic group or culture. While most of the builders had German surnames, it could not be established using US Census records where the person resided prior to building the house in all cases. For example, in the case of Francis Opl who built 2025-31 Iberville, the builder arrived in the United States just 20 years before building the row of dogtrots, so it is more likely that the house type was derived from local influence rather than Opl learning the technique by living amongst Scotch-Irish pioneers in the Upland South. In addition to German, the original owners also has Irish and French Creole surnames.

It is possible that the type may have been introduced by a person familiar with this house type in rural Louisiana. The owner of one of the oldest dogtrot Creole cottages (the 1834 dogtrot at 1609 St. Ann) was Widow Bertrand. According to data from ancestry.com, those with the Bertrand surname have historically (1830-1880) been most heavily clustered in Louisiana and, specifically, Pointe Coupee Parish and St. Landry Parish west of New Orleans. Indeed, Widow Bertrand’s maiden name was Bassert, a surname of German origin. This fits with what is known about this region, that Scotch-Irish and German frontiersmen mixed with French Creoles
in this region, although the time frame of early 19th century is early. However, it is provocative to think that this may have been a house type that was familiar to her prior to her arrival in New Orleans.

*Use of the Dogtrot Creole Cottage*

It is most likely that continued use of the dogtrot Creole cottage represented an attractive alternative to the standard four-bay Creole cottage. Since separate families occupied each side of the house, the breezeway offered more privacy than a party wall. Additionally, the breezeway likely increased airflow in the structures even though not all of them were oriented in the Southwest direction which Gentry and Lam determined provided the maximum cooling effect. These benefits were more likely to be responsible for the continued use of the dogtrot Creole cottage than any association the builder may have had to a specific cultural group.

It is not likely that providing access to the back of the property was a primary reason for the existence of this building type. If access was the only consideration, the builder could have saved expense by eliminating the breezeway, building a party wall between in the four-bay Creole cottage, and then positioning the house so that there is a small alley on one side of the house. Indeed, this is what is commonly seen on lots where four-bay Creole cottages were found. The benefits listed above were the likely reasons that builders went to the extra expense of adding the breezeway.

*Distribution*

As expected, the result of a thorough search of house footprints on the Sanborn maps show that the majority of dogtrot Creole cottages were located in present-day Lower Mid-City, a “back of town” section where Faubourg Hagan was located (Fig. 19 & 22). There were
originally 46 dogtrot Creole cottages in this neighborhood with 8 remaining (Table 3), the most of any New Orleans neighborhood. Toledano confirms that dogtrots were very common in Faubourg Hagan and were rare in other sections of the city (Toledano and Christovich, 123).

Figure 22: Map of dogtrot Creole cottages in Mid City (Faubourg Hagan)

The Faubourg Hagan area was not established until nearly five decades after the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, when the United States government “claimed the lands from N. Claiborne to N. Dorgenois, Faubourg Ste Marie to the Carondelet Canal, as part of the Louisiana Purchase, supposing that they were *tierras realenguas*, or abandoned lands that had belonged to the Spanish Crown” (Toledano and Christovich 81). The land changed hands and underwent a lengthy litigation process between heirs after initially being awarded to General Lafayette, then eventually in 1840 the land was sold to John Hagan, an Irish-American entrepreneur and speculator in New Orleans real estate (Toledano and Christovich 81). Hagan subdivided and sold
a few of the lots privately before holding a public auction in 1840, and by 1841 nearly all of the lots were sold. Toledano states that “the archival drawings dating from the early 1850’s suggest the atmosphere of Faubourg Hagan as it appeared then. Modest, frame dogtrot creole cottages often with common-wall or common roof,” as well as “Lower Garden District-style, side-hall houses, which accommodated the needs and tastes of the German immigrants who settled in the neighborhood” (Toledano and Christovich 82).

