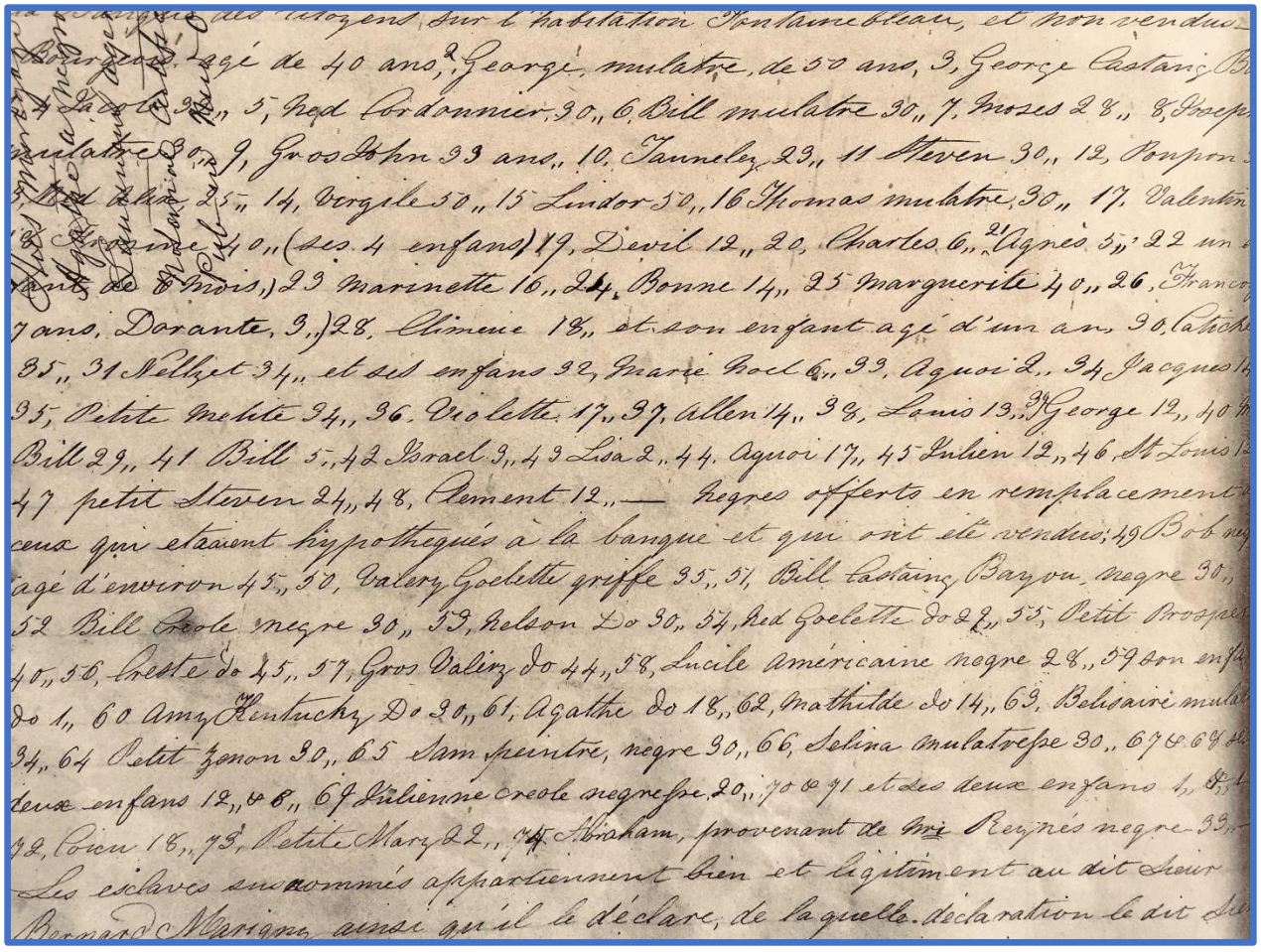
THE ENSLAVED FAMILIES OF FONTAINEBLEAU

A Summary for the 2019 Dedication of the Historic Marker



FEBRUARY 19, 2019

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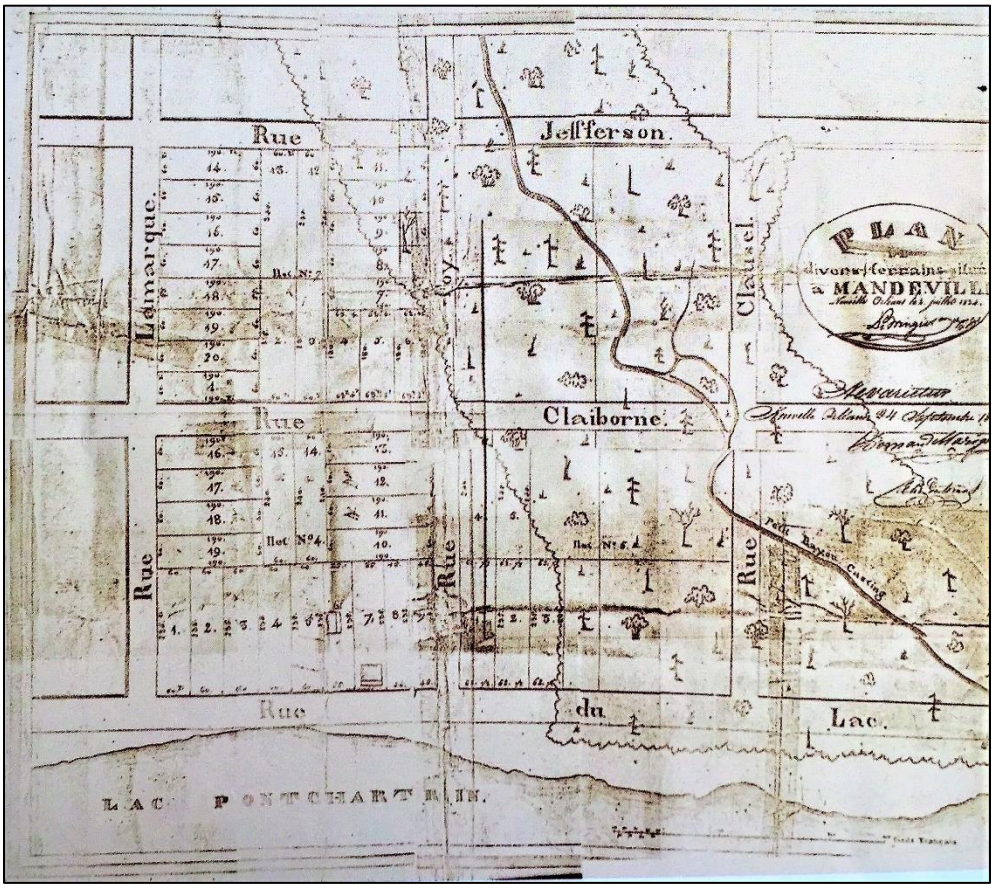
Introduction

Before we can discuss the lives of the enslaved families who once resided at Fontainebleau, it is helpful to know how and why the plantation was created in the first place.

For residents of the city of Mandeville, Louisiana, stories about the town's founding father, Bernard de Marigny de Mandeville are widely known. When he and his siblings inherited their father's vast estate (some historians claim his holdings may have been worth $7 million or around $200 million in today's value) he was just shy of 16 years old. Bernard had seen a life of indulgence and privilege like few other teenagers ever had. His mentors did their best to educate him and help him mature before he arrived at the legal age of maturity. As a 21-year-old in 1806 New Orleans, he began subdividing the family's plantation there into residential lots that would become the suburb known as the *Fauberg Marigny.*

Two decades later, Bernard had by then helped facilitate the winning of The War of 1812 and served as President of the Louisiana State Senate. He began looking toward the north shore of Lake Pontchartrain as an area where he might purchase and again subdivide land. His goal was to create a resort town near pine forests, the lakefront, and fresh-water bayous. While laying out the plans for his little city, he created street names to honor various statesmen and war heroes. Claiborne, Foy, Galvez, Jackson, Lamarque, and Madison were some of his choices, and they remain today. Bernard stipulated that the area between the lake and its main thoroughfare was to remain free and common ground, ensuring a perpetual free space for pedestrians to enjoy. On those streets and over just a three-day period in 1834, he sold 388 lots for a grand total of $80,000. That is the equivalent of almost $3 million in today's currency in 2019. Marigny's financial future seemed bright.

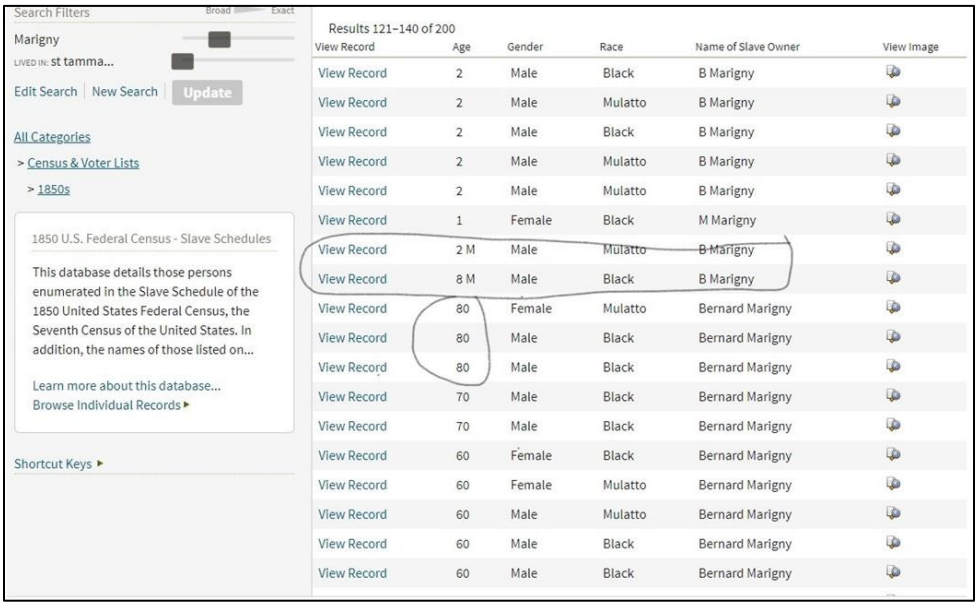


It was during this time period that the middle-aged father of seven also bought the 4,800-acre cattle ranch held by the Bonnabel family, the de La Rondes, and others. Adjacent to the future town of

Quartier de Mandeville, or Mandeville as we call it today, it was to be a parklike escape from the city as well as a serious business investment. It was bounded on the west by Bayou Castine and on the east by Bayou Cane. Its southern limit was the coastline of Lake Pontchartrain, and to the north an adjoining farm. Purchased on June 25, 1829, Bernard named the site *Fontainebleau* after the royal forests of the sixteenth century estate of the French king, Francis I. The name comes from the French words '*fontaine belle eau'* or fountain of beautiful water. From this site of natural beauty and period of economic optimism, we also turn to look at slavery.

The Enslaved at Fontainebleau

To try examining the lives, living conditions, and work of the enslaved population, it is easiest to follow a timeline of activities that were going on at Fontainebleau and in the immediate area. In most cases, individuals cannot be investigated because the identities of the enslaved were largely unrecorded. The details of their daily lives have been lost to time.



View Record	Age	Gender	Race	Name of Slave Owner	View Image
View Record	2	Male	Black	B Marigny	
View Record	2	Male	Mulatto	B Marigny	
View Record	2	Male	Black	B Marigny	
View Record	2	Male	Mulatto	B Marigny	
View Record	2	Male	Mulatto	B Marigny	
View Record	1	Female	Black	M Marigny	
View Record	2 M	Male	Mulatto	B Marigny	
View Record	8 M	Male	Black	B Marigny	
View Record	80	Female	Mulatto	Bernard Marigny	
View Record	80	Male	Black	Bernard Marigny	
View Record	80	Male	Black	Bernard Marigny	
View Record	70	Male	Black	Bernard Marigny	
View Record	70	Male	Black	Bernard Marigny	
View Record	60	Female	Black	Bernard Marigny	
View Record	60	Female	Mulatto	Bernard Marigny	
View Record	60	Male	Mulatto	Bernard Marigny	
View Record	60	Male	Black	Bernard Marigny	
View Record	60	Male	Black	Bernard Marigny	

What information we do have comes from a handful of official documents. During the mid-1800s, there was a federal census taken every ten years that included whites, free people of color, and the enslaved. Portions of the census became known as the "Slave Schedules" and today as in the 1800s, provide a fairly accurate record of how many enslaved men, women, and children were part of each household when the census was taken. The reports, however, do not provide their names. The persons' gender, age, and skin color were usually the only pieces of information shown on the Slave Schedules. In the figure above from Ancestry.com, note that babies as young as two months of age (later found to be named Lucien and Nelson) and elderly 80-year-olds from Marigny's Plaquemines Parish site were included – nameless – on the 1850 census entry for Bernard and his wife Anna Mathilde Morales Marigny. The primary way in which names and skillsets were noted was instead in legal documents associated with the banking industry.

A word of forewarning here. It is disturbing to read about and to consider the valuation of human beings, but chattel slavery, where people were sold as commodities, was exactly that. To look open eyed into history and learn from it, however, is important.

During an act of a property's sale, mortgage, or conveyance through inheritance, the names and sometimes personal details of the enslaved who were legally attached to the property were noted. The reason that the personal identity of each individual was important in these documents (as opposed to

the census) was that their 'monetary value' might be different from another individual of the same age, gender, and skin color. Each person had a specific dollar amount assigned to him relative to his abilities. An unskilled 24-year-old field worker might be 'worth' one half the value of a 24-year-old schooner pilot or steam engineer. A nurse or seamstress was valued more than a housemaid. Likewise, a healthy woman of childbearing age was viewed as having more worth than an elderly woman with the same skills because the younger woman could 'reproduce' and she herself provide more years of service. When a land owner sought to borrow money from a bank by mortgaging his property and the enslaved workers, the people themselves were each considered 'collateral' on the loan.

This process of assigning specific dollar values started in the insurance industry relative to cargo ships laden with products and then later on, with enslaved individuals. People who were originally from Senegal, for example, spoke fluent French and were more easily taught skillsets by French colonial planters in Louisiana than those who could not understand the language. To an insurer, their ability to communicate made them valuable. According to Dr. Sharon Murphy in "*Investing in Life: Insurance in Antebellum America*," insurance companies also sold policies for enslaved individuals who were engaged in dangerous or technical work. The companies were careful, however, to offer only partial payouts relative to the person's 'dollar value.' Had they not done so, planters who found themselves in financial straits could potentially kill off an enslaved person to collect on his life insurance policy especially after congress banned the importation of new slaves in 1808. The enslaved were more 'valuable' after 1808.

Likewise, when land owners defaulted on loans, and a bank foreclosure was imminent, without clearly identifying each individual on the legal record, they might fraudulently substitute an unskilled field worker for a similarly aged sugar-maker when lenders came to seize their 'property' during a foreclosure. Plantation banks, then, required that each 'mortgaged' individual be clearly identified on its banking documents. After the financial Panic of 1837, banks found themselves 'owning' thousands of enslaved people and often turned to slave traders to auction them off in order to recover the cash they had lent to the planters. Enslaved families, then, were not just subject to the whims of treatment by landowners and overseers, but to being sold away from their loved ones as well. It was in their best interest to be part of a plantation or business which was financially solvent. Astute adults knew to perform their duties to the best of their ability as it was their only way to influence the likelihood of their family unit staying together. The financial environment of the time period had a direct effect on their lives.

The Beginning of Fontainebleau

We know from the succession records of Antoine Bonnabel whose heirs sold the property in 1829 to Bernard de Marigny de Mandeville, that nine enslaved individuals were 'inherited' by Antoine's family members and had set values. The men were:

- Etienne, aged 60 *$200*
- Boston, aged 45 "with foot a little injured" *$400*
- Jean Baptiste, aged 36 *$600*
- George, aged 32 (he would remain at Fontainebleau until it was sold by Bernard in 1852) *$500*
- Jean Pierre (John Peter), aged 31 years "cow driver" (he would remain at Fontainebleau when it was purchased by Bernard but gone before the first mortgage in 1837) *$600*

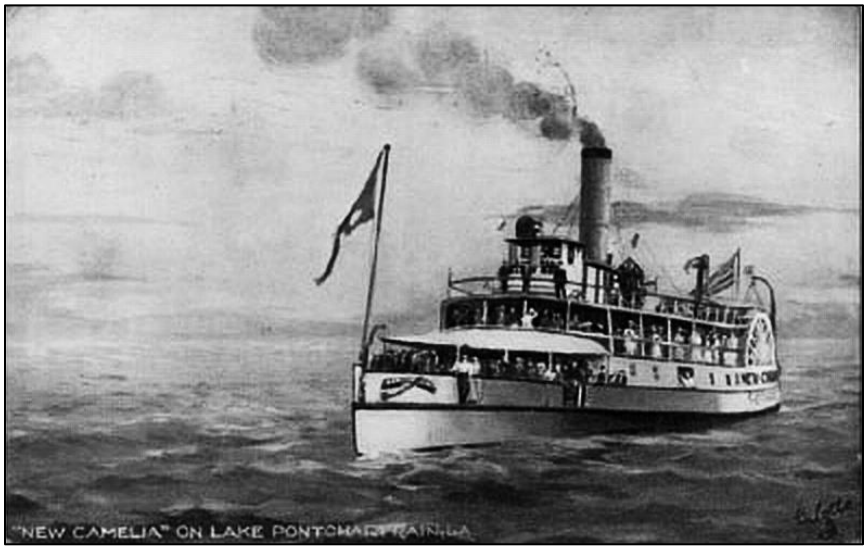
The women were:

- Jeanette, aged 70 *$150*
- Sira, aged 50 *$150*
- Rachel, aged 22 “a good servant with her child Josephine a mulatto, two years old” *$700* for her and her female child
- Josephine, aged 2

It appears that the older men, the women, and the baby Josephine remained with the Bonnabel family and another four men were eventually ‘sold’ to Marigny.