Initially, the demographics of Faubourg Hagan consisted of working-class whites, immigrants, and a heavy concentration of free blacks (Campanella 301). This lower income population was served by the large-scale development of rental housing in this area, where environmental inconveniences such as frequent flooding and poor drainage made the area undesirable and kept rents lower than that of housing on higher ground. The epicenter of white settlement in Faubourg Hagan was located around Canal Street, where the streetcar line was established in 1861 (State Historic Preservation Office, “Mid City”). Building activity and appeal to more affluent whites increased in 1889 when New Orleans voters approved a bond issue for new improvements to the drinking water, sewerage disposal, and drainage systems, making lower-lying areas more habitable (State Historic Preservation Office, “Mid City”). When they arrived, wealthy newcomers to the neighborhood had a tendency to demolish and replace older housing along major thoroughfares like Canal Street and Claiborne Avenue, or convert them to new uses (Laborde and Magill 190). As a result, working-class whites and blacks, who would often serve as domestic servants to the wealthier whites, would settle into the smaller streets and neighborhoods located behind the upper-class dominated major thoroughfares,
within walking distance to their jobs (Campanella 302; Lewis 46). Streets such as Iberville, North Miro, and Bienville where many of the dogtrot Creole cottages were located.

Many of the lots on which dogtrots once stood in Faubourg Hagan are now vacant lots. The houses in the area around the lots are heavily comprised of shotguns, many of which were built in the Arts and Crafts style. This is reflective of the increased building that occurred when drainage was improved and owners built homes according to the current tastes and styles which, in the late 1920s and 30s, heavily shifted towards Arts and Crafts style homes. An inspection of the 1908 Sanborn maps showed that most of the dogtrots in this area still remained at that time, confirming that they were likely demolished after the first decade of the 20th century.

The second largest cluster of dogtrots found in the city of New Orleans was located in Central City (Fig. 23). The Sanborn maps show that as of 1895-96, there were at least 18 dogtrots located around and north of the old Dryades Market at Oretha Castle Haley Boulevard (formerly known as Dryades Street) and Martin Luther King Boulevard (formerly known as Melpomene Street). Two of the structures, 1609-11 and 1613-15 O.C. Haley, possibly remain in a heavily modified form, but a site visit inside the structures would be needed to determine their true building type. The area around the Dryades Market was, as discussed in Chapter 2, also an
area with a heavy Jewish and Eastern European immigrant population who were drawn to the economic opportunities and cheaper rents in the neighborhood.

The third concentration of dogtrots, although still noteworthy, was a relatively minor one and was located in the Lower Garden District (Fig. 19). While there were only five dogtrots located on the Sanborn, this area retained more of its original dogtrots than did Faubourg Hagan or Central City. This is likely because demolitions in this neighborhood are controlled by the Historic Districts Landmarks commission, whose members are aware of the significance of these structures. Historically, renovation and rehab is more likely to occur along the River since the land is located on higher ground and tends to have a higher value, making the opportunity cost of rehabilitation or resale greater than that of vacancy or neglect.

*Age of Exiting New Orleans dogtrot Creole cottages*

The earliest dogtrot Creole cottages in New Orleans are 1609 St. Ann Street and 1012-14 Ursulines. Characteristic of homes built during and before the 1830s, these two masonry built houses with stucco lime-washed façade exhibit parapet gabled roofs, also known as fire walls. The incorporated overhang of 1609 St. Ann appears to have replaced an abat-vent, which was common on houses from this period and of this style. As discussed at the end of the last chapter, one would expect a Creole cottage constructed in the 1830s to have two full length doors on both sides. The same can be assumed for the design of the dogtrot Creole cottages. 1012-14 Ursulines does have two full length doors on both sides, and it appears from the indentation in the stucco under two of the windows on 1609 St. Ann that the original full length doors were later converted to windows. Previous research by Toledano and Christovich dates
1609 St. Ann to at least 1834, and based on the shared characteristics it is likely that 1012-14 Ursulines dates from the same period.