Big Plans in the Early 1830s

After the purchase of the cattle ranch which would become Fontainebleau, Marigny was busy. He had already acquired his first parcel on the western side of Bayou Castine in 1829 and set about purchasing more tracts of land from various north shore families to set up his new subdivision. By 1833, he had amassed nearly 3,000 acres of property for the future town. Marigny then introduced a bill to incorporate a new bank, *Citizens of Louisiana*, which would hold the mortgages for prospective buyers in the new town of *Quartier de Mandeville*. His first experience as a land developer for *Fauberg Marigny* in New Orleans had been very successful, but Marigny himself had acted as the lender to all the lot owners. Because more than a few defaulted on their mortgages, he had to re-sell the homes in order to try recouping his money. By setting up a bank to hold the loans, he sought to avoid the same situation.



By 1834, visitors to the north shore were common. Marigny had arranged for the steamship *Blackhawk* (see the image of the New Camelia, a similar ship on Lake Pontchartrain) to bring potential buyers over the lake each Sunday to tour his future resort town. The tickets were 25 cents, and the journey across Lake Pontchartrain took two and a half hours. On-board bands made the trip a lively one. He also was bringing guests to Fontainebleau which he had by then built out beyond a working ranch to include a sugar plantation and refining mill, brickyard, and lumber mill. While he had moved into the original rustic ranch home of the Bonnabels, it was appointed with all the luxuries that the affluent Bernard had known his entire life. During the early 1830s, he could afford the finest things and services available. His three factories, linked by a shared steam operation, functioned well as an industrial park, and his schooner delivered goods to New Orleans for quick sale. Other local ship owners also sent their crafts over to pick up cargo. To his credit, even before Bernard had this complex built, he had innovative plans to get his products to a wide market of buyers.

In 1830, Marigny had sold a swath of land in his *Fauberg Marigny* neighborhood to set up the Pontchartrain Railroad Company. This parcel for the rail line was to help create a fast, inexpensive route

to transport sugar, lumber, and bricks from Fontainebleau across Lake Pontchartrain to its deep-water harbor, then along the rail line to the main docks of New Orleans on the Mississippi. From his wharf on the Mississippi, the products from Fontainebleau could be shipped anywhere on this "delivery chain."

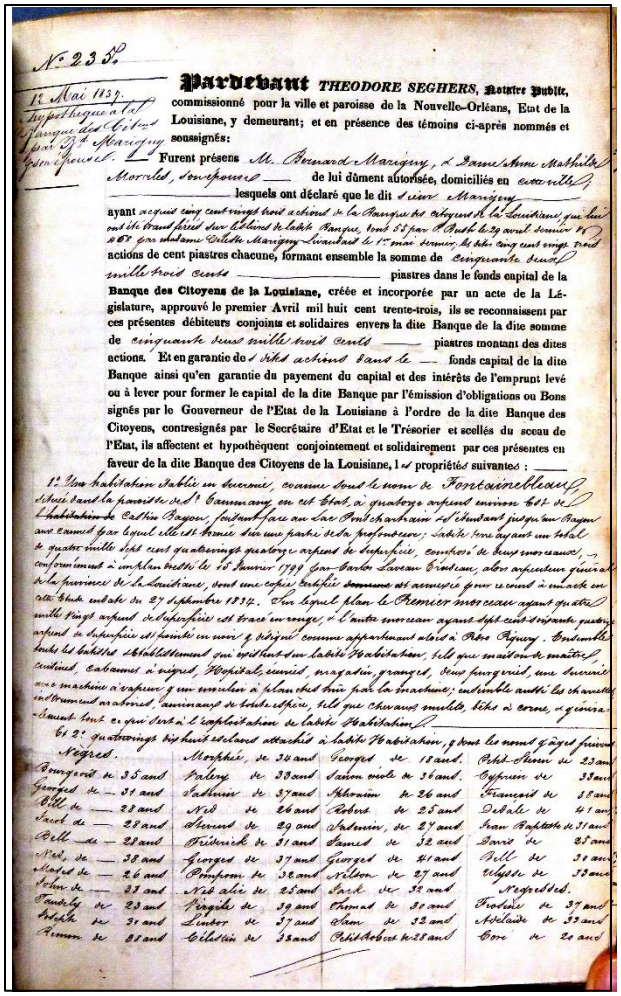
The section of land for the rail line had once been part of the Dubreuil plantation established in 1757 and which Bernard's father acquired while Bernard was a young teen. It was a place that likely influenced Bernard's long-term plans for Fontainebleau and the role his enslaved workers would play.

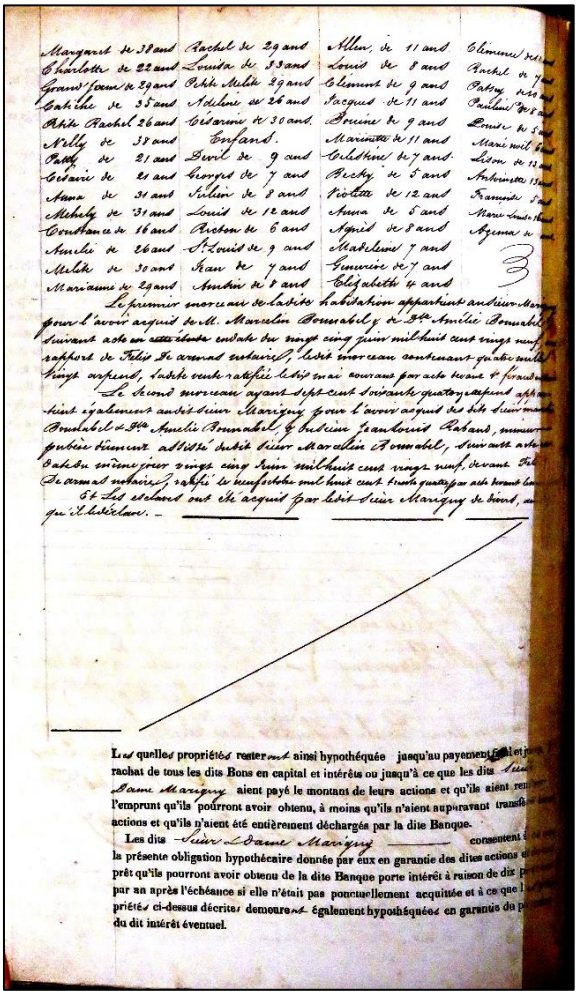
Finding the Workforce

To get his industrial complex at Fontainebleau running, Bernard first had had to transform the cattle ranch. The sale from the Bonnabels included buildings and the six enslaved men, but also 300 head of cattle, horses, hogs, and chickens. Five pair of oxen, 20 head of sheep, and the schooner *Faure* "with her tackle and apparel" (tackle valued at $300) were also listed on Bonnabel's inventory, along with various tools and old furniture.

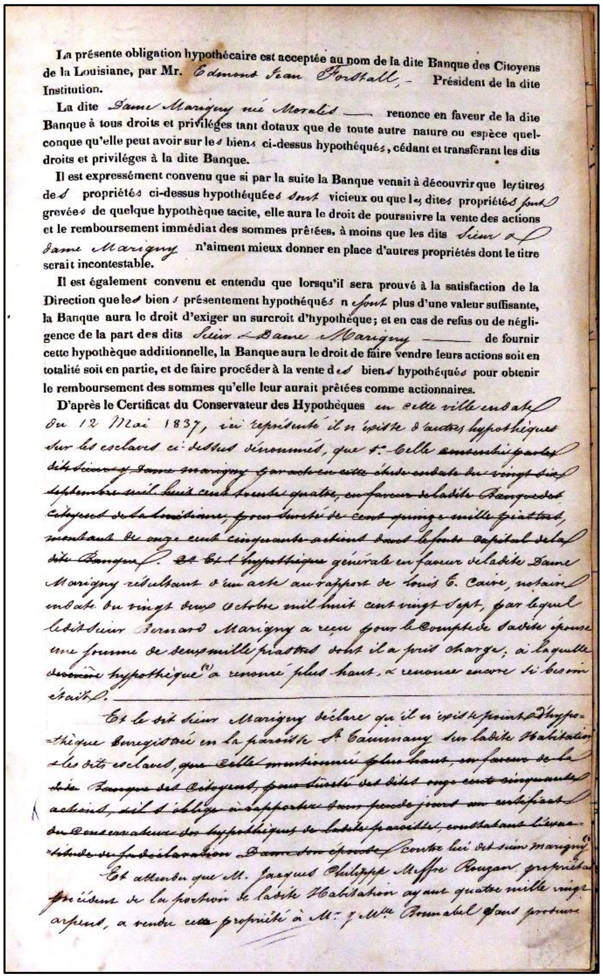
To turn this 5,000-acre working ranch into an industrial compound and luxury retreat, a large, experienced workforce was needed. The workforce was, of course, the enslaved.

From an 1837 mortgage document filed by Bernard Marigny and his second wife Anna Mathilde Morales Marigny (see the four inserts, written in French), we know that at least 98 enslaved individuals





were listed as being attached to the property at Fontainebleau that year. Where most of them came from and when they arrived on the north shore is uncertain.



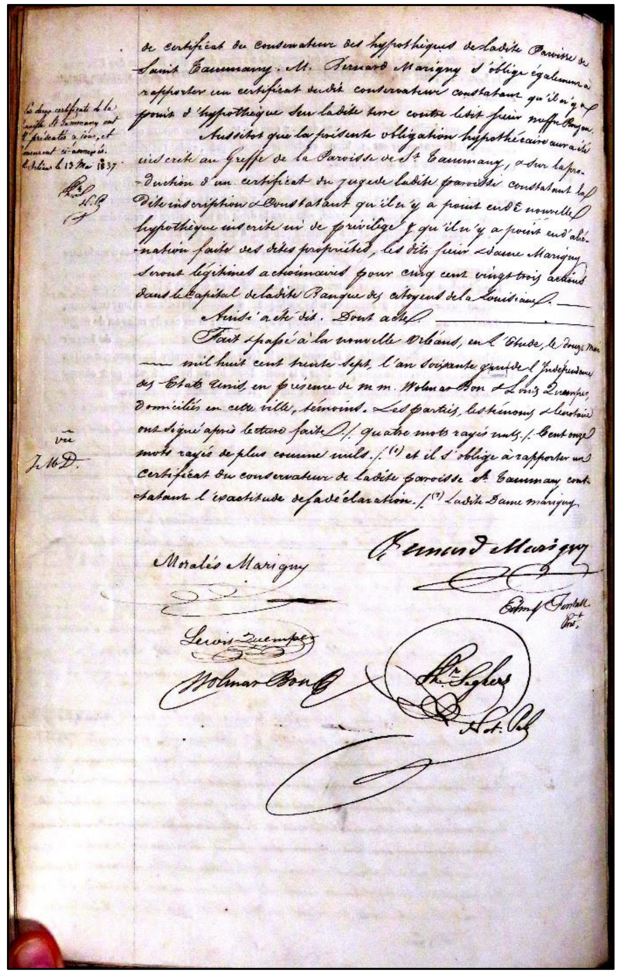
La présente obligation hypothécaire est acceptée au nom de la dite Banque des Citoyens de la Louisiane, par Mr. Edmond Jean Forstall, - Président de la dite Institution.

La dite Dame Marigny née Morales — renonce en faveur de la dite Banque à tous droits et priviléges tant dotaux que de toute autre nature ou espèce quelconque qu'elle peut avoir sur les biens ci-dessus hypothéqués, cédant et transférant les dits droits et priviléges à la dite Banque.

Il est expressément convenu que si par la suite la Banque venait à découvrir que les titres des propriétés ci-dessus hypothéquées sont vicieux ou que les dites propriétés sont grevées de quelque hypothèque tacite, elle aura le droit de poursuivre la vente des actions et le remboursement immédiat des sommes prêtées, à moins que les dits Sieur & Dame Marigny n'aiment mieux donner en place d'autres propriétés dont le titre serait incontestable.

Il est également convenu et entendu que lorsqu'il sera prouvé à la satisfaction de la Direction que les biens présentement hypothéqués n'ont plus d'une valeur suffisante, la Banque aura le droit d'exiger un surcroit d'hypothèque; et en cas de refus ou de négligence de la part des dits Sieur & Dame Marigny — de fournir cette hypothèque additionnelle, la Banque aura le droit de faire vendre leurs actions soit en totalité soit en partie, et de faire procéder à la vente des biens hypothéqués pour obtenir le remboursement des sommes qu'elle leur aurait prêtées comme actionnaires.

D'après le Certificat du Conservateur des Hypothèques en cette ville en date du 12 Mai 1837, [illegible]



[illegible]

In 1833, Bernard purchased three enslaved men from the Baham and Morgan-McNeill families (no names available) and a 23-year-old named Joshua from the Bowmans. With George, Jean Pierre, and four other individuals who had been with the Bonnabels, that would be a total of ten men from the Mandeville area present at Fontainebleau in the early 1830s. How the other 88 individuals arrived is up to conjecture.

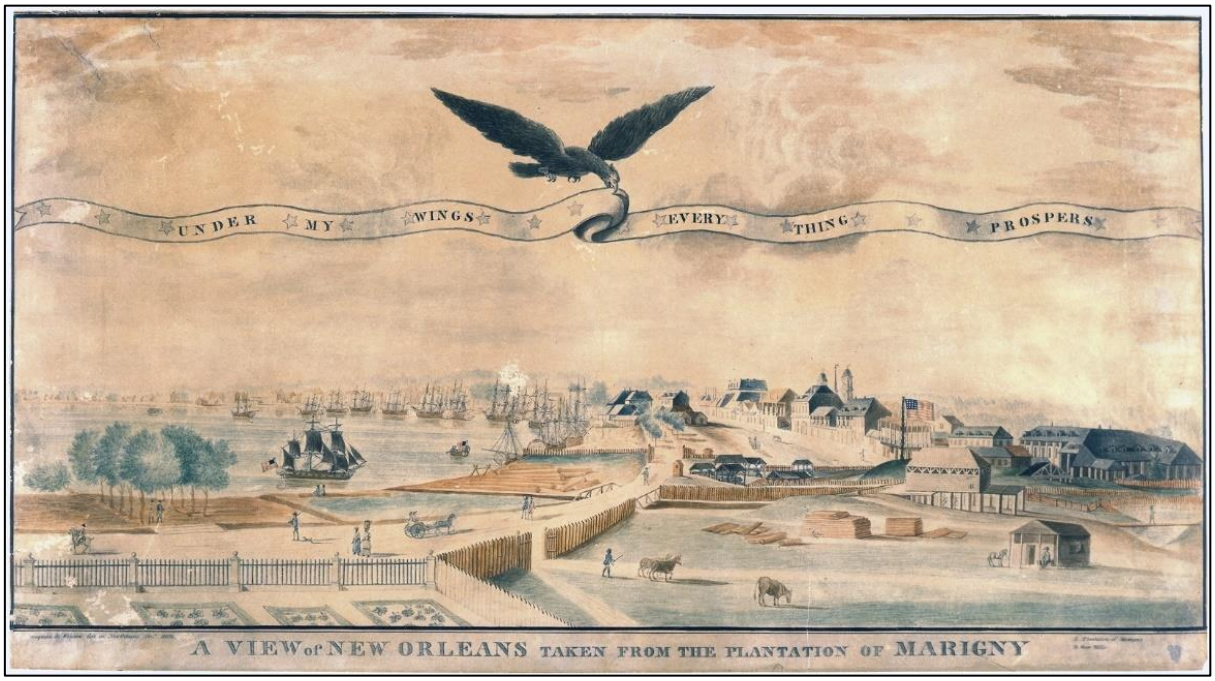
Marigny did have a sugar plantation in Plaquemines Parish first owned by the Paturels (and later called *Bellevue* and *Longuevue*), so it is possible he may have moved workers across the lake by way of his schooner *Faure*. Since the former Dubreuil land that Bernard subdivided into the *Fauberg Marigny* began as a sugar plantation (with accompanying brickworks and sawmill), Marigny had been aware since his teen years of the labor required to run such operations.

Another possible source of either enslaved workers or at least the know-how for setting up the industrial complex could have come from Bernard's extended family. His first wife, Mary Ann Jones, died at age 22 shortly after the birth of their youngest son, Gustave. Her parents, Evan Jones and Marie "Pomponne" Verret-Jones stayed in touch with Bernard over the years as the grandparents to Bernard's

boys, Prosper and Gustave. Jones had a very successful sugar operation in Ascension Parish called Evan Hall, so it is possible that Bernard sourced his 'workforce' from his former in-laws. Bernard's sons by Mary Ann Jones (also nicknamed Pomponne like her mother) died in their 20s in 1830 and 1835, so whether his relationship with the grandparents continued is unknown, but they were known to correspond.

Skilled Workers

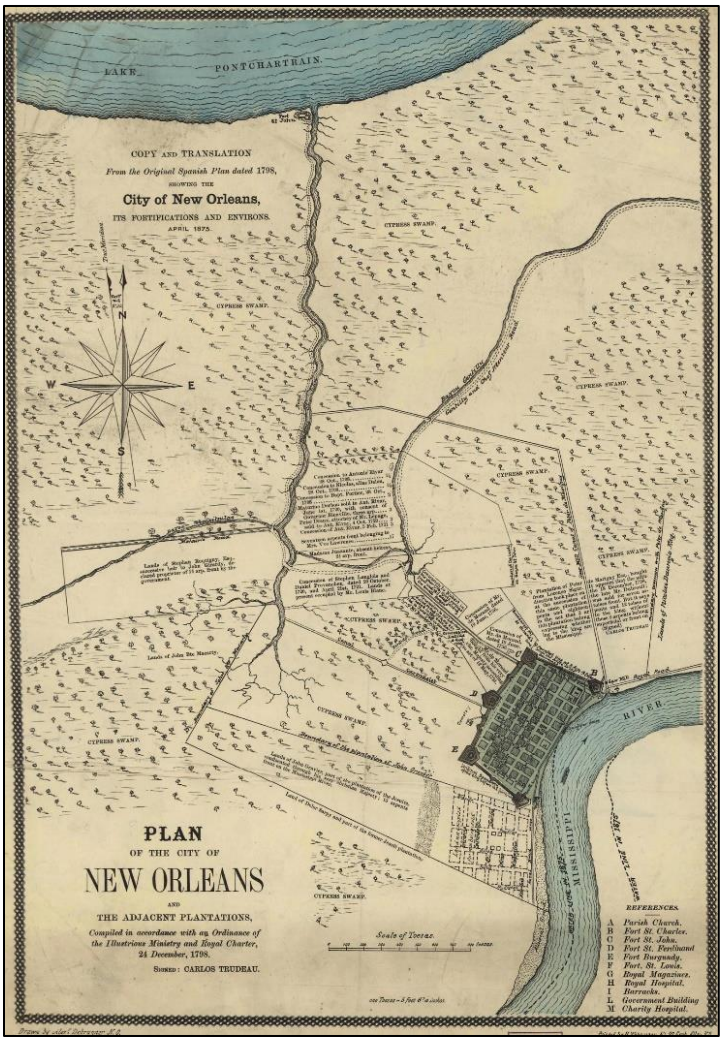
While we do not know where most of the enslaved persons came from or their specific job titles or skillsets, we can infer what their abilities may have been when we consider the massive transformation of the ranch into the industrial complex. It was also to function as a luxurious getaway for Bernard's affluent guests and a self-sufficient village of sorts for the enslaved workforce.