The remaining 14 dogtrot Creole cottages were built between 1850 and 1870. As shown in Appendix B, the dates for six of the homes are known. Based on similar characteristics and neighborhood history, the remaining dogtrot Creole cottages are estimated to be around the same time period.
CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

The New Orleans dogtrot can be classified as dogtrot Creole cottages, and is an urban adaptation of this architectural type. While they cannot be directly linked to the Upland South cultural complex and appear to have been divorced from their cultural roots by the time many of them were built in the mid-to-late-19th century, they are a hybrid of the classic Upland South dogtrot type seen in the rural South and the Creole cottage style exhibited by early French settlers in Louisiana. Dogtrots found new life when they were brought to America by Finnish farmers and adopted by Upland South farmers, and then again as they were blended with the Creole architectural type and adapted to an urban setting in New Orleans. The distribution of Dogtrot Creole cottages in New Orleans strongly suggest that they were used as an affordable housing option for renters, which included working class blue-collar immigrants and Americans, as well as Free Persons of Color. Dogtrot Creole cottages have not been documented in an urban setting elsewhere, meaning that the 16 remaining in New Orleans are a truly rare and unique type of vernacular architecture in the city of New Orleans.

Limitations

The search for dogtrot Creole cottages on the 1895-96 Sanborn maps was limited to areas where these structures still exist or were known to have existed in the recent past.

Recommendations for Future Study

Additional demolished dogtrot Creole cottages in other neighborhoods of New Orleans should be located using the Sanborn maps to determine if there were any additional clusters. It

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2 Several dogtrots were lost shortly after this thesis was written. The row of three dogtrots at 315-25 N. Miro Street were destroyed by fire on March 24, 2013. 1415-19 Chartres Street was declared in Imminent Danger of Collapse by the City of New Orleans on April 8, 2013. The total number of dogtrots in the city as of April 2013 is 12.
is recommended that the researcher begin with neighborhoods that were known to have a high working class population combined with cheaper rents or, what Richard Campanella would call “high nuisance neighborhoods” (Campanella 372).

Additionally, a full history for each dogtrot (demolished and standing) should be completed at the Notarial Archives. With this information, a search of US Census records to determine the builder’s history could be completed and would give a broader picture of the possible origins for the homes. While the data collected for this study was provocative and the builder’s origins leaned towards a German heritage, a larger data set is needed to draw definite conclusions.

Further study is also recommended of Milton B. Newton’s “bungalow double shotgun” type to further distinguish them from dogtrot Creole cottages. This type is not well known or documented in the literature.
REFERENCES


APPENDICIES:
APPENDIX A:

Inventory of Existing Dogtrot Creole Cottages in New Orleans

BYWATER

3421 Burgundy Street
*Occupied, excellent condition*
NE-SW
Two-bay and four-bay Creole cottages separated by a dogtrot under a side-gabled roof with incorporated overhang. Traditional lattice detail above the dogtrot. Classic style details.

FRENCH QUARTER

1012-14 Ursulines Avenue
*Occupied, Very good condition*
NE-SW
Dogtrot Creole cottage with a side-gabled roof. The abat-vent and two full length doors on either side of the dogtrot suggest that the structure was probably built before 1830. Possibly brick between post.

LOWER GARDEN DISTRICT

2036 Camp Street
*Occupied, excellent condition*
NW-SE
Frame dogtrot Creole cottage with side-gabled roof and incorporated overhang. The dogtrot appears to have been raised to match the level of the doors.

962 Felicity Street
*Occupied, very good condition*
NE-SW
Frame two-story dogtrot with lattice work covering the breezeway. The addition of a second story was a common modification for dogtrots.
921-23 St. Andrew Street
*Vacant, good condition (threatened)*
NE-SW
Frame dogtrot Creole cottage with two double doors on either side of the breezeway. Side-gabled roof with an incorporated gallery. Unusual single chimney between the two pens. The Italianate transoms and brackets suggest that the house was probably built between 1850s-60s.