One of the first tasks to be done at Fontainebleau was not just to build the industrial complex but to design and excavate a canal from the lake up to the factory's location. His schooner was the prime method for getting products to sales points, but constructing the sugar mill, sawmill, and brick kilns too close to the lake would have put the industry at risk for occasional flooding. Excavating the canal offered a way to float the heavy pallets of bricks, sugar, and planed lumber to the ship.

The idea to build this canal probably came from Bernard having seen, as a 13-year-old, his father's newly acquired plantation just downriver of New Orleans. The old Dubreuil plantation, acquired by Bernard's father in 1798, had its sawmill powered by water flowing from a fast-moving curve in the Mississippi River. It was channeled through a man-made canal that connected to Bayou St. John. It was designed and constructed by enslaved workers and was quite the feat of engineering in 1757. During low water intervals, the waterway was used to float small barges of bricks, lumber, and sugar from the mills to bigger boats for shipping – exactly the way in which the Fontainebleau canal would work decades later.

As a young man, Bernard had had the Dubreuil-Marigny canal deepened and reinforced to act as a navigable waterway that connected to Bayou St. John. It can be seen running left to right in John L. Boqueta de Woiseri's 1803 painting, "*A View of New Orleans Taken from the Plantation of Marigny*" (look from the schooner on the Mississippi toward the flag flown at the right) and in the 1798 New Orleans map from the US Archives. After the *Fauberg Marigny* was created from this land, the canal was later filled in. It became Elysian Fields Avenue. This stretch of property also happened to be the shortest distance between Lake Pontchartrain and the Mississippi River. It was this exact, narrow 3.5 mile swath that Marigny sold so that the Pontchartrain Railroad could be set up and act as the last inexpensive leg for his Fontainebleau products to travel on their way to the docks of the Mississippi. In the words of a local historian, "Bernard had big plans."



According to Richard Campanella, *"On April 23, 1831, the horse-drawn Pontchartrain Railroad made its inaugural run, as the first railroad west of the Appalachians and the first in the nation to complete its charter. The talk of the town for months, the mechanical spectacle may have been seen by a young Abraham Lincoln, who happened to be in town that spring on a flatboat journey (and, after returning to Illinois, would run for office advocating for Western railroads). In late 1832, the company introduced the steam locomotive to New Orleans…."* The locomotive earned the nickname "Smoky Mary" from locals.

With the end of the delivery chain built in Fauberg Marigny's rail line, Bernard had to get things moving at the starting point. With his Fontainebleau canal finished, products were loaded onto small barges that were pulled along the canal by ox teams on either side of the waterway. At Fontainebleau today, this canal still exists although it is overgrown and filled in somewhat from nearly 200 years of sediment being deposited.

A wharf for the schooner *Faure* and the steamship *Blackhawk* also needed to be built. Today's pier is situated where the old wharf once stood.

As for buildings, Marigny moved into the existing, somewhat rustic Bonnabel home, but other structures had to be laid out and constructed.

Twenty raised cabins – duplexes with a shared central brick chimney - were built in a long symmetrical pattern among large, standing oak trees. Marigny had additional oaks brought in by his workforce, and they planted lines of these shade trees to provide shelter (and perhaps a nice look) to the arrangement of cabins that would serve as forty single-family quarters for enslaved.

The raised brick piers, front porch galleries, size, and deep hearths were notable for slave quarters of the time.

Figure 6-12. Selected artifacts recovered from the southern half of Locus 1 at 16ST76: (a) annular early whiteware; (b-c) purple transfer-printed early whiteware; (d) red transfer-printed early whiteware; (e, g) brown transfer-printed early whiteware; (f, h-i) blue transfer-printed early whiteware.

Archeological finds from the 2006 post-Katrina clean-up show that the slave quarters were partly furnished with fine china imported from Europe, a sample of which are shown here. A chipped plate had no place at the dinner table of the finicky Bernard but may have been appreciated as something special by enslaved families.

Storage buildings and privies (close to the canal) were also needed. Enclosed fences for kitchen gardens and chickens were likely. The alley of oak trees has grown over the past two hundred years, but the remains of brick chimney hearths can still be spied among them. At Evergreen Plantation in St. John the Baptist Parish (see photo above), the design and layout of cabins is nearly identical to what once stood at Fontainebleau.

We know that the main house used by Marigny as his country residence was not of the grand design of many primary residences for planters. While its architecture was simple in style, Bernard spared no expense on furnishings and in hiring some of the best chefs in the city to welcome theatrical celebrities and gambling associates among his other guests. The only photograph of what may have been the Bonnabel house shows a design very similar to the simpler slave cabins. An archeology report submitted by Christopher Goodwin and Associates suggests that while Marigny initially used the original Bonnabel residence, he may later have built a new home as his Fontainebleau lodge and done so in a style to compliment the first house.

Figure 4-5. A WPA worker recorded one of the remaining historic structures at the proposed park in the late 1930s (source: On file Fontainbleau State Park, St. Tammany Parish, Louisiana).

In support of that idea, a 19th century oil painting by Tobriand shows two nearly identical large homes next to one another at Fontainebleau, so it is possible that the lighter one next to the tall *pigeonnier* is of newer construction. These buildings were located west of the oak alley and closer to the lake. Just like the cabins of the enslaved, few hints of their foundations exist today.

Four artesian water wells were dug on the property, including one at each end of the oak alley. Also built were a hospital, molasses hut, various storage buildings, two kitchens, offices, stables, mule barns, and a blacksmith's shop. A brick *pigeonnier* was built to raise squab for the elegant dinners, and a small, brick-vaulted underground chamber was also constructed, possibly as a wine cellar or spring house. A terrapin pen was kept on hand for fresh turtle soup.

Figure 4-6. A nineteenth century painting of Fontainebleau Plantation rendered by Regis de Trobriand (1816–1897) (source: Simoneaux 1940:36). William Nott felt that the home was Bernard Marigny's Fontainebleau residence (Simoneaux 1940:36).

At the industrial area were two massive brick chimneys built around a lumber-planing building; the sugar house with its two presses and a purgery wing; the housing for the steam

engine; cane sheds; and two sets of brick kilns. All of this was constructed by the enslaved. The hundreds of thousands of bricks they made and the lumber they planed went on to help build the city of New Orleans. The timber specifically from Fontainebleau's mill would later be used to build the United State Customs House, according to the Louisiana Historical Society.

In sum, the manpower and skills necessary to create this self-sustaining complex that covered 800 improved acres (let alone its products for sale) was massive. Maintaining the livestock and sugar cane crop, the gardens, orchard, plus feeding the entire population required major effort. Trees had to be harvested for the mills and for fuel. Clay had to be dug and moved for brick making. Products had to be loaded onto barges and moved down the canal to then be loaded on the schooner. Gardens, chickens, and milk cows needed to be tended. Horses had to be groomed and shod, wheels repaired, barrels for the sugar built, and so on. The work was intensive and unending.

Sugar Makers and More

Jill-Karen Yakubik, in *Settlement and Occupation of the Chalmette Property* (historic resource for Jean Lafitte National Park), wrote the following description of the work in sugar refining. "*.. by 1850, most sugar houses were constructed of brick. Sugar houses generally were 100-150 feet long and about 50 feet wide. The mill usually was powered by a steam engine. The mill was used for expressing juice from the cane, and it usually was housed within the sugar house, although detached structures for the mill*

also were utilized on Louisiana plantations." It should be mentioned here that children, with their small hands, were often the ones to feed the cane stalks into the presses.

"The most common method of cane juice clarification and evaporation was the open pan method. This method involved the use of a set of four kettles of decreasing size called, respectively, the grande, the flambeau, the syrup, and the battery. The kettles were set into a masonry structure usually about thirty feet long by seven feet wide, within which was the furnace and the flue for conveying heat to the kettles." The ruins of Fontainebleau's sugar house have been damaged by various hurricanes, but before 2005, it was possible to see four large circular depressions where the kettles had been. The "grande" held between 70 and 100 gallons of cane juice. This set-up was nicknamed "the Jamaica train" because the thickening juice in each of the kettles would be ladled into the next smaller in size. The kettle openings at Fontainebleau were set in a square shape but are now entirely covered with brick debris.

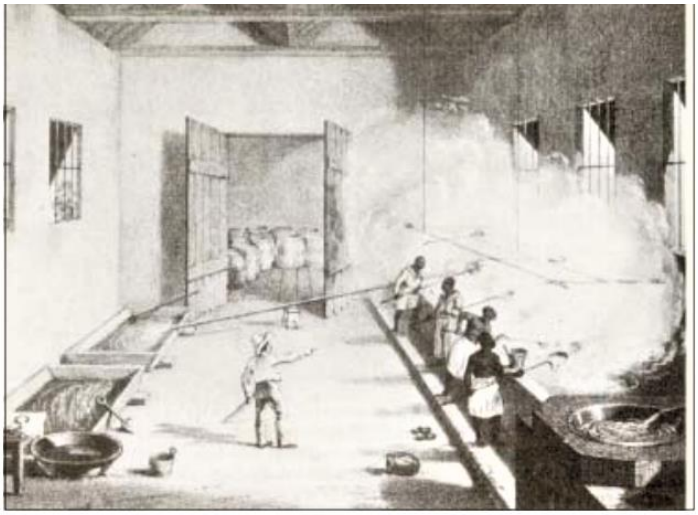


Figure 3.12. Inside an Eighteenth-Century Sugar House. Slaves are ladeling the syrup from right to left in a series of kettles arranged in the "Jamacian train." The *grande* is in the right foreground. The wooden trough for crystallization is in the left background and a ramp for moving the massecuite (mixture of syrup and sugar crystals) is shown connecting it to the *teche, the boiling kettle in which crystallization occurs.* Crystallized raw sugar is shown in the trough in the left foreground. Source: Noel Deerr, *The History of Sugar* (London, 1950), Plate 24, opposite p.451.

"After the clarification and evaporation of the cane juices, they were emptied from the battery into shallow wood troughs, or coolers, and the sugar granules formed as the juice cooled. The coolers were ten to twelve feet long, four feet wide, and eighteen inches deep. There usually were about sixteen coolers in a sugar house. After the completion of granulation, the sugar and molasses in the coolers were packed into hogsheads, or barrels of approximately 1,000 pounds. The packing was done in the purgery, a room in the sugar house containing a large cement cistern overlain by timbers on which the hogsheads were placed. The hogsheads had holes in the bottom through which the molasses could drain into the cistern, leaving the granulated sugar. A cane shed for storing cane as it was brought in from the field usually was attached to the sugar house on the same end as the mill." Fontainebleau had two cane sheds.

Sugar cane was harvested over several months late in the year, and new cane was planted at the same time. The work was non-stop, dangerous, and technical. For the quality of refining to be perfect, experienced sugar makers had to carefully monitor and control the entire process. Note the sugar maker directing workers in the above image of a more primitive sugar house from the 1700s.

Marigny was known for employing enslaved men as sugar makers, steam engineers, and both pilot and crews for the schooner. Most of these highly skilled positions were typically held by white men or free men of color, but Marigny entrusted this work to the enslaved, specifically engineering responsibilities according to Charles Manigault in *Plantation Management* and Follett in *The Sugar Masters*.

Other than the technical work, the enslaved also performed duties as clergymen according to the *Act of Sale of Slaves and Plantations by Bernard Marigny to William and Haywood Stackhouse* in 1852. An enslaved man by the name of Sam held weekly religious services at Fontainebleau.

In addition to various letters of the time showing that Marigny's men had unique (and valuable) capabilities, we also see evidence of those roles on the federal census.

Tracing the Enslaved: The Federal Census, Slave Schedules, and Mortgages

By the time of the 1840 census, a total of 153 enslaved persons were shown to be situated at Fontainebleau. We see on the report from Ancestry.com that Marigny's youngest son, Armand was operating the site for his father. Armand was living with his wife-to-be, a free woman of color named Josephine Celina (Selina on some records) St. Pe' and their two children. By examining the inserted census report, we read that there were three free white males listed: a teenager, a man in his 20s (28 year old Armand), and one in his 30s. Four 'free colored persons' included: a female age 10-23 (Josephine Celina St. Pe'), a male older than 55, one male under the age of 10, and a female under 10 (Armand and Josephine Celina's children: 4 year old Clement Gustave and 7 year old Louise Armantine).

Name:	Armand Marigony [??Mand Marigoney]
Home in 1840 (City, County, State):	Saint Tammany, Louisiana
Free White Persons - Males - 15 thru 19:	1
Free White Persons - Males - 20 thru 29:	1
Free White Persons - Males - 30 thru 39:	1
Free Colored Persons - Males - Under 10:	1
Free Colored Persons - Males - 55 thru 99:	1
Free Colored Persons - Females - Under 10:	1
Free Colored Persons - Females - 10 thru 23:	1
Slaves - Males - Under 10:	30
Slaves - Males - 10 thru 23:	50
Slaves - Males - 24 thru 35:	25
Slaves - Males - 55 thru 99:	5
Slaves - Females - Under 10:	27
Slaves - Females - 10 thru 23:	7
Slaves - Females - 24 thru 35:	7
Slaves - Females - 36 thru 54:	2
Persons Employed in Agriculture:	18
Persons Employed in Manufacture and Trade:	20
Persons Employed in Navigation of Canals, Lakes, Rivers:	10
Free White Persons - Under 20:	1
Free White Persons - 20 thru 49:	2
Total Free White Persons:	3
Total Free Colored Persons:	4
Total Slaves:	153
Total All Persons - Free White, Free Colored, Slaves:	160

Of significance is that the roles of various enslaved men are actually shown on this census report: 10 were listed as working in Navigation. They were the schooner crew. Another 20 were the brick makers listed as workers in Manufacturing. For the sugar operation, 18 were listed as being employed in Agriculture. The remaining men and women of the workforce were not distinguished by their roles which was typical for each census. While the others might have been skilled in their respective jobs, they may have been considered replaceable. Specifying the job responsibilities of these particular 48 men was, of course, for financial reasons.

When Marigny mortgaged Fontainebleau in 1837, he listed 98 enslaved people with the property and was lent $50,000 by Citizens Bank (see the four images on earlier pages). In just three years, however,

the census showed an enslaved population of 153 – quite the expansion from the 98 people listed in 1837. That he would add 55 additional people to Fontainebleau while he was trying to extract himself from financial straits of the Panic of 1837 makes little sense. Not only did he mortgage Fontainebleau, he was forced to do the same for his Plaquemines operation. The Wall Street Crash of 1929 was a comparable event with the Panic of 1837, and Bernard was scrambling to keep solvent. We can surmise that in the 1837 banking transaction, then, he kept the brickmaking and transportation pieces of his Fontainebleau business separated financially since that was the most profitable part of his operations.

Three women harvest sugarcane by hand in southern Louisiana in this photograph from the 1880s. Sugarcane has been a leading agricultural product for south Louisiana for nearly 300 years, since its introduction by the Spaniards in the 1700s. Etienne de Bore, the first mayor of New Orleans, revolutionized the industry by being the first to produce granulated sugar. Today most sugarcane is harvested by machinery.

Along those lines, what he may have done in 1837 was only mortgage the most 'replaceable' personnel. The 30 men who ran the brickworks and operated the schooner were highly skilled and therefore valuable. Should Marigny default on his loan to the bank, he may not have been willing to risk losing them. This would be the logical reasoning that they may have not been mortgaged along with the others in 1837. Supporting that idea is that aside from the 98 people named on the mortgage, the translated document does not mention the schooner or brickworks, but the following:

"Together all the buildings and establishments which exist on the said plantation, such as the Master's House, Kitchens, Negro Cabins, Hospital, Stables, Storehouse, Barns, two sugar presses, one Sugar House with a Steam Engine, one Lumber Mill powered by the engine, together also the wagons, Agricultural Instruments, Animals of all kinds, such as Horses, Mules, Cattle, and generally all that serves the exploitation of the said plantation."

As the economic crisis of the late 1830s continued into the 1840s, prices for sugar, bricks, and lumber plummeted. On the banks of the Mississippi where Marigny's Plaquemines Parish plantation was situated, two major breaks or '*crevasses'* in the natural levee completely wiped out his sugar crops. He and wife Anna Mathilde Morales Marigny were forced to mortgage Fontainebleau again in 1841 and 1851 in order to try salvaging their estate. In the 1841 transaction with Citizens Bank, they were lent $99,900 for portions of the plantation including an enslaved workforce of 74 individuals and Bernard's share of holdings in the bank. Also mentioned is their Plaquemines Parish property then called "*Longuevue*."

Bernard's oldest living son, Antoine Jacques, had recently married Sophronie Claiborne. Her deceased father was not only the former Governor of Louisiana, but her brother was the new president of Citizens Bank. Sophronie and family had wealth and influence. Her older brother, William Charles Cole Claiborne Jr., signed the mortgage document with Bernard on April 28, 1841 (from handwritten copy of mortgage,

in French). This was Bernard's last chance at bringing his site back into financial solvency, but by July of that year, Claiborne was forced to repossess the banks' rights to the property, including 64 of the 74 enslaved individuals from the mortgage taken just three months prior. It appears that the elder Marignys, whose marriage had long been an unhappy one, had legally separated their financial holdings. While Bernard was shown in the 1850 census for St. Tammany Parish to have 73 enslaved individuals "living with" him, his wife Anna Mathilde Morales Marigny had 54 persons who she did not mortgage in 1841. Between owning shares in the very bank which was to foreclose on them, dividing financial assets before their marital separation, a run on the bank in 1842, and involving the new president of the bank (and an in-law to boot), unraveling the money trail and its impact on the enslaved individuals is difficult when attempted nearly two hundred years later. The documents are accurate, but there is guesswork involved as to details.