**MID-CITY**

2224-26 Conti Street
*Occupied, very good condition*
NE-SW

2115-17 Iberville Street (formerly Common Street)
*Occupied, very good condition*
NE-SW
Frame dogtrot Creole cottages with side-gabled roof and incorporated gallery. A door and window appear on either side of the breezeway. Features classic-style details. Built as rental units by Theresa Dietrich and her husband between 1861-68 (Toledano and Christovich 165).

2311-13 Iberville Street (formerly Common Street)
*Vacant, good condition (threatened)*
NE-SW
One of two frame dogtrot Creole cottages with side-gabled roof and incorporated overhang. A door and window appear on either side of the breezeway.

2315-17 Iberville Street (formerly Common Street)
*Occupied, very good condition*
NE-SW
One of two frame dogtrot Creole cottages with side-gabled roof and incorporated overhang. A door and window appear on either side of the breezeway.
415-17 N. Johnson Street  
Occupied, excellent condition  
NW-SE  
Frame dogtrot Creole cottage with side-gabled roof and incorporated overhang. A door and window appear on either side of the breezeway. The roof of the attic was extended with a shed roof to create a second story.

315-17 N. Miro Street  
Vacant, poor condition (threatened)  
NW-SE  
One of three frame dogtrot Creole cottages with side-gabled roof and incorporated overhang. Features Italianate details, segmental arched doors, and original ovoid-light panel doors. Built between 1850-60s.

319-21 N. Miro Street  
Vacant, poor condition (threatened)  
NW-SE.  
One of three frame dogtrot Creole cottages with side-gabled roof and incorporated overhang. Features Greek key surrounds and classic-style details. Built between 1850-60s.

323-25 N. Miro Street  
Vacant, poor condition (threatened)  
NW-SE  
One of three frame dogtrot Creole cottages with side-gabled roof and incorporated overhang. Features classic-style details with ovoid transoms. Built between 1850-60s.

NEW MARIGNY

1415-19 Chartres Street  
Occupied, poor condition  (threatened)  
NW-SE  
Frame two-story dogtrot with a door and modified window on either side of the breezeway.
2410 Royal Street
*Occupied, very good condition*
N-S

1609 St. Ann Street
*Occupied, very good condition*
NE-SW
Dogtrot Creole cottage, possibly brick-between-post. Features a side-gabled roof and abat-vent. Possibly had two full length doors on either side of the breezeway, appears to have been modified to windows. Only remaining example of a dogtrot Creole cottage with dormers. House was built in 1834 by Marie Bassert, Widow Pierre Rene Bertrand.
### APPENDIX B:
Characteristics of Existing New Orleans Dogtrot Creole Cottages

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<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D Date Known</th>
<th>E Date Estimated</th>
<th>F Hipped</th>
<th>G Side-Gabled</th>
<th>H Gallery</th>
<th>I Window/Door</th>
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<th>K Weatherboard</th>
<th>L Dormer</th>
<th>M Classical</th>
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* Breezeway was likely raised at a later time when it was converted into the main entrance for the house.
### APPENDIX C:

List of Dogtrot Creole Cottages in New Orleans (Demolished and Standing)

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### APPENDIX D:

**Known Builder History for New Orleans Dogtrot Creole Cottages**

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<td>German</td>
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* Toledano and Christovich, 151-184

^ Ancestry.com

+ United States Census Records
VITA

Jennifer K. Anderson was born in Houston, Texas. She obtained her Bachelor of Arts degree in Anthropology and Archaeology from Southern Methodist University in 2007. After working for a year as a Field Archaeologist, she joined the University of New Orleans Planning and Urban Studies graduate program to pursue her Master’s, where she furthered her knowledge of cultural resource management by focusing on historic preservation and planning. Ms. Anderson currently resides in New Orleans, Louisiana.