To further complicate this history, when an enslaved worker could no longer perform his work, the Marignys would remove him from the plantation and the mortgage, presumably sell him, purchase a replacement worker, and then add the new individual to the mortgage. The following information comes from *Banking on Slavery in the Antebellum South* by Dr. Sharon Ann Murphy and could describe either Bernard's wife or his daughter-in-law, as his son used the name Mandeville.

*"*On April 24, 1850, *"Mrs. Mandeville Marigny applied for a release of mortgage on the slave York whom she intends to sell, he being too weak for the work of her brick yard [in the St. Tammany parish], offering to apply the proceeds of said sale to the purchase of another slave"* who would then be encompassed in the original mortgage.*"*

Bernard tended to "sell" and "buy" families in groups, keeping mothers and children together.

On March 27, 1849*, "Mr Bernard Marigny applied for a release of mortgage in the slave Celina and her two children and to mortgage in their stead the slave Anna aged 30 years and her two children François & Euladich (sic) which was granted after due appraisement shall have been made & accepted."*

It appears that the Marignys mortgaged portions of Fontainebleau in not just 1837, but 1839, 1840, 1841, 1849, and 1851. In 1841, when he was granted nearly $100,000 for the entire site, the enslaved workers, and his bank shares, it still was not enough to get him solvent. The severe economic downturn that had plagued the nation for five years, his crop losses, and the devaluation of sugar due to new tariffs could not be overcome. They sold the entire site at a loss to Hippolyte Griffon in 1852, and 62 enslaved individuals were included.

A few months later, Griffon sold the enterprise to Pierre Poutz (appears as Pautz on the census). Fontainebleau was seized by the parish sheriff's office after the Civil War in 1874, sold to T.H. Kennedy,

Year	Number Enslaved	Named	Names Unknown	Source Document
1829	6	2	4	Bonnabel conveyance and sales
1833	10	3	3	Sales documents show 4 people added, 1 named
1837	98	98	0	Mortgage for B Marigny and M Marigny $50,000
1840	153	0	153	Census for Armand Marigny, 48 roles specified
1841	74+	74	0	Mortgage for $99,900, William C.C. Clairborne Citizens Bank
1850	127	0	127	Census for B Marigny (73) and M Marigny (54)
1852	62	62	0	Sales document to Hippolyte Griffon, then Poutz
1860	45	0	45	Census for Pierre Poutz (spelled Pautz)

then to George W. Knott. Navigational maps from 1898 show that the slave quarters were gone. The Southern Lumber Company purchased it in 1906, and by 1938, it had become Chefuncte State Park.

Who Were the Enslaved?

Between the various mortgage and sales documents, we have found the names of 153 enslaved individuals owned by Bernard Marigny and his wife at Fontainebleau over the years. The list of names includes Jean-Pierre of the 1829 Bonnabel sale, Joshua of 1833, plus 98 from the 1837 mortgage (including George of 1829). Add to that 12 children born to the original 98 (two babies yet unnamed) who remained in 1852, plus 33 others. We were able to back out the birth years for each of them and see how old they were during key events. Another eight individuals were listed in 1841 but gone by 1852. There were so many partial mortgages over the years that tracking each individual was difficult. Certain names were commonly used (and misspelled), making it easy for some to be confused with others.

25 People Previously Mortgaged in 1837 and Who Were Sold in 1852, Therefore Remaining at Fontainebleau. Also included are 12 childr n.

Men, Women, and Children Sold in 1852	Age in 1852	Age in 1837	Age in 1829	Year of Birth	
urgeois	50	35	27	1802	
Jacob	43	28	20	1809	
Ned Alix	40	25	17	1812	
Bill	43	28	20	1809	mulatto, runaway
Moses	30	15	7	1822	
Joseph	38	23	15	1814	
Steven (Gros Steven)	44	29	21	1808	
Tandely	38	23	15	1814	
Pompon	47	32	24	1805	
Nigile or Virgilo	44	29	21	1808	
Thomas, mulatto	40	25	17	1812	
George	22	7	-1	1830	born at Fbleau?
St. Louis	24	9	1	1828	
Jacques	26	11	3	1826	
Allen	26	11	3	1826	
Nelson	42	27	19	1810	
Ned (Ned Cordonnier)	35	20	12	1817	Shoemaker
John (Gros John)	40	25	17	1812	
Caicho or Catishe	50	35	27	1802	not sold
Nelly	50	35	27	1802	not sold
Valette (Violette)	25	10	2	1827	
Cecile	7			1845	born at Fbleau?
Sosthene	4			1848	born at Fbleau?
Alexandre	2			1850	born at Fbleau?
Frasine	45	30	22	1807	
Charles	15			1837	born at Fbleau?
Noel	7			1845	born at Fbleau?
Bonne (Bonnine)	24	9	1	1828	Nursery maid
Lucien	2			1850	born at Fbleau?
Baby boy	newborn			1852	born at Fbleau?
Climene (Climence)	22	7	-1	1830	born at Fbleau?
Pichon	10			1842	born at Fbleau?
Marguerite	5			1847	born at Fbleau?
Petit Thomas	4			1848	born at Fbleau?
Trousiine	4			1848	born at Fbleau?
Baby	1			1851	born at Fbleau?
Francoise	20	5	-3	1832	born at Fbleau?

We do get occasional knowledge about certain persons like Ned Cordonnier the shoemaker, Bonnine the nursery maid, and Sam the clergyman (and painter) who are listed with their skills. For the most part we can only correlate lives with a financial timeline of the plantation and the growth of their families.

For example, in 1829 when Marigny bought the cattle ranch, the toddlers Violette and Bonnine were two- and one-year-olds (see the inserted list at left). Where they were born and who their parents were, we do not know. But by the time of the 1837 mortgage, the girls showed up as 10- and 9-year-old girls on the banking document. When Fontainebleau was sold in 1852, Violette and Bonnine were young mothers with four young children and an infant between them, all presumably born there. Another

young woman, 22-year-old Climence, was not even born when Fontainbleau was purchased by Marigny in 1829, so it is possible that her five children were the second generation of enslaved born there. On the other hand, Climence may have arrived at the site with her own unidentified mother sometime before 1837 just as Violette and Bonnine did. Without birth documents or letters discussing specific mothers or babies, however, it is impossible to tell. Their lives, like so many others, remain a mystery.

Of the 43 men named in the 1837 mortgage, only 41-year-old George had been there since Marigny bought the former cattle ranch from the Bonnabels and others in 1829.

Eight men listed in 1837 were still present in 1852 when Marigny sold the plantation and the entire enslaved population to Hippolyte Griffon, then on to Pierre Poutz. On that sales document from 1852, 25 "new" names appear that had not been listed on the 1837 mortgage. Some of them were probably men who were part of the brickworks labor force or those that crewed the schooner *Faure*. They may also have come from the Plaquemines Parish outfit or have been purchased elsewhere.

Only three adult women out of the 22 who were named on the 1837 mortgage were still at Fontainebleau when it was sold in 1852 to Hippolyte Griffon. When Griffon flipped the property a few months later to Pierre Poutz, Catishe and Nelly were not part of the sale. It is possible that Poutz saw no need for these particular two women in their 50s.

In total, there were 35 men, 19 women, and 25 children listed on the 1837 mortgage roster whose names were no longer seen in 1852 when the sales documents came out. These 79 individuals were likely sold. The man named "York" who Anna Mathilde Morales Marigny, Bernard's wife, sought to replace with another in 1850 appears nowhere on the mortgage records for 1837. The mother Anna and her children Francoise and Eulalie, substituted for Celina and her two children by the Marignys in 1849, do show up on the 1852 sales records (see below). The Marignys were known to legally set free various slaves over the years, but as hard pressed as they were financially, it would be foolish to expect that they freed 79 individuals.

Family of 3 mortgaged in 1839, Still There in 1852				**Family mortgaged in 1840 Still There in 1852**		
Mary Bill, mother of	38	1814		Acquoi, mother of	29	1823
Bill or William	19	1833		Rebecca	5	1847
Eusebe	12	1840		Nelson	2	1850
9 Persons Mortgaged in 1841, Still There in 1852 plus 2 Children				**Family of 3 added to Mortgage in 1849 by Mrs. Marigny**		
Valery Goelette	46	1806	griffe	Ann Liza, mother of	36	1816
Bill Bayou Castain	41	1811		Francoise	7	1845
Ned Goelette	35	1817		Eulalie	4	1848
Coicon	29	1823				
Lucile	35	1817		**5 Persons Not previously mentioned**		
James	12	1840		Ameline	13	1839
Ann	7	1845		Brown	40	1812
Henderson	22	1830		Dorante	15	1837
Petar	34	1818		Petit Louis	14	1838
Bon Ami	50	1802		Victor	25	1827
Joe	14	1838				
Alex	50	1802				

Likewise, with the 79 who left, there is no easy way to know where the 25 "new" persons on the 1852 sales documents came from. In 1841, eight other individuals appeared on that mortgage but were not listed in any other banking transactions. Some carried names of Marigny family members, perhaps named in honor of them. Mathilde was Marigny's wife, Eulalie was his older sister, and Prosper was his deceased son. The tradition wasn't new. An enslaved man named Pompon was born while Bernard was married to his then 19-year-old first bride, Mary Ann "Pomponne" Jones. In the revolving door of which enslaved people lived where and when, the most accurate headcount for one specific time is the census.

Individuals on the 1841 Mortgage Not Mentioned Before

Abraham (from Mrs. Reyes)	33	1808
Agathe	18	1820
Amy Kentucky	30	1811
Belisaine, mulatto	34	1807
Mathilde	14	1827
Petit Prosper	40	1801
Selina	30	1811

On the 1840 census, 153 enslaved were listed. By coincidence, 153 names have been found on mortgages and acts of sale spanning 23 years. These were not the exact same people. The 1840 record shows ten men in navigation, and we can identify Valery Goelette and Ned Goelette from the 1841 mortgage as possible pilots. "Goelette" means schooner in French. Valery was also listed as a "griffe" meaning he was half Native American. Bill Bayou Castain, Petar, Bon Ami, Alex, Joe, Coicon, Brown, and George (who came with the schooner *Faure* during the 1829 Bonnabel purchase) are the most likely shipmates. Regardless, that a ship was crewed entirely by enslaved men

35 Men from 1837 Mortgage Gone in 1852

Man's Name	Age in '37	Birth Yr	1852 Age
Georges	18	1819	33
Petit Steven	23	1814	38
Sadmin	24	1813	39
Robert	25	1812	40
Davis	25	1812	40
Moded	26	1811	41
Ned	26	1811	41
Iphraim	26	1811	41
Bill	28	1809	43
Petit Robert	28	1809	43
Joseph?	30	1807	45
Thomas	30	1807	45
Bell	30	1807	45
Georges	31	1806	46
Friderick	31	1806	46
Jean Baptiste	31	1806	46
James	32	1805	47
Jack	32	1805	47
Sam	32	1805	47
John	33	1804	48
Valery	33	1804	48
Celestin	33	1804	48
Cypriene	33	1804	48
Ulysses	33	1804	48
Morphee	34	1803	49
Sanon Creole	36	1801	51
Fadimin	37	1800	52
Georges	37	1800	52
Lindor	37	1800	52
Ned	38	1799	53
Remon	38	1799	53
Francois	38	1799	53
Virgile	39	1798	54
Georges	**41**	**1796**	**56**
Jedale	41	1796	56

19 Women from 1837 Mortgage Gone in 1852

Woman's Name	Age in '37	Birth Yr	1852 Age
Constance	16	1821	31
Core	20	1817	35
Patty	21	1816	36
Cesaire	21	1816	36
Charlotte	22	1815	37
Petite Rachel	26	1811	41
Amelie	26	1811	41
Adeline	26	1811	41
Grand Jocine	29	1808	44
Marianne	29	1808	44
Rachel	29	1808	44
Petite Melite	29	1808	44
Melite	30	1807	45
Cesarine	30	1807	45
Anna	31	1806	46
Mihely	31	1806	46
Adelaide	33	1804	48
Louisa	33	1804	48
Margaret	38	1799	53

From Bonnabels in 1829

25 Children from 1837 Gone in 1852

Child's Name	Age in '37	Birth Yr	1852 Age
Azime	0.5	1836.5	15.5
Elizabeth	4	1833	19
Becky	5	1832	20
Anna	5	1832	20
Lourde	5	1832	20
Pichon	6	1831	21
Marie Noel	6	1831	21
Jean	7	1830	22
Celestine	7	1830	22
Madeleine	7	1830	22
Genevieve	7	1830	22
Rachel	7	1830	22
Julien	8	1829	23
Ambien	8	1829	23
Louis	8	1829	23
Agnes	8	1829	23
Pauline	8	1829	23
Devil	9	1828	24
Clement	9	1828	24
Patsy	10	1827	25
Marionette	11	1826	26
Louis	12	1825	27
Lison	13	1824	28
Antoinette	13	1824	28
Marie Louise	16	1821	31

crossing Lake Pontchartrain back and forth over the decades was highly unusual. If the men had families at Fontainebleau or were very well compensated for their work, it makes sense that they would not take the ship and 'make a run for it.' Whatever their names may have been, the stories of this crew led by Ned and Valery the "griffe" would be something extra special to know.

Remembering Slavery at Fontainebleau

Despite extensive research, literature reviews, interviews with nine historians, trips to other plantations and museums, and visits to the parish archives, we still know little about the 153 individuals whose quarters were beneath these trees. Whether the enslaved were particularly ill-treated or not remains a mystery. We can only make guesses about their treatment based on the following indirect clues.

It is well known that Bernard had an older half-sister of color named Eulalie who was beloved by the Marigny family. Before Bernard's parents were married, Eulalie was born to his father Pierre Marigny and Marie Jeanne, an enslaved woman born in the Congo. Marie Jeanne, nicknamed Jeanette, was given her freedom after the birth of her free-born daughter. According to Gould's PhD dissertation at Emory in 1991, "Marie Jeanne and Eulalie were an integral part of the Marigny family. She was loved by her younger siblings. "*Eulalie was rightfully viewed and raised as a daughter in the household. Pierre's mother, Madame de Mandeville, was very close to Eulalie, and supervised her courtship with Eugene McCarty of the wealthy white McCarty family.*"" He eventually became her husband in placage marriage, and they raised four children together. In his will, Eulalie's father Pierre had left her several thousand dollars, slaves, cattle, and a tract of land in St. Bernard Parish when she was a 22-year-old young woman. With these resources she established a dairy, started a dry goods business, built, leased, and sold rental properties.

Eulalie and Bernard stayed in close touch as adults. In 1806, he gave her a large plot of land in the new *Fauberg Marigny* and provided the lumber for her to build all her rental properties there (see her sales advertisement above). Eulalie made a fortune in real estate and through the ownership of several mercantile stores throughout the New Orleans and Mississippi River Region. She ultimately left an estate worth over $250,000 or $8 million today. Bernard's love and respect for his intelligent, industrious half-sister of color was well known.

After her husband McCarty's death, his family took Eulalie to court twice to try extracting all ownings from her. Eulalie may have had the backing of her wealthy father and brothers to get her businesses started, but it was her intelligence that led to success. She ran her businesses independent of her placage husband, McCarty, and Bernard testified in court at both hearings to help protect her wealth.

In Penny Johnson's PhD dissertation at UNO in 2010, she states this about the Marigny family: *This racial openness caused Eulalie to be considered "a friendly light" according to Bernard Marigny's testimony in 1846, "and a natural sister."*

His attitude toward free people of color was also evident when developing and selling lots in *Fauberg Marigny* and in *Quartier de Mandeville.* Many of the first buyers were free men of color. Bernard's youngest son, Armand, of course had four children with the free woman of color, Josephine Celina St. Pe' while they lived at Fontainebleau and married her after the war.

The fact that Bernard entrusted critical technical work to his enslaved workforce, revered his half-sister Eulalie, and that his son carried on the Marigny line with a woman of color are the only clues for us to follow and from which to infer his mindset. While he and his wife did keep enslaved mothers and children together during 'sales transactions,' there was also an 1829 law in Louisiana that forbade the separate sale of children under 10 from their mothers. Other states set that age at 5. According to the financial historian Dr. Sharon Murphy, Citizens Bank - who held the various mortgages on Fontainebleau - was also reported to keep together family members that fell outside of those terms of law, including spouses, fathers, and children over the age of 10. As it was Bernard who initiated the charter of this bank, he may have had some say in their unwritten rules. But we do not know that.

From archeological finds, we know that the enslaved ate from Marigny's used European china. Two water wells were dug for them close to their cabins. The quarters were raised above the damp grounds by brick piers and featured large hearths and covered porches. But these individuals were also purchased and sold. They were enslaved. We cannot know what their lives were like.

Today, when we view the alley of oaks that Marigny had planted, we can only hope that these beautiful trees signified some degree of respect for the people who toiled so hard and so well.

When we see today's families, their children playing chase with one other beneath these oaks, let us remember the original families who walked this ground. Let us say a silent word of thanks that today we are all free. With this historical marker dedicated in 2019, we honor the families who came before us.

CREDITS

A very special thank you to the following individuals for their time, resources, and encouragement. This Eagle Scout Project could not have been completed without your generosity of spirit.

Mr. Grayhawk Perkins, the Ranger who first told me the story of the enslaved families of Fontainebleau and showed me the remnants of their chimney hearths. His ability to bring history to life, back in in 2009 (when I was a six-year-old history buff pestering him for more information), has had me think of those families every time we have passed this beautiful oak alley over the past ten years. Thanks to Mr. Grayhawk, they will now never be forgotten.

Mr. Richard Scott, Interpretive Ranger, Fontainebleau State Park

Dr. Sharon Ann Murphy, Financial Historian, Author, and Professor at Providence College, Rhode Island

Ms. Robin Leckbee Perkins, Director for Records Management St. Tammany Parish Clerk of Court

Mr. Bill de Marigny Hyland, St. Bernard Parish Historian

Ms. Robin Parson, Evergreen Plantation Historian, St. John the Baptist Parish

Ms. Stephanie Ballard, Deputy Clerk, Archives Department, St. Tammany Parish Clerk of Court

Mr. Tom Colvin, Choctaw Interpreter

Mr. Sam Bruning, Historian

Mr. Fouad Harb, Park Manager, Fontainebleau State Park

And finally,

Mr. Raymond Berthelot, Parks Program Manager, Louisiana Office of State Parks for acting as the official Eagle Scout Beneficiary for the State of Louisiana, but also as a mentor, editor, and archeology resource

My mom, LeAnne Cantrell, for driving me by car and in spirit.